

INSPECTION REPORT

LYNGFORD PARK PRIMARY

Taunton

LEA area: Somerset

Unique reference number: 123715

Headteacher: Mr R T Aslett

Lead inspector: Mr A Fullwood

Dates of inspection: 11th – 13th November 2003

Inspection number: 256810

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:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	262
School address:	Bircham Road Taunton
Postcode:	TA2 8EX
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs D Gilham
Date of previous inspection:	July 1997

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is situated in the Priorswood area of Taunton. It is an average sized primary school, with 262 pupils in nine classes. The socio-economic context of the school is well below average. Two hundred and fifty-five pupils are of white ethnic origin and seven pupils are from a variety of other ethnic backgrounds. No pupils are at an early stage in the acquisition of English. Forty-eight pupils have special educational needs, broadly in line with the national average. Pupils' attainment on entry is wide-ranging but well below average overall. The school received an Achievement Award in 2000 for continuous progress in national test results from 1997.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21184	Mr A Fullwood	<i>Lead inspector</i>	Science; Physical Education.
9472	Mr J Edmond	<i>Lay inspector</i>	
31307	Mr I Hancock	<i>Team inspector</i>	English; Design and technology; Information and communication technology.
31319	Mrs D Hunter	<i>Team inspector</i>	Foundation Stage; Art; Music.
20614	Mr D Kimber	<i>Team inspector</i>	Mathematics; History; Geography.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Lyngford Park Primary School provides a satisfactory standard of education for its pupils. Teaching, the curriculum and leadership and management are satisfactory. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The provision made for pupils' personal development is good.
- Provision in English is unsatisfactory and some pupils are not achieving as well as they could.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good.
- The school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- Systems for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning are underdeveloped.
- The curriculum is enriched very effectively through a wide range of visits and events that have a positive impact on pupils' achievements.
- The use made of assessment information is unsatisfactory.
- Teaching in the Foundation Stage class and in Years 5 and 6 is good.
- Good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs.

Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Standards, although well below national averages, are improving in line with national trends at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. However, standards in English at the end of Year 6 are falling. Not enough attention has been given to improving pupils' attainment and progress through the systematic development of key skills, such as spelling and speaking. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) have improved through the better provision made for this subject. The school's arrangements for identifying and assessing pupils with special educational needs have improved and provision for these pupils is now good. The role of the governing body in monitoring the work of the school has improved, but the way in which the cost effectiveness of major spending decisions is evaluated needs further 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	E	E	E	D
mathematics	E	E	E	D
science	D	D	E	D

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.

As can be seen from the above table, the standards attained by Year 6 pupils in 2003 in English, science and mathematics were well below average in comparison with all schools. In comparison with similar schools, pupils' attainment was below average. Inspection evidence indicates that, in the current group of Year 6 pupils, standards in numeracy and science are in line with national expectations but that standards in English and mathematics as a whole are below average. Standards meet national expectations in art, history and ICT. Pupils' progress and achievement are satisfactory overall, but good in numeracy and science.

In 2003, standards in reading, writing and mathematics in national tests at the end of Year 2 were below average in comparison with all schools. In comparison with similar schools, attainment was average in writing and mathematics and above average in reading. Inspection evidence indicates

that standards in the current group of Year 2 pupils are below average in reading, writing, science and mathematics, but that pupils are achieving well in mathematics and science in relation to their attainment on entry to Year 1. Pupils' achievement in English is satisfactory. Standards meet national expectations in art, history and ICT. Standards in religious education, at the end of Years 2 and 6, are in line with the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus.

Pupils with special educational needs are supported well by teachers and support assistants so that they make good progress in relation to the targets set in their individual education plans. Children's attainment on entry to the school, although wide ranging, is well below average. Inspection evidence indicates that currently children in the Foundation Stage class are achieving well in all areas of learning and are on track to achieve the goals they are expected to reach by the end of Reception. Children in the mixed Year 1 and Foundation Class are achieving satisfactorily but do not have the same opportunities as other Foundation children to choose their own activities or to develop their learning through play. This is due to the poorer accommodation provided for them.

Overall, pupils' attitudes to school are good and they behave well. **The provision made for pupils' personal development is good, as is the provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.**

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a satisfactory quality of education. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Teaching in the Foundation Stage class and in Years 5 and 6 is good. The teaching of mathematics, art, history and ICT is good. Teaching in English, science, religious education and physical education is satisfactory. Good use is made of teachers' specialist knowledge in art, drama and science in Years 5 and 6. No judgements can be made about the overall quality of teaching in other subjects where work was only sampled. Assessment procedures are satisfactory, but the use made of this information to plan future work is inconsistent and unsatisfactory overall. The marking of pupils' work is supportive but rarely indicates what they need to do to improve.

The quality and range of curriculum opportunities for pupils are satisfactory overall. However, there is a very good range of events, visits and visitors to enrich pupils' learning. The school has good links with parents and partner schools and very good links with the community and this has a good impact on pupils' learning. The provision made to support, advise and guide pupils is satisfactory.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. Many co-ordinators are new to their roles and have not yet had time to make an impact on the provision made for their subjects. Governance of the school is satisfactory. The governing body has begun to monitor the work of the school more closely and to take an appropriate part in deciding its future direction. However, systems for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning are underdeveloped.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents think well of the school. They are pleased that their children like school and that they are made to feel welcome there. They feel that the school supports their children well in promoting their personal and academic progress. However, few parents actively involve themselves in their children's education, for instance by supporting the completion of homework. Pupils' views of the school are good. They feel supported well when they need help and feel that their ideas and opinions are listened to. The vast majority of pupils enjoy school.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise pupils' standards of attainment in English and mathematics.
- Ensure that pupils' literacy skills are developed through other subjects.
- Improve procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning.
- Improve the provision and resources made for Foundation Stage children in the mixed-age Reception class.
- Make better use of assessment information to consistently plan suitably challenging work for pupils of different abilities, particularly the more able.
- Improve the quality of teachers' marking so pupils know what they need to do to improve.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

By the time they leave the school, pupils' standards of attainment in English, mathematics and science are below average. However, pupils achieve well in science and in the numeracy aspect of mathematics. Their achievement in English and mathematics as a whole is satisfactory. In information and communication technology (ICT), history and religious education, pupils' achievement is good and standards are average. There was insufficient evidence to make a secure judgement about standards and achievement in design and technology, geography, music or physical education.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Pupils achieve well in relation to their well below attainment on entry to the school.
- Standards in English at the end of Year 6 are falling.
- Children in the Foundation Stage are achieving well.
- Unsatisfactory use is made of assessment information to consistently plan work for pupils of different abilities, particularly the more able.
- Standards in ICT have been improved since the last inspection.

Commentary

1. Children's attainment on entry to the school, although wide ranging, is well below average. Children in the Foundation Stage class are making good progress and achieving well. Children in the mixed Reception / Year 1 class are making satisfactory progress and achieve appropriately. This difference is mainly due to the better accommodation and learning resources available to children in the Foundation class. In both classes, most children are on track to reach the Early Learning Goals in their personal, social and emotional development and in their physical and creative development. By the time they transfer to Year 1, relatively few children are likely to reach the Early Learning Goals in their language, literacy and communication skills or in their mathematical development or knowledge and understanding of the world.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.4 (14.0)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	14.0 (13.4)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	15.7 (14.6)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 22 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. The results of the national tests in reading, writing and mathematics for pupils at the end of Year 2 in 2003 were below average in comparison with all schools. In comparison with similar schools, attainment was average in writing and mathematics and above average in reading. There has been a steady improvement in standards in reading and mathematics over the last two years. Standards in writing fell in 2002 but improved in 2003. Generally, girls perform better than boys in reading and writing whereas in mathematics their performance is similar.

3. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in the current Year 2 are below average in speaking, listening and reading and well below average in writing. Pupils' achievement in English is satisfactory but a more systematic and planned approach to developing their speaking and listening skills needs to be developed in order to improve standards in writing, where standards of spelling and handwriting are poor.

4. Standards in mathematics are below average but standards in numeracy are average. Pupils make good progress and achieve well in numeracy due to the strong emphasis given to this aspect. Overall, pupils achieve satisfactorily in mathematics. However, their weak literacy skills have a negative impact on their ability to apply their mathematical skills when solving problems written in words.
5. Standards in science at the end of Year 2 in 2003 were average, with all pupils achieving the expected level (Level 2). However, few pupils achieved the higher level (Level 3). Inspection evidence indicates that standards in the current Year 2 are below average but that pupils are achieving well in relation to their low attainment on entry to Year 1.
6. Standards in religious education are in line with the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus. Standards in art, history, physical education and ICT are average. Pupils make satisfactory progress and achieve as well as they should in these subjects. Work in other National Curriculum subjects was only sampled and no secure judgement can be made about pupils' attainment in geography, music or design and technology.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	24.1 (25.4)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	24.5 (24.7)	26.8 (26.7)
science	26.5 (28.1)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 48 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

7. The results of national tests in English in 2003 for pupils at the end of Year 6 were well below average in comparison with all schools and below average in comparison with similar schools, based on pupils' prior attainment at the end of Year 2. Standards in English have fallen over the last three years, with a sharp fall in 2003. The school's target for the percentage of pupils expected to achieve Level 4 was not achieved but the target for the percentage of pupils expected to achieve Level 5 was exceeded. Generally girls perform better than boys. These results were no surprise to the school because many pupils in this year group had emotional and behavioural problems. A small minority were also poor attenders. Inspection evidence indicates that the current group of Year 6 pupils are attaining below average standards in speaking, listening and reading, and well below average standards in writing. Insufficient time and resources are given to developing literacy skills. This has a negative impact on pupils' attainment, and some pupils underachieve as a result. Achievement is better in Years 5 and 6 than elsewhere, but overall the provision made for English is unsatisfactory. There is a need for a more consistent and whole school planned approach to developing key skills in English and across the curriculum.
8. The results of national tests in mathematics in 2003 for pupils at the end of Year 6 were well below average in comparison with all schools and below average in comparison with similar schools. Although varying from year to year, the overall trend in standards was upwards until they fell in 2003. Generally, girls and boys perform similarly. The school did not reach its target for the percentage of pupils expected to achieve Level 4. The target for the percentage of pupils expected to achieve Level 5 was exceeded. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in Year 6 are below average but that many pupils are attaining satisfactory standards in number and are achieving well in relation to their attainment at the end of Year 2. This is due to the good quality teaching that pupils receive and the use made of setting by ability, which ensures that work is closely matched to the needs of pupils of different abilities, including those with special educational needs and more able pupils. Pupils' poor literacy skills mean that they have difficulties in applying their number skills in problem solving situations. This has been identified by the school as a focus for development this year. Few examples were seen of mathematics being used as part of pupils' work in other subjects.
9. The results of national tests in science in 2003 for pupils at the end of Year 6 were well below average in comparison with all schools and below average in comparison with similar schools.

There was an upward trend in standards in science until 2003 when there was a sharp fall. Boys and girls perform similarly. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in Year 6 are currently in line with national expectations. Pupils are achieving well, particularly in Years 5 and 6, in relation to their attainment at the end of Year 2. Their progress in scientific enquiry skills is only satisfactory because teachers tend to over-direct them when they carry out experiments, and do not provide enough opportunities for them to plan their own investigations.

10. In ICT, standards of attainment are satisfactory by the end of Year 6. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Generally, pupils make good progress and achieve well due to the good quality teaching they receive. Greater teacher confidence in the subject is providing a wide range of experiences for pupils who, by the end of Year 6, understand the power of computers when making PowerPoint presentations using text, graphics and sound.

11. Standards in religious education are in line with the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus. Standards meet national expectations in art, history, physical education and ICT. Pupils make satisfactory progress and achieve as well as they should in these subjects. Work in other National Curriculum subjects was only sampled and no secure judgement can be made about pupils' attainment in geography, music or design and technology.

12. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and make good progress so that they achieve well in relation to the targets set in their individual education plans. Teachers and learning support assistants work effectively together and monitor closely the attainment and progress of these pupils.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **good**. Exclusions are well below the national average. Attendance fell last year but is **satisfactory** overall and punctuality is **very good**. The school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Authorised absence is above the national average, but unauthorised absence is slightly below.
- Punctuality is very good.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good overall. There was only one fixed period exclusion last year.
- The school promotes very good relationships and deals with all forms of harassment very effectively.
- The school's training for pupils in how to distinguish right from wrong and how to live harmoniously in a community is very successful.

Commentary

13. The attitudes and behaviour of children in Reception and Years 3 to 6 are good, and can be outstanding with inspirational teaching. The attitudes and behaviour of pupils in Years 1 and 2 are satisfactory, though they may lose interest in class, for example, if the work is pitched above their heads or fails to stimulate them. Pupils of all ages are generally interested in lessons and in the wide range of outside activities provided. Behaviour round the school is good and well supervised. It is due to the school's strong ethos and the measures taken to maintain high standards that there was only one fixed-period exclusion last year.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black African
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Any other ethnic group

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
255	1	0
1	0	0
2	0	0
1	0	0
1	0	0
2	0	0

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

14. During the inspection, there was no evidence of bullying, racism or other harassment, but pupils are confident that the school deals with them effectively when they occur. The school is successful in ensuring that pupils work and play well together, which leads to very good relationships between pupils and with teachers. The school works hard to promote pupils' self-esteem, and so far has had reasonable success. It stimulates in most pupils a desire to learn.

15. The school is active in developing pupils' self-awareness. Assemblies have a limited spiritual dimension but they meet the statutory requirement for a daily act of worship. Pupils' self-knowledge is good and they know that staff value them. Pupils have a very good understanding of moral principles and the responsibilities of citizenship. This is because teaching is good and class discussions (called 'circle time') make a very good contribution to their learning. Pupils are clear about the difference between right and wrong and about the importance of respecting other people's feelings, values and beliefs. Cultural development is strong, with many visits to places of interest. Pupils' understanding of other cultures is still underdeveloped, though there are advanced plans, in conjunction with the Taunton Learning Partnership of other local primary schools, to remedy this omission.

Attendance

16. Attendance is satisfactory. It fell last year by 1.2 per cent compared with the previous year, though unauthorised absence remained the same. Attendance registers are properly kept. The school has adequate measures for promoting high levels of attendance, though they could be better if absentees were contacted on the first day of unexplained absence, rather than the third. Pupils' punctuality is very good, though curriculum time is sometimes lost by lessons starting late after breaks. Parents' efforts to ensure the attendance of their children are satisfactory.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	6.4%
National data	5.4%

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.3%
National data	0.4%

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a **satisfactory** quality of education. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. The curriculum is satisfactory. Staffing, accommodation and resources are satisfactory overall. Links with parents and other schools are good and those with the community are very good. Pupils' care, guidance and support are good.

Teaching and learning

Teaching is **satisfactory** overall. It is good in the Foundation Stage class and in Years 5 and 6. The quality of assessment of pupils' work is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The provision made for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- Teaching is good in the Foundation Stage class.
- Teaching is good in Years 5 and 6.
- Good relationships between teachers and pupils ensure that teachers manage pupils well and have high expectations of their behaviour.
- Assessment information is not used consistently to inform teaching and learning.
- The application of the school's marking policy is inconsistent and does not tell pupils how they could improve their work.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 48 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
1 (2%)	5 (10%)	18 (38%)	24 (50%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	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.

17. The strengths in the teaching outweigh the areas for improvement. However, the quality of teaching and learning are not monitored closely enough to identify what works and what does not or to spread good practice across the school.

18. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well. Work is planned appropriately to cater for their individual needs and there are good assessment procedures to check how well they are learning. There is good teamwork between teachers and learning support assistants and this ensures that pupils make good progress and achieve well in relation to the targets set in their individual education plans. Staff continually strive to increase pupils' self-esteem and confidence by valuing their oral and written contributions and praising their efforts.

19. Teaching in the Foundation Stage varies from satisfactory to very good, but it is good overall. In the best lessons, challenges and expectations are high and activities are clearly adapted to match the needs of individual children. There are also examples of good planning that provides an inter-related curriculum, where activities weave together the various areas of learning. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good in the single-age Reception class, but there is inequality of opportunity in some areas in the mixed Reception / Year 1 class, and this detracts from the overall quality of experiences provided. For example, children in the mixed-age class do not have regular access to the good outside play facilities available. Their classroom is cramped and does not allow for regular opportunities for children to choose their own activities, such as sand and water play.

20. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory. Teachers provide suitable activities to challenge pupils' understanding and skills but the pace of lessons and teachers' expectations of what pupils could achieve is not always high enough. Teachers do not always insist that all pupils listen attentively and time is not always used well, such as when Year 1/2 pupils visited the computer suite. They arrived late and did not have enough time to evaluate what they had learned at the end of the lesson.

21. Teaching in Years 3 and 4 is satisfactory. Both teachers are new to the school and are beginning to adapt their teaching to the needs of individual pupils and to establish good working relationships with them.

22. Teachers in Years 5 and 6 work very well together and enjoy very good relationships with pupils, who admire and respect them. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and of what pupils can achieve. Good use is made of teachers' specialist knowledge in art, drama and science to promote pupils' skills in these subjects. Generally, lessons move at a brisk pace and teachers successfully inspire pupils through their enthusiasm and good humour. Good use is made of questioning and discussion to involve pupils in their own learning, such as when Year 6 pupils in history discussed the problems Elizabeth I faced when she first came to the throne. Activities are stimulating and teaching often inspiring, with good use of drama to successfully promote pupils' speaking and listening skills.

23. In many lessons observed, teachers' good relationships with pupils encouraged good behaviour and positive attitudes to work, particularly in the Foundation Stage class and in Years 5 and 6. This significantly impacts on the standards attained, as pupils want to please their teachers, generally work hard and concentrate well. Through praise and encouragement, pupils respond very well to teachers, particularly when work is interesting and challenging. Teachers make good use of humour to defuse potentially difficult situations and apply the school behaviour policy consistently so that pupils know what is expected of them. This ensures that pupils behave well in the large majority of lessons in these classes. Pupils in Years 1 to 2 have satisfactory attitudes to learning. Here teaching is generally satisfactory but activities do not always stimulate pupils to give of their best or to behave well.

24. Pupils' work and discussions with teachers and pupils show that teachers' planning does not always identify challenging activities for pupils of different abilities within each class. As a consequence, pupils make satisfactory rather than good progress. Too great a reliance is placed on open-ended tasks to which pupils respond as well as they are able. However, such tasks do not always have the structure needed to guide the development of pupils of differing abilities. Assessment information is not used to identify where pupils need to develop better understanding, for example in scientific enquiry skills, and this limits their opportunities to achieve as well as they could.

25. Marking is always supportive, with comments such as 'Well done' or 'Good effort'. However, it rarely states what pupils have achieved or how they could improve their performance. There are examples of teachers giving advice to pupils about how to improve their work, particularly in Years 5 and 6, but this is not a consistent feature of marking in other year groups.

The curriculum

Overall, the curriculum provision is **satisfactory** and meets all the statutory requirements. The wide variety of school visits and extra-curricular activities is **very good** and further enhances learning. The quality of accommodation is **good** overall and playground improvements have brought great benefits for pupils. The quality and quantity of resources, including staffing, are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Curriculum innovation is good.
- The provision made for the teaching of English is unsatisfactory.
- Provision for personal, social and health education (PSHE) is good.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- The enrichment of the curriculum, including extra curricular provision, is very good.
- Accommodation is good overall, but there is cramped space for some Reception children.
- Resources are satisfactory to support learning in most subjects, but the quality and range of books to support English, including those in the school library, are unsatisfactory.

Commentary

26. The broad curriculum meets the statutory requirements for infant and junior pupils, and pupils are well prepared for moving to secondary school. For some children under five years, the curriculum draws too strongly upon National Curriculum approaches for older pupils rather than the nationally recognised, and more appropriate, Early Learning Goals.

27. The school recognises the value of making good cross-curricular links to support learning. These underpin the recent (2002) introduction of the school's curriculum framework. Where appropriate, it is planned that topics in science, history and geography will support learning in other areas. Many topics are drawn from national guidelines, and are intended to facilitate good continuity and progression for individual pupils in the school.

28. The provision made for the teaching of English is unsatisfactory. Given that pupils' literacy skills are below expected levels, not enough time is given to developing these skills in some classes. Opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills, although good in Years 5 and 6, are not systematically planned for in some classes. Pupils are encouraged to take reading books home but procedures to ensure they make satisfactory progress are not yet effective. Reading diaries are not regularly updated and not all teachers are making the best use of the quiet reading sessions after lunch, and this has a negative impact on pupils' achievements. The school has identified writing as an area for development but insufficient opportunities are provided for pupils to improve their writing skills across the curriculum or to improve their handwriting and spelling systematically.

29. Pupils with special educational needs are well provided for. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The good support they have in lessons comes from well planned teaching and the guidance of the learning support assistants, who help these pupils to take part confidently in all activities.

30. Carefully planned visits, including residential ones for pupils in Years 3 to 6, contribute to the very good enrichment of the curriculum. Visits to Caerleon (history) and Quantockhead (geography) are supplemented by residential visits to Kilve, and to Greatwood. Personal development is also promoted well. School visits abroad for Years 5 and 6 pupils have included visiting the United Nations building in Geneva. The links with secondary schools, which have specialisms in science, technology and arts, also provide valuable opportunities for older juniors to extend their breadth of learning.

31. Much of the accommodation is spacious, with extra areas adjoining main classrooms that can be used for practical activities. However, some classrooms for the infants and under fives are more cramped. Some children under five do not have ready access to the outdoor play area. The school is in the process of developing areas of the playground imaginatively.

Care, guidance and support

The school cares for its pupils **well** and ensures their health and safety. It provides **satisfactory** levels of support, advice and guidance, but these could be more firmly based on the monitoring of pupils' progress. The school is **good** at seeking and acting on pupils' views.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Strong child protection measures are in place and the school has close and effective relations with most outside agencies.
- Proper health and safety procedures are generally in place, though risks are not formally assessed.
- Staff are caring and fair and help those with behavioural problems, which results in happy and trusting pupils.
- The school is very inclusive.
- The school supports pupils from diverse backgrounds very effectively.

Commentary

32. Effective child protection practices are in place and are kept in line with those laid down by the local education authority. No significant health and safety risks were noted and a governor is properly involved in health and safety. Playtime is well supervised and there are appropriate medical arrangements. However, risks have not been formally assessed, nor have staff been trained in this work. Pupils and staff work in a very clean, litter-free environment, which is healthy and safe. All equipment is regularly tested and fire drills are carried out each term. Access to the Internet is strictly controlled.

33. Pupils are highly valued. The school lays great stress on supporting and caring for its pupils. The 'circle time' programme of class discussions is backed up by constant informal support and such measures as the breakfast club and extra support for new pupils through the 'buddy' system. Staff all know pupils very well and there is always at least one member, often more, with whom pupils can and do develop a trusting relationship. Pupils consider that staff treat them fairly and help those few pupils who have difficulty in conforming. As a result, this is a happy school.

34. The school actively helps pupils develop healthy eating habits and is sensitive in respecting the needs of children from vulnerable families. Induction arrangements for Reception pupils are very good. Relationships with the pre-school group from which most children are admitted to the school are very good. The school does all it can to ease the induction of children into the school.

35. There is a school council whose ideas the school has implemented in several areas. Members agree the council is worthwhile and they appreciate that the school listens to them. Pupils are encouraged to help develop class rules and to contribute their own ideas, especially during 'circle time'. Pupils are also involved in setting their own personal targets, expressed in language they can understand, though these targets are often not specific enough.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents and other schools are **good**. Those with the local community are **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The information about the school, produced for parents, is generally comprehensive and well produced but written reports are not detailed enough.
- The contribution of parents in promoting their children's education is unsatisfactory.
- Links with the local community are extensive, varied and valuable to pupils.
- There are very close links with the neighbouring nursery school and good links with the local primary and secondary schools.

Commentary

36. Documentation about the school's activities meets statutory requirements. The prospectus is of high quality and newsletters are frequent and informative. The governors' report to parents is satisfactory and the induction brochure for new parents is helpful. Pupils' annual reports also meet statutory requirements, and, to an extent, set out for parents what their children know, can do and understand. However, using only one side of A4 paper, a report cannot reflect comprehensively the child's performance in each subject over the whole year, and the targets set for future improvement are often too vague.

37. The school has only moderate success in encouraging parents to involve themselves in promoting their children's learning at home, with many not really supporting homework. To combat this problem, the school runs homework clubs during the school day and this is a good feature of its work. Termly consultation and target-setting meetings are well attended, as are the school's many social events. A small but energetic 'friends' association' runs social and fund-raising events, which provide substantial sums for pupils' benefit. While parents support outings and sports fixtures, only very few actually help within the school on a voluntary basis.

38. The school deals effectively with concerns and complaints. It does not yet seek parents' views formally, but intends to introduce questionnaires shortly. Nevertheless, it welcomes parents at all times and tries to accommodate their needs. Teachers are available daily for informal discussions about pupils. Parents generally hold the school in high regard, though a small minority do not feel well-informed or are uncomfortable about approaching the school.

39. Links with the local community are very strong and effective. Pupils gain a lot from the school's very wide range of cultural, artistic, sporting and commercial connections. Their sense of service to others is enhanced by sponsoring charities and working with senior citizens. Transfer arrangements for pupils moving on to secondary schools are effective. The secondary schools contribute variously to pupils' development by providing science lessons (Year 5), drama, dance and athletics coaching, together with contributions to the school's arts week. The school works closely with professionals in the local education authority and with the Taunton Learning Partnership of primary schools, in order to share good practice.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management of the school are **satisfactory**. The governance of the school is **sound**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The governors' role has significantly improved and they are very supportive of the school.
- The headteacher has sound aspirations and a clear vision for the school but some of the issues identified in the previous inspection have not been fully addressed.
- There are no effective systems in place for the monitoring of teaching and learning to improve classroom performance.
- The school improvement plan lacks detail on the order of priorities and how it will evaluate the effectiveness of what it does.

Commentary

40. The governors are fully supportive of the school and their role has significantly improved since the last inspection. They are now more proactive in their responsibility to manage the school. They monitor the curriculum by regular visits to the classrooms and have a satisfactory understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They have established good relationships with the headteacher and staff and ensure that all their statutory duties are met. A new chair of governors has recently been appointed, together with many new governors. They are settling well into their new roles but as yet do not have effective systems in place to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of any decisions they take.

41. The headteacher successfully creates a caring and supportive atmosphere, which focuses on providing equal opportunities for all its pupils to learn the basic skills and understanding needed to live a full and happy life. He is well supported by the deputy headteacher and senior management team, who provide good role models for effective teaching and learning. The senior management team meet regularly to provide supportive leadership to staff based on the school's aims and positive ethos. However, some of the issues identified in the previous inspection have been addressed too slowly, which has a negative impact on standards and pupils' achievements.

42. The management of the school is satisfactory. The headteacher has recently reorganised key staff and subject leaders to help raise standards throughout the school. Their role is underdeveloped due to the lack of opportunity to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning across the school. However, the headteacher intends to release subject leaders to begin formal monitoring in English and mathematics in the near future. The headteacher has a good grasp of pupils' standards in English, mathematics and science. He analyses National Curriculum and optional test results to track pupils' progress from year to year, and has begun to identify weaker areas of the curriculum needing attention. The headteacher acknowledges that teachers' performance management targets need to be more rigorous and specific to help raise standards and pupils' achievements.

43. The manager for special educational needs provides good leadership, and there have been many improvements since the last inspection in the provision made for these pupils. She has introduced measures such as the 'nurture' group, and overseen improvements in the identification and assessment of pupils. Individual education plans now have clearer targets and regular dates for review. The school recognises the need for continuing improvements, such as increased involvement of parents in reviewing the progress their children have made.

44. The school improvement plan is a useful document in that it identifies those issues the school most needs to address, but it has weaknesses. It does not make clear an order of priorities for the areas of development, nor does it take a sufficiently long-term view of the school's future needs and the impact of falling roles. It lacks detail and is not always sufficiently clear about the time scales, costs or how the school will evaluate the effectiveness of what it does.

45. The monitoring of teaching and learning is underdeveloped. There is no ethos of systematic monitoring by the headteacher, senior staff or subject co-ordinators. The headteacher regularly visits classes on an informal basis and senior staff have had some opportunities to monitor their colleagues. The school has made good use of local education authority consultants in some areas, such as literacy and numeracy, but there are no formal, established whole-school procedures for identifying strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning across the curriculum.

46. There are sound procedures for the day-to-day monitoring and recording of expenditure, and these are efficiently carried out. The governors are fully involved in the budget-setting process and in monitoring the school's spending on a regular basis. Best value principles are applied appropriately to major spending decisions but evaluating the cost effectiveness and the impact they have on raising standards is at an early stage of development. When all factors are taken into account, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	633,674.00
Total expenditure	631,015.00
Expenditure per pupil	2,544.00

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	39,589.00
Balance carried forward to the next	42,248.00

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

47. The children enter school in the September before they are five and attend school full-time. One third of the group are taught with Year 1 pupils. Most pupils have had pre-school experience and many of these attend the playgroup, which is housed next door to the Reception class. This means that there are good opportunities for links between the two groups, and this makes the transfer into the school a positive experience. Outside, large play equipment is shared and the pre-school group is able to explore the school environment. Children enter school with levels of attainment well below what is expected for their age but the experiences they gain from the good quality teaching allow them to make good progress so that they are well prepared for transfer to Year 1. The curriculum is appropriately planned but closer liaison between all teachers who teach Reception children would ensure more consistent provision for all pupils and a wider range of interesting and varied activities that are better matched to their needs. All teachers and support staff provide good role models for the pupils and liaison is very good between the part-time teachers in the Foundation Stage class. In the class with mixed year groups, there are times when an extra adult would be valuable to ensure that the needs of the different age groups are met. All staff who have contact with the children take good care to assess and monitor their progress across all areas of learning. The accommodation in the Reception class is good, with pupils having continuous access to an outside play area but in the mixed class this access is not available and the classroom is cramped. Resources for outdoor activity are generally very good but there is no provision for large 'ride-on' toys.

48. By the end of the Reception Year, pupils are on track to reach the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development and in physical and creative development but their mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world are likely to be below expectation. Attainment in communication, language and literacy is likely to be well below expectation at this age.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Children achieve well because of the high expectations set by staff and the careful monitoring and assessment of their progress.
- Supportive relationships are established so that children's self-esteem is raised and they feel confident and happy.
- Not all pupils are able to take part in activities where social relationships are developed.

Commentary

49. This area of learning is particularly well taught and, by the end of the Reception Year, the majority of children are likely to have reached the expected levels. Most are able to conform to the high expectations of the staff and the good role models of the adults. As a result, even though they have only been in school a short time, the children know what is expected of them. They know the routines, behave sensibly and settle to tasks quickly, so that the atmosphere is calm and purposeful. Arguments are quietly settled and the adults help children to learn together in harmony and to respect each other. Pupils are interested and eager in their learning, can stay on task for long periods of time and are motivated to succeed even when not directly supervised.

50. The adults constantly encourage children and praise their efforts so that all can feel successful. They intervene when necessary with good questioning, which extends learning, and they encourage pupils to take a pride in their work. There is consistency in routines so that children know to put up their hands, take turns and listen to others. This was clearly seen in 'circle time', when children waited their turn to talk and were able to respond to others' comments. They share equipment well and can work together, as was seen when two boys went on a 'bear hunt' using an activity board, which the class had made. Their role-play quite clearly depended on each other and their conversations moved the action forward. There are very supportive relationships so that all the Reception children feel secure and confident to seek help when required. Teachers use targets, such as 'Being able to put overalls on without adult help', 'Remembering to say excuse me'. Such targets are simple so that children understand them, and they play an important part in developing independence, courtesy and respect.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Teachers and support staff take every opportunity to develop pupils' language skills.
- Activities are varied and motivate the pupils to achieve well.
- Not all pupils have quality time to talk about and share picture books with an adult.

Commentary

51. Teaching in communication, language and literacy is good. Children make good progress though many of them enter school with a very low level of language and will not achieve the expectations in this area by the time they enter Year 1. They listen well but have a limited vocabulary and attention span. Constant questioning, explanation and activity designed to widen their vocabulary are strong features of teachers' planning. Adults continually talk to children and the provision of imaginative activities helps them to think and choose appropriate language to describe what they are doing. Adults take time to listen and they value what the children say so this gives them confidence to talk. Books are available and most children take them home regularly to be shared with adults. They understand how to use books and enjoy reading them. However, some children do not have opportunities to share picture books or to enjoy the telling of a story through pictures, and this denies them pleasure of learning from books. When teachers read stories, children listen avidly and are drawn into the imaginative world described. There is good emphasis on teaching of sounds, and children have made good progress in sound recognition, learning through rhymes, sound and picture games and constant reinforcement from adults to recognise sounds and match them to letters. They have opportunities to write and colour and were enthralled in making cards for the bear's birthday party and writing labels for his present. A few more able children can copy by either writing over letters or copying words from a card. Staff ensure that pencils and crayons are held correctly and that letter formation is accurate. However, without direct supervision, children cannot be relied on to remember these strategies.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Teachers take every opportunity to promote mathematical development in all activities.
- Teachers plan a wide range of mathematical activities to ensure pupils achieve well.

Commentary

52. Teaching is good in this area of learning. Teachers plan a range of interesting activities to promote mathematical understanding. Many children had very low attainment when they began school and it is not likely that they will reach the expected levels by the end of the Reception Year. However, they have made good progress and most are able to count to ten. About half can count beyond that and they enjoy reciting numbers to adults. They sing rhymes to help them count and teachers imaginatively make up extra verses in traditional rhymes, such as '1,2,3,4,5 once I caught a fish alive', so that pupils benefit from the rhyme and rhythm of the song. They have opportunities to write numbers but very few are beginning to match objects to numbers. Adults question children and constantly use a variety of words, such as 'above, below, beside, one more than', in many incidental ways to help develop vocabulary. Children are aware of symmetry and in one well planned activity, where many opportunities for exploring the concept were provided, the most able could identify the line of symmetry in their pictures. Most know the main colours and are encouraged in their painting and colouring to identify mixed colours such as purple, and mauve. When designing hats for the bear's party, some children produced simple repeating patterns using lines and circles.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Planning provides a wide range of activities to promote learning.
- Access to computers in the classroom is limited by the number of machines available.

Commentary

53. Teaching is good. Many children have a very limited understanding of the world around them but good provision extends their knowledge and understanding so that they make good progress. However, they are not likely to reach the levels expected of them by the time they reach Year 1. Activities are well planned to give children opportunities to widen their vocabulary, and good questioning by adults gives them time to think and respond. They take part in activities to stimulate their curiosity and enhance their understanding, such as going on an adventure walk in the locality when photographs were taken. These were shared among the pupils, who were encouraged to describe them. By reminding them of the walk and asking questions such as 'Where did we go next?' or 'What did we see on the old pine tree?' children were able to reconstruct their journey using their pictures and could recreate it on a display board with appropriate labelling and notices.

54. Children have opportunities to use the one computer in the classroom but were not seen using the computer suite during the time of the inspection. They use listening centres with confidence and the more able follow the text in storybooks with their fingers as they listen.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- In the class where there is continuous access to the outside play area there are well planned, structured activities that help to develop learning in other areas.
- All children benefit from well-planned activities in the hall.
- Some children do not have enough opportunity to use the outside play area.
- There are no ride-on toys available.

Commentary

55. Children enjoy physical activity both indoors and out and make good progress, so that it is anticipated that they will meet the expected goals by the end of the year. Teachers plan so that outside activities are structured to extend learning in the classroom. An example of this was seen when, after discussing an adventure walk that had taken place in the locality amongst the trees and by the river, children were asked to think of an adventure for the animals placed near the big bricks. Those who have continuous access to the outdoor play area use it well and make the most of opportunities for physical development so that they can learn to control their actions and use large apparatus safely. It is unsatisfactory that children in the Reception/Year 1 class do not have this same opportunity. The lack of ride-on toys for children restricts their physical development. In hall lessons, children pay good attention and are responsive to teachers' expectations. They stretch, curl and begin to plan sequences of movement. They move in different directions and teachers' use of language reinforces mathematical and positional vocabulary. Sometimes children are not aware of space sufficiently and tend to crowd together and bump into each other.

56. They have good understanding of health and safety matters and have been trained well in getting out and putting away equipment such as benches and mats. Children have good opportunities to develop fine motor skills in a variety of activities in the classroom. They use scissors, thread beads, build with construction toys and handle paint brushes, crayons and playdough confidently.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Good planning gives many opportunities for creativity in a variety of situations.
- Pupils are aware of the expectations and produce careful work.

Commentary

57. The activities planned in the Reception class allow children to develop their language and imagination well so that, by the end of the year, they will have made good progress and should have reached the expected goals in this area. Role-play is encouraged so that children can develop their imagination. This was clearly seen in a lesson where the focus was the bear's birthday. Children made a board from play dough and found small toys, which they used to act out the bear family's preparation. The home corner had been turned into a bear's cave and this was the centre of much animal role-play. Children enjoy singing, which is often a feature of a range of activities not necessarily connected directly with music lessons. They will tap out the beat and enjoy the rhythms of the music.

58. Children have opportunities to paint and to colour as well as to use scissors and make models. In one session, the teacher provided a variety of materials for junk modelling and children used them well showing that they understood how to use glue and to be imaginative in their making; string became smoke and tubes became motorcycle exhausts.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Standards throughout the school are below average in speaking, listening and reading, and well below in writing.
- A more consistent emphasis needs to be placed on developing pupils' speaking and listening skills.
- Poor resources and unattractive book areas do not encourage pupils to read.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to write at length, and there is no consistent approach to promoting their handwriting and spelling skills.
- The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, with a number of good lessons.
- The new subject leader has a good understanding of how the subject can be developed.
- Monitoring of teaching is underdeveloped.
- Literacy skills are not promoted enough across other areas of the curriculum.

Commentary

59. Not enough progress has been made in improving the provision for English. Not enough time is given to developing pupils' skills in the some classes, where literacy lessons are not timetabled each day. As a result, although pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall, some are not achieving as well as they could.

60. Standards in speaking and listening are below average throughout the school. A few teachers encourage careful listening and clear speech, but a more consistent emphasis is required to improve pupils' confidence and extend their vocabulary. As a result, many pupils are hesitant when speaking and lack an enriched vocabulary when explaining their thoughts. A number of pupils show poorly developed listening skills and lose concentration quickly. Many teachers are satisfied with short answers and do not encourage pupils to respond confidently to questions by discussing constructively and using appropriate specialist terms in different subjects. However, older pupils are frequently invited to talk openly in front of their classmates. This is effective in building their confidence, as seen in a drama lesson. Role-play and 'hot seating' was used in a Year 6 lesson to explore the feelings and actions of some of the major characters in Macbeth. Such techniques help pupils speak and listen appropriately to a larger audience besides learning about the conventions of a Shakespeare play. In such situations, pupils achieve well.

61. Standards in reading are below average throughout the school. Although pupils are encouraged to take reading books home, procedures to ensure they make satisfactory progress are not yet effective. Reading diaries are not kept up to date in all classes, and there is no consistent practice of recording pupils' progress. During the inspection, some pupils were reading books that were too easy or too difficult to develop their reading skills, and this mismatch has a negative impact on their achievements over time. The infant library, together with many book corners in classrooms, is unattractive, with limited choices of books, often in poor condition. This has an adverse effect on encouraging pupils to read. The main school library is not used sufficiently because library time is not planned into the school timetable. This is a current target in the school improvement plan.

Pupils, therefore, have limited opportunities to access information, which restricts their learning of research skills. Although reading standards are below average throughout the school, a number of pupils make good progress and achieve well by regularly practising their reading. Many teachers broaden pupils' reading experiences by promoting an author of the month, such as Berlie Doherty or Joan Aiken, and using guided reading sessions effectively. However, not all teachers are making the best use of the quiet reading sessions after lunch, which has a negative impact on pupils' achievements.

62. Standards in writing are well below average. The school has identified this as an area for development. In some classes, pupils are improving their handwriting through regular practice but this is not consistent throughout the school. Scrutiny of pupils' work indicates that they do not have enough opportunities to develop their writing skills through other subjects. Their progress and achievement are inhibited by the lack of opportunity to express themselves and develop good techniques for extended writing. Insufficient attention is given to extending simple sentences into compound sentences and to improving and editing their work. Many pupils have limited vocabulary, which inhibits them from writing imaginatively. Younger pupils learn to write sentences when they record their visit to Weston Super Mare, and they sequence events by rewriting a story about Katie Morag. Older pupils learn the conventions of poems, such as sonnets by Shelly, and Shakespearean plays such as 'Romeo and Juliet' and 'Macbeth', where they compare the use and effects of figurative language. In the best instances, punctuation and grammar skills are in line with national expectations but many fail to reach these standards. Spelling is often weak because there are insufficient opportunities given to use a dictionary or thesaurus to check spellings and enrich vocabulary. Many pupils' handwriting lacks fluency and good joins, and insufficient attention is given to good presentation.

63. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, though a number of good lessons and one very good lesson were observed. Pupils with special educational needs are often appropriately supported by teaching assistants and withdrawn for small group support. Teaching and learning are most effective in lessons where pupils are well motivated and challenged by a brisk pace of instruction and stimulating tasks. They respond to these lessons very well and show lively interest. They are very enthusiastic, particularly in drama lessons and role-play, where they are actively involved. In less effective lessons, expectations are too low, work is not well matched to the needs of pupils of different abilities, including those with special educational needs, and the pace of lessons is too slow. In such lessons, pupils lose concentration and are easily distracted, which has a negative impact on their achievements. Pupils' work is marked regularly but the quality of teachers' marking is variable, with targets to help pupils improve rarely identified.

64. Given the unsatisfactory provision made for English, leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory. The new subject leader is enthusiastic and has worked hard to identify key areas for improvement, but has no opportunity to monitor teaching and learning across the school. She has identified the need for a more systematic approach to planning and better use of assessment information to match work to the needs of different ability groups. She is well placed to develop the subject further and has sought advice from the local authority.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

65. The development of literacy skills in other areas of the curriculum is unsatisfactory. The quality of writing opportunities planned in other subjects, notably history, geography and religious education, varies widely between different classes. Some good cross-curricular links have been established in history, where pupils write reports and biographies, for example of the wives of Henry VIII. In general, though, too few examples of extended writing were evident in displays and the scrutiny of pupils' work. Some teachers do not ask questions that encourage longer and more thoughtful answers, and this limits the development of more capable pupils in particular.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The overall quality of teaching is good.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- The subject is well led and clearly focused on improving provision.
- Emphasis is given to developing pupils' numeracy skills.
- There is very little monitoring of teaching.
- The quality of marking and of feedback to pupils is inconsistent.
- There are limited opportunities for independent working and the practical application of mathematics.
- Weak literacy skills limit the progress of some pupils in areas such as problem solving.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to evaluate their own learning at the end of lessons.

Commentary

66. Standards in mathematics in both Year 2 and Year 6 are below average. However, in their work with number, many pupils are attaining satisfactory standards. In the 2003 mathematics tests, well over three quarters of pupils in Year 2 and three fifths of pupils in Year 6 achieved the expected standards. A small proportion of each year group achieved the higher levels. The number knowledge of children on entry to school is well below expectation. Overall, most pupils make satisfactory progress through the school, and older pupils achieve well. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by both teachers and learning support assistants, and they achieve at least as well as their peers. Girls and boys perform as well as each other. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 have been placed in 'sets' (groups of broadly similar ability). This system has been re-introduced so that work can be matched more closely to the needs of a narrower range of ability. Pupils with lower attainment are given more help and higher attainers are given more challenging work.

67. Since the last inspection, the school has maintained a consistent effort to raise standards in mathematics. Standards then were judged to be average, reflecting the nationally expected levels. In national tests since then, standards have generally lagged below those of other schools, but have shown improvement in the last two years. In Year 2, many pupils have developed satisfactory number skills, with a sound knowledge of place value, and are able to count on in tens. Many can also name common shapes, and can suggest and recognise them by their properties. Pupils continue to sharpen their numeracy skills as they move through the school. Many Year 4 pupils show a sound understanding of number bonds to 100, and some can use column addition of three digit numbers. Year 6 pupils showed real enjoyment and a sense of achievement as they enthusiastically worked with equivalent fractions and percentages when interpreting pie graphs that represented the different age structures in two towns.

68. A strong focus is placed on developing pupils' numeracy skills. This is reflected in their improved knowledge of the place value of digits to support their mental calculations of multiplication and division. They apply this to fractions, percentages and decimals. However, samples of pupils' work offered few examples of sustained work in other topics, such as line graphs, probability and measures. The development of problem solving skills, along with the greater application of mathematical skills in everyday situations, has been identified by the school as an area for development.

69. The quality of teaching and learning was good overall in the lessons seen, and very good in two upper junior lessons. Strengths of lessons include:

- * Teachers have good subject knowledge.
- * Correct mathematical vocabulary is used consistently.
- * Pupils are encouraged so they feel secure and contribute with no fear of failure.
- * Questioning is used well to challenge pupils and advance their thinking.
- * Learning support assistants give good support to pupils with special educational needs.
- * Pupils are encouraged to develop their own strategies to calculate their answers.
- * Resources and approaches, using the senses of sight, sound and touch, are effective in heightening pupils' interest and involvement.

70. In some lessons, the learning objectives are not shared clearly with the class at the outset, so they do not always understand what is expected of them. Lessons often end with a review (or 'plenary'), but pupils are not given enough opportunity at such times to review the lesson's targets and check their own progress. The use of computers to support mathematics is at an early stage of development.

71. The subject manager has provided good leadership as the school has successfully adopted the National Numeracy Strategy (NNS) as the main basis for planning. Selective use is made of commercial schemes to support topics and to aid assessment. A number of measures have been adopted in recent years, aimed at improving standards, such as:

- * The introduction of team planning in some year groups.
- * The development of setting in Years 3/4 and 5/6.
- * The use of NNS learning objectives to guide planning in Years 1 and 2.
- * The increasing consultations with the local authority's numeracy adviser.

72. The school aims to raise standards further by developing the use of interactive teaching programmes, and by developing pupils' mental strategies to support their understanding of verbal problems. The quality of marking is inconsistent, and does not always indicate to pupils how they can improve. A regular pattern of monitoring arrangements is not established to identify and share good practice.

Mathematics across the curriculum

73. Few examples were seen of mathematics being used as part of pupils' work in other subjects. However, these are likely to increase as the school's revised curriculum framework becomes embedded, and cross-curricular links between subjects grow.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Generally, pupils are achieving well in relation to their prior attainment.
- Good use is made of teachers' specialist knowledge in Years 5 and 6.
- Pupils' skills in scientific enquiry are not consistently promoted.
- There are no established procedures for tracking pupils' attainment and progress.

Commentary

74. There was little written evidence of work done by the current Year 2 pupils except for work on healthy eating. A scrutiny of this work and discussions with pupils indicate that standards in this particular aspect of science are average but that pupils' knowledge and understanding of other areas of science are below expected levels. Statutory teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 in 2003

indicate that all pupils achieved the expected level (Level 2), but that very few pupils achieved the higher level (Level 3). The current Year 2 entered the school with below average understanding of the world about them but pupils are achieving well in relation to their prior attainment. In discussion, pupils were able to talk about the need for a balanced diet and regular exercise in order to enjoy a healthy lifestyle.

75. Pupils in the current Year 6 are on track to achieve average standards by the time they leave the school. This group is more able and there are fewer pupils with personal and behavioural difficulties than was the case last year when standards in science fell sharply. Generally, current pupils are making good progress and achieving well in relation to their attainment at the end of Year 2. This is due to the good use the school makes of teachers' specialist knowledge in the subject in Years 5 and 6. However, planning for lessons does not consistently include more challenge for higher-attaining pupils. All pupils do the same tasks, and this restricts opportunities for higher-attaining pupils to reach their full potential.

76. In the lessons seen during the inspection, teaching and learning were satisfactory. Teachers have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the curriculum, and this is evident in their use of technical vocabulary, such as 'attraction' and 'repulsion' when Year 3 and 4 pupils learnt about magnetism. In most lessons, teachers enjoy good relationships with pupils, who are interested in the practical activities provided for them. Lessons have clear objectives and these are shared with pupils and evaluated at the end of sessions. In some lessons, teachers talk too much and activities are too teacher-directed. This results in pupils not thinking enough for themselves and making satisfactory rather than good progress. Teachers generally provide opportunities for pupils to carry out experiments, but analysis of work indicates that there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to plan their own investigations. The marking of pupils' work is supportive but rarely indicates what they need to do to improve.

77. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinator has only recently taken responsibility for the subject but has a clear idea of how provision and standards could be improved. These include:

- * More opportunities for pupils to carry out scientific investigations.
- * Greater emphasis on scientific vocabulary.
- * More open-ended opportunities and less teacher direction.
- * Introducing procedures for tracking pupils' attainment and progress in the subject.

78. The co-ordinator has enlisted the help of the local education authority's consultant in improving provision for scientific enquiry.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in ICT is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Significant improvements have been made since the last inspection to improve resources, including a new ICT suite.
- The ICT suite is not always effectively used, and working conditions are uncomfortable because it is very hot.
- Regular training has improved teachers' subject knowledge and confidence, ensuring that all aspects of ICT are well covered.
- The quality of teaching is good overall.
- The subject leader makes a considerable contribution to raising standards and pupils' achievements.
- The subject leader has no opportunity to monitor teaching and learning.

Commentary

79. Standards in ICT are in line with national expectations in Year 2 and Year 6, and pupils achieve well. Standards have significantly improved since the last inspection when they were reported to be below expectations and pupils made unsatisfactory progress. High priority and commitment have been given to raising standards. The new and very well equipped ICT suite gives pupils good opportunities to use computers and develop their skills. However, lack of ventilation leads to excessive heat so the suite often becomes uncomfortable to work in. During the inspection, the suite was not always used effectively, partly due to technical problems. This is an inefficient use of a valuable commodity and restricts pupils' opportunities to use and extend their ICT skills. Teachers' subject knowledge has significantly improved through on-going training, so that most teachers are now confident in providing pupils with a wide range of experiences.

80. Pupils are introduced to computers through structured and free activities. They learn to use the keyboard and mouse confidently to develop word processing skills. Junior pupils develop the use of e-mails by exchanging information with another school. By Year 6, many pupils can use a multimedia package to organise, refine and present a set of pages that incorporate images, sounds and text. They learn to enter instructions to control a screen turtle to create a flower.

81. The quality of teaching is good overall. This has a positive impact on learning and significantly helps all pupils, including those with special educational needs, to achieve well. Good teaching is characterised by good subject knowledge, well-planned and challenging activities that capture pupils' imagination to ensure they have positive attitudes. As a result, they make good progress in their learning. In less successful lessons, there is little or no adaptation of tasks to challenge all pupils, including the more able, which has a negative impact on their learning and achievement.

82. The subject is well led and managed. The subject leader has made a significant contribution to raising standards in the school. He is very supportive and gives his time freely to assist staff and provide training. He has introduced a new scheme of work to help teachers plan more effectively. However, he has no opportunity to monitor teaching and learning in lessons, which limits his effectiveness in raising standards across the school. He has identified the need for further training to include teaching assistants, to develop their skills and confidence, and the need for more resources to support pupils' learning. Assessment procedures are in place but this information is not yet used effectively to inform future planning.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

83. Satisfactory use is made of pupils' ICT skills in other subjects. For example, good use is made of the digital camera to produce portraits in the style of Andy Warhol in an art project. In religious education, pupils make good use of the internet to find information about Lent, and in history about the Tudors. There are good opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy and numeracy skills from an early age, using appropriate software and websites. However, during inspection, there was very little evidence of pupils' ICT work on display throughout the school, particularly in word processing.

HUMANITIES

Religious Education

Provision is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Pupils are encouraged to relate religious principles to their own attitudes and behaviour.
- Pupils show interest in the subject and build on prior learning.
- There is little evidence of knowledge of people of other faiths.
- There is little opportunity for writing in the subject.

Commentary

84. Standards of attainment by Year 2 and Year 6 are in line with those expected in the locally Agreed Syllabus, as they were at the time of the last inspection. Teachers' planning shows that the locally Agreed Syllabus is covered sufficiently. Teaching is satisfactory, with the best lessons being characterised by teachers' good subject knowledge and understanding. Active learning, where pupils make visits to local churches, listen to speakers who come into school and see artefacts from different faiths, is a successful feature of the teaching. Pupils enjoy these opportunities, being able to recount what they have learnt. For example, Year 3 pupils could describe a visit to the local church last year when they learnt how the font had been used as a bowl for washing clothes at one time. Pupils can build on their prior learning, as was shown in a lesson on symbols when pupils were able to relate a dove to the story of Noah, which they had heard previously, and use that knowledge to develop the theme of peace.

85. Pupils' knowledge and understanding is at a very low level when they enter school, but they quickly come to understand the religious concepts of how we might choose to live, and devise their own class code of behaviour towards one another. They show very good attitudes in caring and respecting each other and this contributes well to their personal development. They have opportunities to collaborate as seen when pupils in Year 2 spent time discussing with a partner why Easter and Christmas celebrations are different from Red Nose day and birthdays.

86. They are introduced to sacred books and hear stories from them. In Years 3 to 6, they learn about modern Christians, such as Martin Luther King, Mother Theresa and Nelson Mandela, and proudly tell about these in assembly. However, pupils do not know much about the major figures of other faiths.

87. The new subject leader is enthusiastic and has a clear vision of the needs of the subject, including development of writing opportunities and systematic monitoring and assessment of pupils' learning.

History and geography

Provision in history is **satisfactory**.

Four lessons were seen in **history**, but only two in **geography**. It is not possible to make an overall judgement about provision in geography.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Pupils respond well to the practical approaches, including visits, fieldwork and drama.
- There is good promotion of pupils' personal development.
- Good cross-curricular links support pupils' learning.
- Poorly developed writing skills limit the quality of recording.

Commentary

88. Standards attained in **history** in Years 2 and 6 meet national expectations. This maintains the standards noted at the time of the last inspection. All pupils achieve satisfactorily.

89. The lessons seen were in infant and upper junior classes. The quality of teaching was good overall. In a Year 6 lesson it was very good, and excellent in a Year 5 lesson. There were very good links made with English in both these lessons, involving some good quality discussion. Pupils were encouraged to offer original ideas and suggestions as to what Queen Elizabeth thought she would have to do when she came to the throne. Year 5 pupils enjoyed an inspirational lesson in which the teacher played the role of an Elizabethan kitchen maid. Good humour and strong relationships, and imaginative activities drawing upon drama, enabled pupils of all abilities to join in the activities. In both these lessons, pupils with special educational needs and lower attaining pupils were fully involved. They were well-supported and confident learners, making valuable contributions to the sharing of ideas. The standards attained by pupils were above average in these lessons. Overall, their limited skills in writing reduce the quality of pupils' presentation and recording in other areas of history.

90. Pupils' social and moral development is promoted well in these lessons, and in the visits that pupils make to museums and places, such as Montacute House. Visitors include naval officers so that pupils can compare life onboard ship today to that in Tudor times. The visits have a positive impact on standards of pupils' work.

91. There is a balanced curriculum in history and geography and topics are drawn from national guidelines. These are featured in the recently developed curriculum framework. Cross-curricular links are a growing strength of both subjects, and they contribute well to increasing pupils' understanding.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and Design

Provision for art and design is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Teachers plan a wide range of stimulating activities.
- Pupils in all years show keen interest and achieve well.

Commentary

92. Evidence from the lessons observed and scrutiny of work on display shows that pupils' attainment at the end of Years 2 and 6 has been maintained since the last inspection and is in line with the national expectations. Provision in the subject is good as the whole-school planning provides for a varied and interesting curriculum that promotes creativity and fosters pupil self-esteem. Teaching is good and pupils achieve well because of the high expectations and attention to detail.

93. Pupils are encouraged to evaluate their own and others' work so that, by Year 6, they are confident in expressing their ideas and opinions. In Years 1 and 2, pupils learn to mix colours and begin to develop an understanding of the use of light and dark shades to create effect. By Year 6, pupils' use of shade and tone has been developed to recreate moods, such as anger and sadness, in their own drawings using pictures like Picasso's 'Weeping Woman' as inspiration.

94. Throughout the school, pupils experience a variety of materials, such as clay, collage, box modelling, papier maché, paint and drawing. They are very enthusiastic and very interested in making things, as was seen when pupils in Year 2 were absorbed in making papier maché puppet heads, decorating them with paint, straws, string and wool to recreate Punch and Judy.

95. In Years 3 to 6, pupils continue to develop their skills and have good attitudes so that they can make the most of their opportunities. They are inspired by the work of other artists and learn about their individual techniques and style. This was clearly seen in Year 3/4 where pupils had looked at the nature sculptures of Goldsworthy and then created their own models. By the end of Year 6, pupils have been challenged by high expectations in teaching and a wide range of opportunities. These include experiments with a digital camera and computers to produce portraits and then use a colour wash and crayons to create pictures in the style of Andy Warhol.

96. The newly appointed subject leader is enthusiastic and has clear plans to develop the subject further, including a more systematic monitoring schedule throughout the school and more planned links with other subjects.

97. During the inspection, no lessons took place in **design and technology**. The only evidence of work on display was that in Year 2, where pupils were designing and making their own hand puppets using papier maché and various materials. This work was of a satisfactory standard. No judgement can therefore be made on overall standards, achievement, teaching and learning. Discussion with two new subject leaders indicates that a suitable scheme of work has been established to support the development of pupils' skills in various ways, often related to cross-curricular topics.

98. Only one lesson was observed in **music** so it is not possible to make a firm judgement about provision. However, evidence gained from talking to the subject leader, scrutiny of plans, listening to singing in whole school assemblies and talking to pupils, shows that the planned curriculum is covered and that pupils enjoy the experience of composing and performing and learning about composers. They sing in tune, and younger pupils show good control of pitch, dynamics and rhythm. Pupils hear music of modern and classical composers in lessons and in assemblies.

99. The newly appointed subject leader is enthusiastic and plans to build on the whole-school programme to ensure progression in learning through more systematic monitoring. Resources for the subject are satisfactory and there are good systems for sharing them throughout classes.

Physical education

Provision for physical education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Pupils' standards are in line with national expectations and they make satisfactory progress.
- Great emphasis is given to pupils working safely and handling apparatus correctly.
- The accommodation is good.

Commentary

100. Four lessons were observed, one in dance and three in gymnastics. Pupils displayed appropriate co-ordination and control in running, jumping, twisting and turning. A small number of pupils showed imagination in their movement and flare in their execution. However, the quality of pupils' work in general was only satisfactory. They showed increased confidence in repeating movements, but the quality of their work did not improve greatly by the end of lessons. Pupils enjoy physical activities.

101. Teaching is satisfactory overall, with some good teaching observed. Good consideration is given to safe working practices. Lessons are well organised and activities are appropriate for the ages of the pupils. They are appropriately paced to keep pupils' attention and interest. However, teachers' expectations for the quality of pupils' work are not always given sufficient emphasis until the end of lessons and through pupil demonstrations of what they have achieved.

102. The co-ordinator has only been in post for a short time and has yet to make an impact on the subject. However, she has clear ideas and intentions as to how she will carry out her role and responsibilities and is being supported well by the previous co-ordinator.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Personal, Social and Health Education

Provision in PSHE is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Staff use opportunities to reinforce the subject during assemblies and through displays around the school.
- There is a clear, well-planned and progressive curriculum that is followed throughout the year.
- Teaching is effective in promoting pupils' personal skills.

Commentary

103. The school sees pupils' personal development as an important part of its work. The policy includes drug awareness, sex education and citizenship. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) is taught as a separate subject, which is reinforced well throughout the curriculum. Class discussions (called 'circle time') are used successfully to help pupils develop their self-esteem and gain confidence in expressing their feelings in a safe atmosphere.

104. The co-ordinator ensures that regular circle time sessions take place and are planned according to the school's curriculum.

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	5
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	4
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	5
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
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	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
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	4
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).