

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ST. MARY'S C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Bridgwater

LEA area: Somerset

Unique reference number: 123784

Headteacher: Mrs Helen Whalley

Lead inspector: Mr Paul Nicholson

Dates of inspection: 15-18 March 2004

Inspection number: 257856

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary controlled <sup>1</sup>
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	259
School address:	Oakfield Road Bridgwater Somerset
Postcode:	TA6 7LX
Telephone number:	01278 422691
Fax number:	01278 431794
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Jacqueline Sims
Date of previous inspection:	March 2002

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St. Mary's School is an average-sized voluntary controlled Church of England primary school situated in Bridgwater. It serves a wide area with a mixture of privately owned and rented homes. Currently there are 259 pupils (129 boys and 130 girls) on roll aged four to eleven years. When children enter the school their attainment is slightly below that expected for their age. Almost all pupils are of white British origin; only 2 per cent are from minority ethnic groups. None speaks English as an additional language. Twenty per cent of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals, which is in line with the national average. The school has identified 5 per cent of pupils as having special educational needs, which is well below the national average. Three pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Need, which is close to the average for this size of school. The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school other than at the usual times of first admission or transfer to secondary school is similar to that found nationally. The school is a member of the Bridgwater Education Action Zone.

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<sup>1</sup> Because St. Mary's Primary School is a voluntary controlled Church of England school the inspection of collective worship is carried out under Section 23 of the Schools Inspections Act 1996 (Denominational Education) by the inspector approved by the Diocese and appointed by the governing body.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
25406	Paul Nicholson	Lead inspector	English Information and communication technology Design and technology Physical education Special educational needs
9446	Helen Griffiths	Lay inspector	
23221	Lynda Parkinson	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage Religious education Geography History
20097	John Griffiths	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Art and design Music Personal, social and health education

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

St. Mary's C of E Primary School provides its pupils with a **satisfactory** education. The overall quality teaching is satisfactory, and at times it is better. Pupils make steady progress in their learning and standards are average. This represents satisfactory achievement. The school is soundly led and managed. It provides satisfactory value for money.

#### The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and she has successfully addressed the serious weaknesses noted at the last inspection and standards have improved.
- It is a caring school and provision for pupils' personal development is good and so pupils have positive attitudes and are well behaved.
- Assessment procedures and their use in helping teachers with their planning are not fully developed and are unsatisfactory.
- Pupils' standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are below average.
- Children do well in reception and make a good start to their education.
- There is a well-planned curriculum, which is enhanced by a good provision for pupils with special educational needs and a good range of extra-curricular activities.

The school has made satisfactory progress since its last inspection. The key issues identified at that time have in the main been successfully addressed and the school no longer has serious weaknesses. Pupils' achievement has improved and is now satisfactory but standards in ICT and procedures for assessment continue to be issues for the school.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

#### Year 6 results

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

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

**Overall, pupils' achievement is satisfactory.** Children get a good start in the Foundation Stage. By the end of the reception, they reach the Early Learning Goals for their age in all areas of learning, including communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and in their personal, social and emotional development. In Years 1 and 2, pupils' achievement is satisfactory and standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science are average. This is an improvement on the last inspection. In ICT, standards are in line with national expectations. Standards in religious education are in line with those expected in the locally agreed syllabus.

Overall achievement is satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. In 2003, the high attaining group of Year 6 pupils made up lost ground from when they were tested in Year 2 and reached above average standards in their end of Year 6 tests. In the current Year 6, standards in English, mathematics and science are average. This represents satisfactory achievement for this group of pupils. Standards in religious education are in line with those expected in the locally agreed syllabus. In ICT, standards are below average.

The school's provision for pupils' **spiritual, moral, social and cultural development** is **good**. Consequently, pupils have positive attitudes towards school and their behaviour is good. Their rate of attendance is above the national average.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The school provides a **satisfactory** quality of education. Teaching is **satisfactory** overall. In the Foundation Stage, teaching is good and so children make a good start to their time in school. In Years 1 to 6, teaching is satisfactory and at times good and pupils make steady progress in their learning. The school provides pupils with a good range of learning opportunities. There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs, which helps these pupils make good progress towards their individual targets. Pupils are well cared for and there are good links with parents and very good links with the community, which support pupils' learning.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The school is **satisfactorily** led and managed. The headteacher provides good leadership and has been particularly successful in guiding the school out of the serious weaknesses identified at the last inspection. The governance of the school is satisfactory. Governors are supportive, carry out their statutory duties well and are developing a sound understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.

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

Parents are satisfied with the work of the school. Most feel their children like school and they are happy with the quality of teaching. A few expressed concerns about the information they received about their children's progress but this was found to be good. Pupils express positive views of the school. They feel they have to work hard and enjoy new activities in lessons. Pupils appreciate the help teachers give them and they know who to seek advice from if they have a problem.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- raise pupils' standards by the end of Year 6 in ICT;
- develop a more effective whole-school approach to assessing and recording pupils' progress in order to help teachers with their planning;
- raise the overall quality of teaching and learning so as to raise pupils' achievement through a greater proportion of good or better lessons.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

Achievement in the Foundation Stage is **good**, and in Years 1 to 6 it is **satisfactory**. Standards in the current Years 2 and 6 are **average**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have improved since the last inspection and are no longer a serious weakness.
- Children in reception do well and make a good start to their education.
- Standards in ICT are below average.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards their individual targets.

#### Commentary

1. At the time of the last inspection (March 2002), the school had serious weaknesses in the standards pupils attained by the end of Years 2 and 6. Pupils were underachieving and standards were below average in English, mathematics, science and ICT. The school has worked hard at addressing these weaknesses and overall standards are now in line with national expectations. The school no longer has serious weaknesses.
2. **Foundation Stage:** Children enter reception with a broad range of experiences and abilities. There are slight variations on attainment on entry between different year groups and this has an impact on the standards achieved in national tests as they move through the school. Overall, standards on entry are slightly below that expected for this age. Children make good progress and by the end of reception, most reach the Early Learning Goals<sup>2</sup> in each of the six areas of learning, including communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and personal, social and emotional development.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	15.5 (15.7)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	13.0 (15.2)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	14.8 (16.6)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 38 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

3. **Key Stage 1:** The trend in the school's average National Curriculum point score<sup>3</sup> for all subjects shows that the school's results in reading, writing and mathematics have been improving at a slower pace than those nationally. Results over the last three years show that overall standards have been lower than those found nationally. This contributed to the serious weaknesses in standards found in 2002. In 2003, standards in the end of Year 2 tests were average in reading, though fewer than expected reached the expected standard, and well below

<sup>2</sup> Early Learning Goals - these are expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage. They refer mainly to achievements children make in connection with communication language and literacy; mathematical development; personal, social and emotional development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical and creative development. There are many goals for each area of learning, for example, in language and literacy children should be able to write their own name and other things such as labels and begin to write simple sentences.

<sup>3</sup> The average points score provides schools with a single statistic to compare the overall grades attained by all of their pupils with the grades attained by pupils in another school as well as an average for all schools nationally. The National Curriculum level attained by each pupil, for example, in mathematics, is given a score. A Level 1 = 9 points, a Level 2 = 15 points, Level 3 = 21 points and so on. Therefore the average points score in mathematics is worked out by adding up all of the points based on the level attained by pupils and then dividing by the number of pupils who took the test. This means that a school whose average points score for mathematics in the end of Year 2 national tests is greater than 15.0 is one whose pupils are performing above that expected for their age. The average points score for Level 4, the nationally expected level for pupils at the end of Year 6 is 27.

average in writing and mathematics. These results did not compare favourably with those of similar schools. A key factor in the underachievement of this group of pupils was a significant disruption to their learning during the year.

4. Measures taken by the school, including changes in staffing and additional support and in-service training, have resulted in a significant improvement to the teaching and learning in Key Stage 1. As a result, standards in the current Year 2 are average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. This is an improvement on the standards seen at the last inspection and in the 2003 test results and represents satisfactory achievement for the pupils. Pupils' standards in ICT are in line with national expectations. In religious education, standards are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.2 (25.7)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	27.8 (26.0)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	29.5 (28.5)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 40 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

5. **Key Stage 2:** The school's results in national tests at the end of Year 6 prior to 2003 had been improving at a better pace to those nationally but at a lower level. The below average standards seen at the last inspection and in recent test results highlighted a serious weakness in standards and the underachievement of pupils in the core subjects. In 2003, test results showed a significant improvement with results in English, mathematics and science above average because over a third of pupils reached the higher standard, Level 5, in each of the tests. Pupils in this more-able year group made up lost ground from when they were underachieving in Year 2 and so their results compare favourably with those of similar schools<sup>4</sup>. This improvement was brought about by improvements in teaching and learning, particularly in providing greater challenge to the large number of more-able pupils in this year group.
6. Inspection evidence indicates that recent improvements to teaching and learning have been maintained and that pupils make satisfactory progress that accelerates towards the end of the key stage. Consequently, standards in the current Year 6 are average in English, mathematics and science. Standards are slightly lower than those gained in 2003 as there are fewer higher-attaining pupils in this group. However, pupils' achievement is satisfactory and this is an improvement on the last inspection. Standards in religious education are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. In ICT, standards have improved since the last inspection but remain slightly below national expectations. Improvements in teaching and learning have ensured all aspects of the subject are now taught but pupils have not had sufficient access to computers over time to fully develop their knowledge and skills.
7. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the school is currently much lower than in previous years. This reflects the way in which the school classifies pupils' needs. However, pupils identified as having special educational needs make good progress in English and mathematics. They achieve well in relation to their individual targets because of the good support they receive in the classroom and in small groups. This is an improvement on the last inspection. Those pupils who have difficulties maintaining good behaviour are well supported in lessons and make good progress towards their individual behavioural targets.

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<sup>4</sup> Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.

## Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **good**. Attendance and punctuality are **good**. Pupils' personal development is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils show good interest in learning, concentrate well and are enthusiastic.
- Their behaviour is good in lessons and around the school.
- Relationships between pupils and among pupils and adults are good.
- Pupils are very willing to take responsibility.
- Pupils show good levels of respect for one another's feelings and beliefs.
- The school has a positive ethos and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- The attendance rate has improved and is now above the national average.

### Commentary

- At all stages, pupils enjoy school and all it has to offer. Children in the Foundation Stage settle quickly into school routines and interact well with older pupils. Pupils have good attitudes to learning and want to do well. They are keen to enter into discussion. They listen well to the views of others, co-operate well and are trustworthy. They are supportive of one another and always respond well to teachers' expectations of them. Pupils are confident, friendly and polite.
- Behaviour is good throughout the school in lessons, assemblies and playtimes. Parents who attended the meeting with inspectors felt that behaviour had improved considerably in recent years. The school has addressed concerns in the last report about boisterous behaviour in the playground by introducing more playground equipment. The strategy has been successful and behaviour at playtimes during the inspection was consistently co-operative and friendly. In the questionnaire, parents were satisfied that behaviour was good. Pupils respect their teachers, who offer them very good examples of courtesy and fairness. School rules are agreed with pupils and written in the prospectus so that both pupils and parents are clear about the three-stage sanctions system. In discussion, pupils appreciated the rewards and sanctions and felt they were treated fairly. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and consequently pupils are very well aware of how they should behave and fully understand the difference between right and wrong. No bullying or harassment was observed during the inspection and pupils know what they should do if it should occur.
- Exclusions:** There were three fixed-period exclusions last year for poor behaviour, the first for some years. Procedures were correctly followed.

### Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi

### Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
254	3	0
1	0	0
1	0	0
1	0	0
1	0	0
1	0	0

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

11. Pupils are enterprising and respond well to the many good opportunities for taking responsibility. For example, Year 6 pupils help in the reception classes during Friday's Golden Time and many Years 5 and 6 pupils volunteer to act as playground counsellors. Relationships between pupils and adults and among the pupils themselves are good and this security gives pupils confidence to ask questions and put forward their ideas. Pupils are keen to take part in school activities and participation in extra-curricular activities is very good.
12. The ethos of the school and the social and moral development of the pupils are good. Pupils behave with consideration for others. They have a well-developed sense of how their behaviour might affect others. A variety of imaginative awards, such as the 'Wobbly Heart' each week for the tidiest classroom and attendance awards for individuals and classes encourage a strong sense of community. Pupils are very supportive of one another. In discussions, pupils particularly liked the atmosphere of the school. The school council, house system and clubs make a real contribution to pupils' sense of responsibility. Pupils are encouraged to think of others through raising funds for charities.
13. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. Pupils have good opportunities to reflect on their own feelings and beliefs and the beliefs of others through religious education and assemblies. The vicar takes assemblies each week and pupils take part in services in the local church three times a year. There are also good opportunities for pupils to record their private thoughts in *Think Books* and their public thoughts in the *Golden Prayer Book*, which is used in assemblies. Pupils' cultural development is good. For example, pupils have worked with the local arts centre for several years, regularly visit Bristol for concerts and plays and multicultural weeks are held in school each year. A teacher regularly gives talks to pupils about the Indian way of life and pupils in Years 5 and 6 learn French. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to learn about the diversity of cultures in modern Britain.
14. Attendance has been improving steadily over recent years and is now above the national average. This is a considerable improvement on the finding of the last inspection. However, the rate of unauthorised absence is now above average because of a change in the method of recording holidays taken in term time. Punctuality is good. The school monitors attendance well, with good support from the Educational Welfare Service.

#### Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	4.3	School data:	0.7
National data:	5.4	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 for its pupils. Teaching and learning are **satisfactory** and the curriculum is **good**. The school takes **good** care of its pupils and there are positive links with parents and the community.

#### Teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching is **satisfactory** and at times good. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 make **satisfactory** progress in their learning. Learning is better in the Foundation Stage, where teaching is **good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- There have been many improvements in the quality of teaching since the last inspection.

- Good teaching in the Foundation Stage ensures children make a good start to their time in school.
- Pupils with special educational needs are taught well and make good progress.
- Teachers make effective use of support staff to help pupils in their learning.
- Whole-school procedures for assessing and recording pupils' progress are unsatisfactory.
- Although satisfactory overall, teaching is not effective enough to ensure good or better learning across the school.

## Commentary

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 30 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0 (0%)	3 (10%)	15 (50%)	12 (40%)	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.*

- The school has worked hard since the last inspection to improve the quality of teaching and learning. There has been rigorous monitoring of teaching by the headteacher and a good programme of whole-school in-service training. Although teaching overall remains satisfactory, there have been several significant improvements that have helped to address the serious weaknesses in pupils' standards. These include:
  - no unsatisfactory teaching was observed during this inspection;
  - teaching in the Foundation Stage has improved and is now good;
  - planning for high-attaining pupils has improved;
  - teaching of pupils with special educational needs is now good;
  - the quality of marking has improved;
  - good use is made of homework to support pupils' learning.
- Teaching in the Foundation Stage ranges from satisfactory to good and overall is good. Children, as a result, make good progress in all areas of learning. Teachers ensure a good balance between adult-led activities and learning through exploration. Staff have high expectations but at times this leads to activities that are more suitable for older pupils. The school is currently addressing a barrier to children's learning through the building of a specific outdoor area for reception children intended to support teaching in all areas of learning.
- In Years 1 to 6, teaching is satisfactory and at times good and better. During the inspection, teaching ranged from satisfactory to very good. In the better lessons, there is a brisk pace and clear learning objectives, which are shared with the pupils at the start of the lesson and reinforced at the end. Activities are well planned, with a good balance between teacher input and practical activities that meet the needs of all groups of pupils. Consequently, learning is good and pupils gain good levels of confidence. An analysis of pupils' previous work indicates that teaching in literacy and numeracy is satisfactory and so pupils make sound progress in their learning. In other subjects seen teaching and learning are satisfactory. The exception is in ICT. Lessons observed during the inspection were satisfactory and teachers are beginning to make satisfactory use of computers to support learning in other subjects. However, teaching over time has not been sufficiently effective to raise pupils' standards to the expected standard by Year 6.
- Teachers throughout the school successfully promote inclusion and equality of opportunity. They manage the pupils well and value the contributions of the pupils and so attitudes and relationships within the classrooms are good. Pupils feel the teachers give them help when they are stuck and listen to their ideas. Teachers make effective use of the support staff. The special educational needs teacher and learning support assistants are well deployed and work effectively alongside the teachers in supporting the inclusion of all pupils in classroom activities.

In particular, they help pupils with special educational needs to make good progress towards their individual targets.

19. Teachers have made a good start in addressing weaknesses in whole-school assessment procedures identified at the last inspection. On a day-to-day basis, a useful marking policy is now in place and pupils' work is regularly marked. The quality of marking in literacy and mathematics has improved and is now good. Helpful comments, individual targets and effective procedures that encourage older pupils to assess their own writing help pupils to have a good understanding of how they can improve. Assessment procedures to show what pupils can do and what they need to learn next are at an early stage of development. In mathematics, there is a good system that is helping teachers in the planning of activities. The school correctly recognises that procedures in other subjects, particularly English, are not sufficiently well developed to help teachers plan more effectively.
20. Strengths in the teaching outweigh the weaknesses. However, there is scope to improve teaching and learning through increasing the proportion of good and better lessons and the sharing of good practice noted during the inspection in the good and better lessons. In lessons that are satisfactory, the teachers do not always clearly identify what it is they want the pupils to learn so as to provide a sharp focus to the lesson. Lesson objectives are sometimes too broad or the small steps required to reach the objective are not clearly planned. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not always accurate so activities do not meet the precise needs of all groups within the class. On a few occasions, activities do not sufficiently challenge or extend pupils' learning, and at other times activities are too challenging and so limit learning. As a result, the teaching is not sufficiently well focused to ensure better than satisfactory learning. In the main, teachers who teach similar aged pupils plan together well. However, at times they do not plan together in sufficient detail to ensure that all pupils always get the same quality of experiences.

## The curriculum

The school provides a **good** curriculum for its pupils. There are **good** opportunities for enriching pupils' learning opportunities. Overall, accommodation and resources are **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum for reception children and pupils in Years 1 to 6 caters well for the needs of the pupils.
- A good, well-planned range of extra-curricular events enriches pupils' learning.
- The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is good and meets their needs well.
- The provision for personal, social and health education is good.
- Cross-curricular links are insufficiently developed between subjects.
- Outdoor activities for children in the Foundation Stage are limited by the current lack of a specific outdoor area to support their learning.

### Commentary

21. In the Foundation Stage, a good curriculum is in place and activities and experiences are relevant for the age of the children. This supports the good progress children in reception make. The curriculum is well planned in all areas of learning other than for physical and outdoor provision. This is because the planned outdoor area is not complete and this impacts negatively on all areas of learning. It is not possible at present to arrange an 'outdoor classroom' that caters for all areas of learning. Current building work is intended to rectify this in the very near future.
22. The curriculum for pupils in Years 1 to 6 is good and clearly meets the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy are securely in place and this has helped the recent improvements in standards. There is a good programme for personal, social and health education, including elements of citizenship. The subject is

effectively taught through weekly 'circle time'<sup>5</sup> lessons and activities, such as assemblies. Suitable attention is given to drug awareness education and statutory requirements for religious education and sex education are met. This has a positive impact on pupils' good personal development.

23. The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is planned well to meet their needs. Good quality individual education plans provide suitable short-term targets and these are regularly reviewed. As a result, these pupils' needs are well met, allowing them to make good progress according to their ability.
24. There are many well-attended clubs that take place at lunchtime, after school and other times that all enhance learning. Lunchtime clubs include accelerated mathematics where pupils in Year 6 are able to enhance their numeracy skills. A French club was started and the initiative has resulted in French being taught during lessons time. There are also booster lessons<sup>6</sup> for Year 6 after school. A history club meets in the spring term. A wide range of extra-curricular arts and sports activities enhances the curriculum. These include well-attended clubs for singing, recorder and guitar groups, gymnastics, football, netball with rounders and cricket in the summer term. A gardening club helps to keep the attractive areas around the school neat and tidy.
25. Some very effective cross-curricular links, which enhance pupils understanding, are being made when lessons are being planned. For example, in the planning of the science topic on forces for Year 2 pupils, good relevant links are made to use the skills of numeracy, literacy and ICT. However, this very good example is not a consistent practice across the school.

### Care, guidance and support

The provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is **good**. The provision of support, advice and guidance based on the monitoring of pupils' achievement is **satisfactory**. The involvement of pupils through seeking and acting on their views is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The induction arrangements for children in reception are good.
- There are effective procedures for health and safety, child protection and first aid.
- All adults know pupils very well and provide good levels of care.
- Systems for monitoring pupils' personal development and academic standards and progress are unsatisfactory.
- There is good support for pupils with special educational needs.
- The involvement of pupils in the school's work is good.

### Commentary

26. There are good arrangements for children when they start at the school. The arrangements include preliminary visits to the school by both children and parents. A Foundation Stage teacher visits all playgroups and nurseries and links with the nearby nursery are very good. Parents and children felt well prepared for their new experience.
27. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs are well supported by the learning support assistants and the local education authority's Behavioural Support Unit, which provides good assessment and guidance. Individual educational plans are thorough and give clear targets.

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<sup>5</sup> During Circle Time pupils discuss a wide range of personal and general issues. It is agreed by all pupils that no interruptions should occur and only one person at a time will speak. Respect for other pupils' views will occur at all times and therefore pupils feel confident that they can talk with ease and free from any form of interference of interruption from other children.

<sup>6</sup> Booster classes provide additional help, normally in literacy or numeracy, to small groups of pupils in order to raise their achievement

28. The school has good health and safety procedures. Child-protection procedures are now in place, which is an improvement on the last inspection. The special educational needs co-ordinator is the designated person for child protection and for pupils in public care and she and the deputy headteacher have recently been trained. All members of staff receive periodic training and are very aware of child-protection issues. They have good guidelines and keep logs of concerns. There is good co-ordination with social services for those pupils in public care. Arrangements for the administration of first aid and for monitoring pupils' medical conditions are good and a good number of staff has been trained in first aid. Supervision at lunch and play times is good and supervisors have been trained in encouraging beneficial play. A satisfactory annual health and safety audit is carried out. Risk assessments are regular and thorough and health and safety practice is good throughout the school.
29. Parents felt strongly that their children were well supported and cared for. There is a strong bond of trust between pupils and all adults who work in the school. Nearly all pupils who responded to the inspection questionnaire felt there was at least one adult to whom they could turn for advice. Adults know the pupils very well. However, there are weaknesses in monitoring pupils' personal and academic progress. Personal development is monitored only through class notes and reports. There is no systematic monitoring. Systems for monitoring academic progress are new and not fully effective in helping teachers' planning in all subjects and providing continuity between year groups. On a day-to-day basis, teachers provide pupils with helpful advice on how to improve.
30. Pupils' views are sought consistently through the school council, circle time and assemblies. This has resulted in improvements to resources available for pupils to use at playtimes. Pupils in their questionnaire felt confident that their views could be heard and acted upon.

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

The school's links with parents are **good**. Links with the community are **very good** and there are **good** links with other schools.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school provides parents with good information.
- There are good links with other local schools through sport and the Education Action Zone.
- The school has very good links with the local community.
- There are good links with parents of children with special educational needs.
- Parents support their children's learning.
- A significant number of parents are dissatisfied with the information on their children's progress.

### **Commentary**

31. In a low return to the questionnaire, parents and carers expressed that they were satisfied with nearly all aspects of the work of the school. They were particularly pleased with the leadership, teaching, extra-curricular activities and homework. Despite parents' concerns, information provided for them was found to be good. The prospectus and governors' annual report to parents are well presented and very clearly written. Regular newsletters are lively and helpful. They keep parents well informed of events and teachers are always available for informal consultation at the end of the day. The induction pack for pupils in the Foundation Stage includes a good home/school assessment profile and at the induction meeting, parents are shown a delightful collection of children's first reactions to school. Class teachers provide parents with good information about what their children are to learn. Reading diaries throughout the school and homework books for Years 5 and 6 are used well by both parents and teachers. Annual written reports on pupils' progress are good: they are crisply written and set targets.
32. The support given by parents to their children's learning at home is good. All parents have signed the home/school agreement. The parent-teacher association runs a good range of social and fund-raising activities and raises very good sums to buy equipment to support

children's learning. A small number of parents help in school on a regular basis. Parent governors are very well involved in the life of the school.

33. Attendance by parents at consultation meetings and school performances is good, although attendance at curriculum meetings and the governors' annual meeting is not high. The school regularly seeks parents' views through questionnaires on target setting, homework and behaviour. Parents are involved early in any behavioural issues. Links with parents of children with special educational needs are good.
34. There are good links with the local secondary school through sports and through regular visits to drama productions. The secondary school has provided good assistance with the teaching of French at St. Mary's. There are good links through the Educational Action Zone with the local Beacon School and with other local primary schools, including two local special schools.
35. The school has very good links with the local community. For example, the church magazine contains written contributions from pupils and the vicar, curate and other parishioners are regular visitors. Pupils visit the local hospital, garden centres and the arts centre. Community police officers and the fire service visit regularly. Older members of the community come into school to talk to pupils about life in Bridgwater during the war. The school has benefited from donations from local businesses.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership, management and governance are **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The leadership of the headteacher is good.
- The headteacher has a very good vision of the development of the school.
- The leadership of the chair of governors is good.
- Governors give good support.
- The school improvement plan is not strong enough.
- Co-ordinators' roles are developing but have not had time to develop fully.

### **Commentary**

36. There have been a number of improvements since the last inspection in the leadership and management of the school. The leadership of the headteacher is strong. Her clarity of vision, sense of purpose and her high aspirations for the school are very good. The chair of governors is very efficient and knowledgeable and is an asset to the management of the school. Governors have given good support to the school to enable it to overcome its difficulties and to progress effectively. The headteacher and governors have tackled the school's weaknesses successfully in a short time and the school has improved. It no longer has serious weaknesses and now provides a satisfactory quality of education for its pupils. The headteacher's monitoring of teaching and learning is rigorous and has had a strongly beneficial effect on the school's improvement. The governors and staff of the school are totally committed to the success of the school. Following the improvements in the last two years, the school is well placed to further improve.
37. The governing body ensures that statutory duties and roles are well fulfilled. The school is committed to the inclusion of all pupils in all its activities. Procedures for the implementation of performance management are firmly in place. A number of governors are new to their posts and the governing body as a whole has worked hard to acquire knowledge and understanding of how the school works. There are a number of examples of good practice in place of how governors familiarise themselves with the aims and workings of a school. Governors are not yet using this knowledge and understanding to ask challenging questions of the headteacher and staff in positions of responsibility in order to form their own judgements about the strengths

and weaknesses of the school. They are therefore not in a position to influence the direction of the school or the school improvement plan sufficiently well.

38. The headteacher motivates and leads other members of staff as one team. The senior management and co-ordinators have well defined positions and responsibilities and are moving into leadership roles. Morale is high. There has been good professional development for all staff. This has been particularly effective because the school took the decision that any in-service training should be for all staff so that the training would have maximum impact and cohesion on school improvement. Senior management and co-ordinators act as good role models for other staff and pupils alike. They do not, however, have sufficiently well developed roles to impact strongly on their subjects and school standards. There is still scope for senior management and co-ordinators to develop their leadership and management skills further so as to form effective teams across the school to further improve teaching, learning and standards.
39. The school improvement plan is satisfactory. It focuses on priorities and has clear links with performance management and the school's good self-evaluation. It is focused, however, on how its priorities are to be managed rather than on the leadership and strong direction in which the school is to go. In planning for the future, its targets and success criteria are not clear or sharp enough to help staff and governors in guiding school improvement and monitoring its progress.
40. Finances and resources are managed carefully and prudently. The principles of best value are satisfactorily adhered to. A recent audit of the school's controls stated they were very good. The carry-forward for 2003 is slightly high but prudent in the face of fluctuations in the number of pupils on roll and planned building works. Given its circumstances and context, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

### Financial information

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	668,056
Total expenditure	674,993
Expenditure per pupil	2,411

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	62,789
Balance carried forward to the next	55,852

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

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

The overall provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **good**.

41. Children get a good start in the Foundation Stage. They enter school at a point slightly below that expected for their age. They achieve well and many children are likely to attain the levels expected of them in all areas of learning by the time they are ready to leave reception. A number of children are likely to have exceeded beyond this level in communication, language and literacy and in mathematical development.
42. Teaching ranges from satisfactory to good and is mainly good. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The activities provided for the children in both classes are imaginative, interesting, worthwhile and make learning fun. Teachers have high expectations. There is a good balance between directed teaching and child-led learning. In both classes, staff do not intervene and interact enough in child-initiated activities in order to support and develop children's ideas, thoughts and incidental learning. Provision for children with special educational needs is good. Parents are given good early morning opportunities to find out how their children learn in school and other frequent opportunities to learn about their children's progress.
43. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are satisfactory overall. The teacher and support assistant in each class work together very well and in each class there is a good team approach. Support assistants make a very valuable contribution to children's progress. This teamwork is not as effective across the two classes. Therefore there is some lack of cohesion in the Foundation Stage. The teachers plan together regularly but often, however, they do not plan together in sufficient detail to ensure that all children always get the same quality of experiences in all areas of learning. The national record of achievement for children in reception is filled in very conscientiously. Both teachers have a number of good ways of assessing the children's achievements in detail but not all strategies are shared between the two classes.

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

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

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

- Teachers and support staff have high expectations.
- The indoor learning environment is well organised and interesting.
- Children sustain concentration and work hard.

#### **Commentary**

44. The children make good progress in this area of learning and achieve the Early Learning Goals because the quality of teaching is consistently good. The children work in a well-ordered and stimulating environment. They settle quickly and feel secure because of good induction arrangements. There are good procedures to talk to parents about their children at the very beginning of their school lives, which contribute to the good relationships between staff and children. Staff know the children very well and have high expectations, and so children's behaviour and attitudes are very good. Staff are skilled in knowing how young children learn effectively and there is a strong emphasis on learning through play as the national guidelines recommend. They plan a good range of activities, which lead to sustained interest and concentration from the children and a strong desire to learn.

### **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Beneficial activities are provided across all areas of learning to develop children's language and literacy skills.
- Activities are imaginative and develop good levels of interest.
- Every opportunity is taken to develop children's vocabulary.

### **Commentary**

45. Teaching in this area is good and most children achieve the Early Learning Goals. There are good opportunities for children to develop their speaking and listening skills in all areas of learning, which reinforce their language and literacy development. The quality of teaching is good. Teaching and activities are well integrated to include aspects of more than one area of learning so that there are many opportunities for the development of language to flourish. Staff constantly use good questioning skills to develop children's speaking and vocabulary. Writing is taught effectively and children are making particularly good progress in this aspect. When children are in the role-play area there are good opportunities to reinforce their writing skills. The older reception children write independently, making good efforts to spell correctly and use simple punctuation. Younger children are also beginning to understand where capital letters and full stops go and spell frequently used words correctly. Children are learning to recognise the shape and sounds of the letters of the alphabet. All children know how books work and a good number are reading school reading scheme books with some understanding. Older reception children know the purpose of the contents page.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The quality of teaching is good and emphasises learning through practical activities.
- Mathematical skills are developed in many areas of learning.
- There are helpful weekly mathematics diaries.

### **Commentary**

46. The good quality of teaching of practical activities helps children to achieve well and most achieve the Early Learning Goals. The organisation of resources in the practical activities is good; for example, the price of objects is usefully shown by 'stick on coins' that the children can match. Activities from other areas of learning are used well to teach mathematics. Photographs of the digging and making of a pond were used well to teach children to understand the importance of ordering and sequencing correctly, and discussions are helpful in developing children's vocabulary. Both classes involve parents in their children's learning. They have mathematics diaries to take home weekly, which give parents good guidance on what to do with their children and which vocabulary to develop.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good teaching provides children with many opportunities to learn about the world around them.

### **Commentary**

47. Teaching and learning range from satisfactory to good and are mainly good and many children reach the Early Learning Goals for this area. Children are given a wide variety of opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world. These included opportunities for cookery and baking, visits to a local hospital and walks around school and the grounds for differing purposes such as 'sound walks' and to use the gardening area. There is good

equipment for gardening and this helps the children to learn about wormeries and drainage as well as planting and growing. Children's vocabulary and understanding of language develop through suitable discussion and questioning, which make the children think hard. Their explanations show their good understanding of what is happening. Children have been given an enthusiasm for gardening and for small beasts. They are now fascinated by worms, in contrast to disliking them previously. Occasionally, some topics are pitched at too high a level, such as that of Florence Nightingale. In religious education, children are taught following the locally agreed syllabus and gain a satisfactory understanding of the main festivals of the year. During a lesson watching a baby being bathed and cared for, children asked many thoughtful questions and were very aware of the need to be gentle. They learn about other cultures such as the Chinese New Year through dressing up or making special foods. Children in both classes use computers and have sound knowledge of their use and have suitable keyboard skills for their age.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children make good progress in using small tools.
- Outdoor provision is not satisfactorily in place but current building work is intended to address this weakness.

### **Commentary**

48. Children's skills in handling pencils, brushes, and other small tools are progressing well because of good teaching in the use of small tools. Good assessments ensure any area for development, such as being able to use knives for spreading butter correctly, are highlighted. Children are given time in the school hall for physical education but this is pitched at too high a level for the age of the children. Plans are at an advanced stage to develop an outdoor area to provide better accommodation for young children's physical development and control. Children reach most of the Early Learning Goals in this area of learning.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in creative development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is effective teaching of direct skills.
- Children have good opportunities to learn through play.

### **Commentary**

49. Children have good experience of mixing colours and paint. They are taught the skills needed in using implements and small tools. They enjoy painting their own portraits and making simple collage pictures. Older children regularly take part in planned music making lessons with adults, slowly building up their knowledge and exploration of percussion instruments and gaining a positive attitude for music. Occasionally, these lessons are pitched a little too high for their level of attainment. There are well-planned opportunities for children to play imaginatively in role-play areas. Overall, teaching in this area of learning is good and most children reach the Early Learning Goals.

## ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have improved since the last inspection.
- Assessment strategies are not effective enough.
- Learning support assistants provide good support in lessons.

### Commentary

50. At the time of the last inspection standards in English were declining and were below average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. In the 2003 national tests at the end of Year 2, standards in reading were average and in writing they were well below average. This group of pupils had a disruptive year due to staff changes and this resulted in underachievement, particularly in writing. With more stable staffing and improvements to teaching, standards in the current Year 2 are average in reading and writing and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. In 2003, national test results at the end of Year 6 were above average because of the higher than normal proportion of more-able pupils who gained the higher standard, Level 5. In the current Year 6, standards are average and this represents satisfactory achievement for the pupils. Standards by the end of Years 2 and 6 are in line with national expectations and overall achievement is satisfactory. This is an improvement on the standards reported at the last inspection.
51. Standards in reading are average. Pupils' learning and their achievement in using sounding-out strategies and word building in order to work out unknown words when reading have improved since the last inspection. Pupils' skills in reading fluently are now what would be expected for their age. Through well-managed group reading sessions, pupils satisfactorily develop their comprehension of more complex language and their ability to explain detailed plots and characters used in fiction is sound. Pupils know a suitable range of authors, have satisfactory library skills and skim and scan non-fiction texts when seeking information. Pupils are given suitable opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills, including the effective use of discussion partners in many lessons. Pupils throughout the school listen attentively and many speak confidently, though for a significant number their vocabulary is limited.
52. Standards in writing have improved and are now in line with national expectations. Teachers rightly place a strong emphasis on grammar, spelling and punctuation. More confident pupils develop their ideas on paper and begin to write confidently and imaginatively. They make satisfactory use of ICT to type, edit and print text. In some classes, writing skills are consolidated through work in other subjects, such as science and history.
53. The quality of teaching and learning ranges from satisfactory to good and is satisfactory overall. Common strengths within the teaching include the effective management of pupils and deployment of support staff. Consequently, pupils are attentive and well behaved in lessons. Learning support assistants are deployed well in helping pupils with difficulties and in providing challenging activities for higher-attaining pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are given effective support and so make good progress towards their individual targets. Pupils' work is marked regularly with constructive comments that help pupils understand what they must do to improve. In the best lessons, there is a brisk pace and activities are well chosen to match the needs of different groups of pupils, ensuring that all make good progress in their learning. In less effective lessons, though satisfactory, activities do not always ensure that all groups make suitable progress. Teachers do not always set out clearly the small steps required to achieve what it is pupils are to learn.
54. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinators share a realistic understanding of the subject's strengths and weaknesses based on satisfactory monitoring of pupils' work. The recent focus on reading, including regular group reading sessions, new reading diaries and a wider range of reading books, have had a positive impact

on raising standards in reading. Teachers use a range of procedures for assessing pupils' progress but currently this does not provide a satisfactory whole-school approach to monitoring pupils' progress in order to help teachers plan more effectively.

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

55. There are many effective opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy skills in other subjects. Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to use a wide range of writing styles in science, history and geography from labelling diagrams to expressing the viewpoint of a Roman invader. Effective use is made of non-fiction texts linked to other subjects in literacy lessons. Pupils are encouraged to read both fiction and non-fiction books, which are included in their 'book bags'.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision for mathematics is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards have improved since the last inspection.
- The curriculum provides a good range of learning opportunities.
- ICT is not used sufficiently to support learning in mathematics.
- Insufficient use is made of mathematics in other subjects of the curriculum.

### **Commentary**

56. Standards at the last inspection were below average at the end Year 2 and 6. In the 2003 national tests at the end of Year 2, standards were well below average and pupils were underachieving. The school has addressed this weakness and standards in the current Year 2 are average. In the end of Year 6 tests in 2003, standards were above average because a third of pupils reached the higher standard, Level 5. In the current Year 6, which has fewer higher-attaining pupils, standards are average. Pupils' current work shows quite clearly that they achieve satisfactorily and make steady progress as they move through the school. Pupils who have special educational needs achieve well due to the good support they receive. This is due to the mainly satisfactory or better teaching throughout the school. Across the school pupils can satisfactorily apply their mathematical skills to problem solving. This is a significant improvement since the last report and reflects the good management of the subject and the committed efforts of the school over the past two years to raise standards. Teachers are good at getting pupils to develop a confident approach in using their mathematical skills.
57. All teachers show good knowledge and a confidence in teaching the National Numeracy Strategy. Pupils have a good range of mathematical experiences in all areas of the subject, including number, shape and measurement. A good feature of the numeracy hour is the ways in which teachers motivate and develop pupils' mental skills. Overall teaching is satisfactory, and during the inspection it ranged from satisfactory to very good. Where lessons were good or better, they continued at a brisk pace, had a clear focus and teachers were good at establishing and reinforcing what pupils had learned at the end of each session in order to plan for the next lesson. Teachers set appropriate challenges for the higher attaining pupils and all ability groups are given work to fully extend their capabilities. The atmosphere in all lessons observed is one of interest and enjoyment and pupils readily apply themselves to their tasks. Teachers are not making sufficient use of ICT in mathematics, such as in the collection, display and interpretation of data.
58. Marking is good and in most classes teachers make constructive comments that help the pupils to improve and know what to do next. Teachers set high expectations for pupils' achievement and support staff give invaluable help and encouragement to pupils with learning difficulties. Lessons are evaluated well and assessment procedures are effective in helping to establish if the learning objectives are appropriate for all abilities in the class.

## **Mathematics across the curriculum**

59. Pupils make insufficient use of their mathematical skills in other subjects. While some measurements are made in science, opportunities to use and develop mathematical skills when surveys are carried out in science and design and technology are missed. The collected data is not sufficiently displayed in graphs and interpreted to consolidate and improve pupils' learning.

## **SCIENCE**

The provision for science is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards have improved since the last inspection.
- Investigative skills are good throughout the school.
- There are good examples where cross-curricular links are made, but this is not a consistent practice throughout the school.

### **Commentary**

60. At the last inspection standards in Years 2 and 6 were below average and progress was unsatisfactory. In 2003, teacher assessments showed that achievement in Year 2 remained unsatisfactory as fewer pupils reached the expected level than is normally found. The 2003 results in end of Year 6 national tests were above average because of the proportion of pupils reaching the higher standard, Level 5, in this high-attaining group. Standards attained by the current Year 2 and Year 6 pupils are average. The majority of pupils are working at the expected level for their age and some pupils are working at the higher levels of attainment. This represents satisfactory achievement. This is an improvement on the last inspection, when achievement was unsatisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in relation to their ability because of good levels of support in lessons.
61. The quality of teaching and learning in science is satisfactory overall. During the inspection, satisfactory and good teaching were observed. As a result, pupils make satisfactory progress throughout the school. Teachers in all years teach science with a high proportion of practical and investigative activities, which have a clear focus in teachers' detailed planning. As a result, pupils are developing a secure understanding of living things, materials, forces and light and sound. They are learning to predict what might happen when they investigate and to explain why things happen in their results
62. The marking of science books is a particularly strong feature of teaching. Detailed comments are made in books, not only to encourage effort but also to suggest how pupils can achieve better results. Another strong feature of the teaching is the way learning support assistants are well briefed by teachers before the start of lessons. They help to keep pupils with special educational needs interested and motivated by asking and clarifying questions to make them think.
63. Teachers work hard to ensure that the correct scientific vocabulary is used in lessons and that pupils understand what the words mean and put them into context. There are examples of good cross-curricular links in science, for example an infant class is investigating forces and the teacher has sensibly linked activities in literacy, numeracy, ICT, and also physical education. However, this is not a consistent practice throughout the school.
64. The management of the subject is good and there is some useful monitoring of teaching and learning. Test results are carefully analysed to pinpoint areas of weakness. Consequently, the provision for the subject has improved since the last inspection.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in ICT is **unsatisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards by Year 6 are slightly below national expectations.
- Resources have improved since the last inspection.

### **Commentary**

65. At the time of the last inspection, standards were 'broadly average' in Year 2 but below average in Year 6. Older pupils had low standards in all aspects of the subject as a result of insufficient opportunities to use computers. Progress was slow because of a shortage of computers. Currently, standards are in line with those expected nationally at the end of Year 2 and slightly below those expected at the end of Year 6. This is similar to the situation at the last inspection. However, evidence indicates that the provision has improved, teaching is satisfactory and many areas of weaknesses in pupils' learning have been addressed. Achievement remains unsatisfactory as not all of the gaps in pupils' standards identified at the last inspection have been fully addressed by Year 6.
66. The subject is satisfactorily led and managed. Since the last inspection, the number of computers has increased to national levels and so pupils have more 'hands-on' experience. The range of software has improved. Pupils now complete activities in all strands of the subject, including data handling, monitoring and control. However, older pupils have not had sufficient opportunities to fully develop their skills in using desktop publishing, multimedia presentations, spreadsheets and in sequencing instructions and monitoring events. So, although standards are improving, they remain slightly below national expectations.
67. Teachers' confidence in teaching and using ICT, including digital projectors, has improved through effective whole-staff training. The use of projectors has allowed whole-class teaching to take place. In the lessons observed during the inspection this resulted in satisfactory learning of new skills because of the teachers' secure subject knowledge. It takes a long time for pupils to practise new skills, as this is dependent on access to the classroom computers during other lessons and activities. Consequently, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to practise and develop their knowledge and skills fully.
68. Assessment of pupils' progress is at an early stage of development and does not provide sufficient information on what pupils can do and what they need to learn next. Useful ICT logbooks have been introduced, in which pupils record what they have done. This is beginning to give them a better understanding of what they can do and how they can improve.

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

69. This is satisfactory overall. A number of effective uses of ICT were noted during the inspection but there were also a number of missed opportunities for computers to support pupils' learning. Good use was made of a digital projector to show younger pupils how their word processing and graphics skills could be used to support their learning in recording, during a literacy lesson, a science experiment on forces. In another lesson, pupils' graphic skills were used well to develop their understanding of the artistic style of Mondrian. Teachers are beginning to identify when and how ICT can be used to support pupils' learning. At present, they do not make full use of the digital projectors to support their teaching or the classroom computers to provide opportunities for pupils to consolidate and extend their computer skills in a wider range of activities.

## HUMANITIES

### Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject is enriched in a variety of ways.
- Assessment is not well developed.

#### Commentary

70. By the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils' standards are in line with those expected by the locally agreed syllabus and they achieve satisfactorily. Evidence from pupils' previous work, talking to Year 5 and 6 pupils and the two lessons observed shows that the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. By Year 2, the pupils have a satisfactory understanding of the significance of the main Christian festivals and some of the important festivals in other world religions, such as Hanukah. They gain an appropriate understanding for their age of the importance of symbols, including light, and of rituals in world religions, such as the painting of Rangoli patterns. Pupils in Years 2 and 3 gain a good understanding of the concept of pilgrimages and journeys. This is well illustrated through the story of the Menorah. As pupils move through the school, they gain a satisfactory knowledge of parables and stories from Christianity and other world religions. By the time pupils are in Year 6, they have satisfactorily based factual knowledge. They know about the traditional artefacts and significant symbols relevant to Christianity and Hinduism. Their understanding of the Creation, however, is very confused.
71. The subject is made more relevant and interesting in a number of ways. There are close curriculum links with history in Years 5 and 6 when pupils study a topic on famous people, such as Mother Teresa and Nelson Mandela. Aspects of writing are particularly well used and ICT is satisfactorily used to research and illustrate learning. Performances by theatre groups and visits to the local church to take part in the role-play of a wedding and a baptism enhance pupils' learning. The use of good quality displays around the school supports teaching and learning well.
72. The quality of provision has not changed significantly since the last inspection. The subject is satisfactorily managed. The co-ordinator is very new to the responsibility for the subject and has not been able to fully evaluate the subject. Assessment in religious education is not well developed and the quality of marking of pupils' written work is very variable and does not always help pupils understand what they know about the subject.

### Geography and History

73. The inspection sampled pupils' previous work in geography and history, with one lesson observed in history and none in geography. Samples of work show pupils have satisfactory knowledge and teachers use suitable methods and strategies. Pupils' work in Year 6 is carefully and well presented in both subjects, indicating pride in their work. Pupils' work shows that teachers have secure knowledge in these subjects. They supplement lessons with practical experiences that help pupils to understand and empathise with peoples of the past. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 dressed as Romans and learned what it was like to be part of a Tortuga.
74. The analysis of pupils' work and the co-ordinator's files demonstrate that pupils satisfactorily research from videos and books. They write from different viewpoints about, for example, the reasons for differing peoples invading Britain. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. There is less evidence of the use of historical language. There is little evidence in the sample of work of teachers closely matching tasks in lessons to the needs of different groups of pupils. In the one lesson observed in history, teaching was good and pupils achieved

well by researching information on Spartans and Athenians from selected extracts. There were good links with literacy in the lesson when the teacher led a reading group whose material was also based on the Ancient Greeks.

75. In geography, there is detailed and well presented work on rivers and the water cycle and on the local features and environment. Class books on certain topics, such as the local town, are well put together and show the pride of pupils and staff in their work.
76. Samples of work in history and geography show good links with literacy and satisfactory links with ICT. In both subjects, the range of different types of writing is good but the quality of marking is very variable.

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

These subjects were not a focus for the inspection. No lessons were observed but samples of pupils' work in art and design and design and technology were seen. As a result, it is not possible to make overall judgements on the provision in these subjects.

### **Art and design**

77. No lessons were seen in art. There is colourful and well-executed work displayed in classrooms, corridors and in the hall. The work on display shows that pupils receive the full range of the art curriculum. Apart from painting and drawing, there are satisfactory examples of colourful textiles and clay, as well as typical examples of mixed media. It was possible to see some work of pupils in Years 5 and 6 at the end of a lesson in which pupils had been looking at work by L. S. Lowry. They painted a background suggesting a sunset and then, with shapes of black and grey paper, they stuck on an urban landscape. Their work shows satisfactory skills in colour mixing and application, together with sound cutting skills. One pupil used tabs on his silhouettes to give a three-dimensional effect.

### **Design and technology**

78. Little work was available to show pupils' practical making skills. Samples of models made from recycled materials by younger pupils and sewing completed by older pupils indicate satisfactory making skills. Photographic evidence of other models shows a satisfactory range of activities and suitable materials being used, but it was not possible to judge the quality of pupils' making skills. Pupils' planning shows they are taught to make a range of artefacts, including model vehicles, pamphlets and photograph frames, using suitable materials and techniques. Their simple sketches are labelled and lists of materials are added. Pupils write satisfactory evaluations of their work. Their plans and evaluations show a steady progression through the school, but they do not make sufficient use of measurements, tally charts and graphs to show the results of their work and develop their mathematical and ICT skills.

### **Music**

79. Music was not a focus for the inspection but there is evidence to show that activities satisfactorily cover the music curriculum. Pupils have good attitudes towards singing. The whole school sings with enthusiasm during assemblies and in hymn practice. There is a wide variety of clubs that enhance pupils' learning through playing recorders, guitars and brass instruments.

### **Physical education**

80. It was not possible to judge pupils' physical skills as no lessons were seen. The school has a satisfactory programme of activities that includes dance, gymnastics and games. There is a suitable programme for swimming for pupils in Years 3 to 6. The school reports that standards in swimming have improved since the last inspection and that most pupils swim to the

expected standard by the time they leave the school. There is a good range of sporting clubs that enhance the curriculum. Pupils take part in a good number of inter-school games and tournaments with a good degree of success in football, netball and rounders. These activities make a positive contribution to pupils' social development.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school provides good opportunities for pupils to develop their personal and social skills.
- Pupils develop a good understanding of living in a community.

### **Commentary**

81. The school has a good programme to promote personal, social and moral welfare as well as health education. It is well organised and complements the wider curriculum. Lessons are planned well so that pupils can confidently express their thoughts and feelings. In the two circle time lessons seen during the inspection, teaching was good. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 pupils were very positive when asked to comment on their classmates. Their comments reflected the harmonious nature of the school.
82. The school provides good opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding of growing up in a community. These include older pupils carrying out duties around the school and the recently introduced school council. Council members from each class show good levels of responsibility and are pleased in what they have achieved in providing playtime games for their classmates. Pupils are very supportive of one another, showing that their social and moral development is good. For example, when a pupil is attempting to achieve a target for saying multiplication tables all the other pupils in the class listen with interest and cross their fingers while the pupil is saying the table. There is widespread and genuine disappointment if a pupil does not succeed.
83. Pupils are given good opportunities to discuss how they feel and have created an interesting anthology of poems on the themes of 'love' and 'fear'. Pupils consider those communities in the world that are in need. They take part in many community activities, such as raising funds for the local hospital, and sunflower challenge was used to raise money for the blind. The school council has been instrumental in selecting charities to be supported and in organising fund raising.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>4</b>
Pupils' achievement	4
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>3</b>
Attendance	3
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>4</b>
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	5
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
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
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	3
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).*