

INSPECTION REPORT

MENDIP GREEN FIRST SCHOOL

Worle, Weston-super-Mare

LEA area: North Somerset

Unique reference number: 109102

Headteacher: Mr B G E Dale

Lead inspector: Dr C Lee

Dates of inspection: 8th – 11th December 2003

Inspection number: 260584

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 8 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	539
School address:	Greenwood Road Worle Weston-super-Mare North Somerset
Postcode:	BS22 6EX
Telephone number:	01934 513791
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr C Flint
Date of previous inspection:	June 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Mendip Green is a large First school for pupils aged four to eight with 539 pupils on roll. There has been a drop in numbers this year but this will be reversed next year when the school will once again be over-subscribed. Pupils are taught in four reception classes and five classes in each of Years 1 to 3. Additionally, a specialist unit for pupils with hearing impairment is located at the school. This has places for eight pupils and although it is currently full, only four pupils actually have a hearing impairment. In total, there are 111 pupils with special educational needs, covering a very wide range of specific requirements including learning, emotional, behavioural and physical difficulties. There are ten pupils with statements of special educational need. This is an average proportion for primary schools but the overall proportion with special needs is above average. Over 95 per cent of the pupils are from a White British background. The proportion claiming free school meals is about average. Two pupils have English as an additional language but have no specific needs relating to their English language acquisition. When starting at the school, reception children's overall attainment is close to the average for the local education authority. It is a school that has special status as a partner school in initial teacher training and it has recently received an Investor in People award.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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9999	Ms R Orme	Lay inspector	
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20645	Ms R Webber	Team inspector	Art and design Design and technology Foundation Stage Special educational needs
2756	Mr M Barron	Team inspector	English Information and communication technology Religious education English as an additional language
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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	8
Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	11
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	15
OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES	16
The provision for pupils in the hearing impaired resource base	
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS	18
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	33

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Mendip Green is an effective school that provides good value for money. It has made substantial improvements in recent years under the headteacher's strong leadership. Staff work very effectively as a united team and are highly committed to ensuring that all pupils receive a high quality of education that fully meets their needs. In doing so, they have successfully created a large school with the intimate, supportive atmosphere and ethos of a small school. Pupils' standards rise steadily and, by the end of Year 2 and the end of Year 3, levels of attainment reflect good achievement by all pupils.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher provides very good leadership and management.
- Throughout the school, standards are above average in information and communication technology (ICT), art and design, design and technology, music and dance.
- Standards in the fluency and range of vocabulary used in speaking are below average in Years 1 and 2.
- Levels of attendance are poor but in every other respect pupils' personal development, including behaviour and attitudes, is very good.
- The provision for pupils in the hearing impaired resource base is very good and that for other pupils with special educational needs is good.
- The quality of teaching is good and helps pupils to raise standards and levels of achievement.
- Outdoor provision for children's physical development in the Foundation Stage is unsatisfactory.
- The accommodation has several unsatisfactory features that have a negative impact on the overall quality of education.
- There are very good links with the local community and very good partnerships with other schools and colleges.

The school was previously inspected in June 1999. The areas then identified as weaknesses have now improved significantly under the headteacher's very good leadership. The very good influence and support of the governing body and the whole school determination to succeed have also had significant impact on improvement. The quality of teaching has risen with improved subject knowledge and the development of effective procedures for assessment. Results in national tests in English and mathematics at the end of Year 2 have risen at a faster rate than has occurred nationally. Standards have also risen markedly in information and communication technology.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
Reading	C	C	C	C
Writing	D	D	C	C
Mathematics	C	E	C	C

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average
Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals.*

By the end of Year 2, all pupils achieve at least what should reasonably be expected of them and the majority, including those with special educational needs, **achieves well**. Standards in Year 2 are average in reading, writing and mathematics; they are above average in information and communication technology, art and design, design and technology, music and dance and average in all other subjects. This picture is the same for pupils in Year 3, but with higher standards in science and history, which are above average. The one area of weakness of pupils in Years 1 and 2 is their

speaking skills, which are below average. Children in the Foundation Stage are making good progress. They are on track to achieve all the goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception and, indeed, to exceed the goals in their personal, social and emotional development and also in their creative development.

The quality of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good**. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good, but their attendance is poor, being well below the national average. Pupils' relationships with others are very good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is **good**, reflecting good teaching and a good breadth and balance of learning opportunities in the curriculum. Teaching has improved considerably since the last inspection. It now results in good quality learning by pupils, especially in the Foundation Stage and in Year 3.

The school shows good concern for the care, health and safety of pupils. There is a high level of quality support for pupils with special educational needs both in mainstream classes and in the specialist facility for pupils with a hearing impairment where provision is very good indeed. The school works well with parents, providing good information about their children's education and how they can help. Links with the community, and with other schools and colleges, are very good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The headteacher's leadership and management of the school are **very good**. They focus on raising standards through improved quality of teaching, ensuring good management by all key staff and most of all through a commitment to teamwork involving all members of teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils, parents and governors. Improvements are managed very well by this teamwork approach and are overseen by very effective procedures used by senior managers, subject co-ordinators and governors to monitor and evaluate the school's progress. A good governing body oversees school development very effectively, with high levels of commitment by individual governors being a strength of the school. The governors ensure that the school meets statutory requirements.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents particularly appreciate the fairness with which all pupils are treated. There is good appreciation of the ways in which the school has improved in recent years. Pupils are very positive about the school and enjoy their learning.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- continue to work towards improvement in pupils' attendance;
- raise the standard of pupils' speaking skills in Years 1 and 2 by increasing opportunities for them to organise what they say and extend the vocabulary used in all subjects;
- as finance permits, develop the outdoor facilities that can be used for children's physical development in the Foundation Stage;
- work with appropriate authorities to improve the overall quality of accommodation and external facilities.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Pupils are **achieving well**. Standards overall are at least in line with what is typical in other schools. Information and communication technology (ICT) and the creative arts are major strengths and standards in these areas are above average in all age groups.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In comparison with past attainment, pupils' achievement is often higher than expected.
- Standards in ICT, art and design, design and technology, music and dance exceed those found in most schools.
- Standards in speaking are below average in Years 1 and 2.
- Year 3 pupils' standards in science are above average.

Commentary

1. On entry to the school, children's attainment is broadly average, being only slightly below the average for the local education authority as a whole. However, this level does vary from year to year and the pupils now in Year 2, for example, were below average overall when they started school. The children in the current reception year have settled well and are making good progress. They are on track to exceed the early learning goals that are set for the end of reception in their personal, social and emotional development, and in their creative development. Their achievement is good overall for they are also on track to achieve all the goals in language, mathematical and physical development as well as in their knowledge and understanding of the world.
2. In Years 1 and 2, pupils continue to achieve well with standards rising to above average standards in several subjects by the time they reach the end of Year 2. The pupils in Year 2 are on track to attain above average standards by the end of the year in ICT, art and design, design and technology, music and dance. Standards in reading, writing, mathematics, science, history, geography and religious education are average. However, pupils' skills in speaking are a weakness in Years 1 and 2. Although they listen well in lessons, responses to questions and contributions to discussions are usually very limited and do not use the range of vocabulary that is expected at these ages.
3. The 2003 national test results at the end of Year 2 show very good improvement in writing and mathematics on the previous year. In the tests overall, there has been an upward trend for several years. Results over the last five years have improved more than has occurred nationally. The results in reading, writing and mathematics now match those in all schools nationally and are also at the average levels being achieved in schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. A particularly good improvement is evident in science in which teachers' assessments place pupils at above average standards compared with all schools and with similar schools. The school is setting realistic targets for pupils' performance in the national tests. Results in 2003 were very close to the targets but of particular note are the percentages gaining the higher-than-expected Level 3, which exceeded the targets in reading, writing and mathematics.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.7 (15.9)	15.9 (15.8)
writing	14.8 (13.6)	14.8 (14.4)
mathematics	16.5 (15.6)	16.4 (16.5)

There were 138 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

4. Pupils continue to achieve well when they are in Year 3. Their standards are above average in science, ICT, art and design, design and technology, history, music and dance. This compares favourably with the last inspection as standards have improved in art and design, design and technology and dance. Standards are average in reading, writing, mathematics, geography and religious education. Since the last inspection, particular emphasis has been placed on improving the level of achievement of more able pupils because they were judged to be underachieving in writing and science. This priority has been addressed successfully and far more of these pupils are now achieving their potential as a result of teachers' good planning for this and, indeed, other ability groups.
5. There is a significant proportion of pupils with special educational needs in each year group. These pupils achieve well because their work is planned around the specific targets that have been set in their individual education plans. These short-term targets are constantly referred to by support staff working with these pupils, either in class lessons or for short periods away from the classroom. The good quality of this support is a major reason for the pupils' good achievement. The few pupils with English as an additional language no longer need specific support and they match the good achievement of their classmates.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils take great interest in all the activities the school offers.
- Behaviour is very good.
- Pupils' personal development is very good.
- Attendance is well below the national average.

Commentary

6. Pupils are eager to take part in lessons and all the other activities that the school offers. They are keen to learn and usually concentrate well. Pupils were thrilled to take part in a Christmas performance. Nearly all parents report that their children like school.
7. Overall, behaviour is very good. Good, and sometimes very good, behaviour, is a feature of many lessons. The occasional lapse in behaviour often comes from pupils who are expected to sit still and listen to the teacher for too long a period. Behaviour is very good in the playground, in assemblies and around the school. The behaviour of Year 3 pupils at play and lunchtimes is particularly commendable as they have a very restricted playground space for their recreation. More than 90 per cent of parents consider that pupils behave well, and few express concerns about bullying. There are very good relationships between pupils and a complete absence of any racist attitudes.
8. Pupils' personal development is very good. Nearly all parents think that the school helps their children to become mature. Pupils talk to visitors with polite confidence. The school provides

many opportunities for pupils to reflect, to develop spiritual awareness and to understand other people's values and beliefs. Pupils respond very well and display good spiritual development. Pupils are carefully taught to distinguish right from wrong, and to consider the needs of other people. The school promotes the social development of pupils well. For example, pupils are confident enough to stand up in assembly to talk about awards they have received, although they sometimes do not speak loudly enough to be heard. Pupils are given many opportunities to learn about their own and other people's cultural traditions. The Comenius Project that has linked the schools with partners in Sweden, Italy and France provides valuable enrichment to the curriculum and enables pupils to gain a European perspective. During the inspection, pupils were learning about other Christmas traditions through gifts sent by the partner schools.

Attendance

9. Attendance, at 91.3 per cent, is well below the national average. It has fallen since the last inspection. A small number of pupils with very poor attendance have been referred to the education welfare service but the support currently provided by the service is not as frequent as the school needs. A number of other pupils are kept away from school for holidays longer than the permitted ten days. Few pupils have high levels of attendance. Unauthorised absence is below the national average. The school has secure registration procedures to record the number of pupils present. Parents are often reminded of the need to bring their children to school regularly. However, the school acknowledges that it needs to develop more effective strategies to improve the attendance of all pupils. Punctuality is satisfactory.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	8.7
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.1
National data	0.4

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

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

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

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
511	1	0
7	0	0
5	0	0
4	0	0
1	0	0
3	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.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a **good quality of education** through good teaching and a broad, balanced and well-planned curriculum. Provision in the creative arts is a strength of the school.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is **consistently good** throughout the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching is raising pupils' levels of achievement and their standards across the curriculum.
- The development of pupils' speaking skills is not given enough attention.
- Pupils enjoy learning and this is due to teachers' good understanding of how pupils learn best.
- Teachers in Year 3 consistently match learning activities carefully to the needs of groups of pupils of differing abilities but this is more variable in Years 1 and 2.
- Support staff make a very positive contribution to pupils' learning through good teaching and thorough knowledge of the pupils' with whom they work.
- In English and mathematics, information from assessment is used well in the planning of the next stage in pupils' learning.

Commentary

10. The quality of teaching shows marked improvement compared with the last inspection with a far higher proportion that is now good or better. Good, supportive monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning by the headteacher, senior managers and English and mathematics co-ordinators have contributed to the improvement. Above all else is the willingness of teachers to learn from each other in their year group teams and to improve the quality of the learning activities planned for pupils. The effectiveness of collaborative planning is particularly evident in Year 3, where there is a high consistency in thorough planning and the good use of marking to inform pupils about how they can improve their work.
11. A consistently good feature of teaching is the use of support staff who provide good guidance to the pupils with whom they work. This is a result of the thorough briefing they receive from the class teachers. In particular, such staff are vital to the progress of pupils with special educational needs. These knowledgeable staff are helping the pupils to make good progress, especially in English and mathematics. Good progress is also evident in the few pupils with English as an additional language. None currently require specialist support from visiting teachers. They have very positive attitudes to learning and receive good general support from school staff and other pupils. High attaining pupils are given appropriately challenging learning activities, most notably in English and mathematics, and the above average standards that they maintain reflect good achievement.
12. Where teaching is at its best, it inspires pupils to work harder than ever before and makes them want to achieve the high level of challenge that has been set for them. The very good teaching of a geography lesson in Year 3 and a dance lesson in Year 2 were products of teachers' high levels of subject expertise combined with very good understanding of the methods and strategies that stimulate successful learning. Crucially, the learning activities were imaginative and enjoyed by the pupils. This strongly motivated the pupils to want to learn. The brisk pace in these lessons was always controlled by continuous assessment of how well pupils were learning, with on-the-spot changes to the lesson plan if they were necessary for individuals or groups. Many learning activities in different subjects had a Christmas theme and this captured interests and occasionally led to high levels of achievement. A Year 2 science lesson required pupils to construct an educational game in which making an electrical contact

with a picture to another with the correct word for that picture resulted in a bulb lighting up. Excited learners in a class with a high proportion of less able pupils applied knowledge of electrical circuits and insulation of conducting materials with great success, achieving way beyond what really could reasonably be expected of many of them.

13. Weaknesses in the procedures for assessment of pupils' learning were evident at the last inspection. The school has made good improvement in this area, establishing clear policy and practices and teachers incorporate the information from assessment in their planning of pupils' future learning. This is now well developed in English and mathematics. However, the school continues to place high priority on developing this work further and it is included as a major target in the current school improvement plan. The need to extend procedures to other subjects is acknowledged and a good lead has been set by the team of Year 3 teachers in their collaborative planning of science that identifies what is working well and what needs developing through analysis of the information arising from regular assessment of pupils' learning.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 67 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	8 (12%)	39 (58%)	20 (30%)	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 curriculum

The curriculum provided by the school is **good** and prepares pupils well for the later stages of their education. The match of teachers to the needs of the curriculum is good and the school's support for learning outside the school day is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides a good breadth of learning opportunities for all pupils.
- Pupils are prepared well for transfer to the next stages of their education.
- The match of teachers and support staff to the curriculum is good.
- The school's accommodation is presently unsatisfactory.
- Opportunities for learning outside the school day are good.

Commentary

14. The curriculum for children in the school's reception classes has good breadth, is well balanced and promotes the nationally required areas of learning well.
15. Curricular provision for pupils in Years 1 to 3 is broad, contains good opportunities for enrichment and also meets all the requirements of the National Curriculum, the locally agreed syllabus for religious education, drugs awareness and sex education. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been well implemented and both literacy and numeracy are promoted effectively in other subjects. Concerns raised by the previous inspection regarding weaknesses in the systematic development of pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding in physical education and art and design have been fully addressed. The creative arts in particular, but also humanities subjects, along with well-planned provision for personal, social and health education, now make a significant contribution to pupils' personal development from an early age and the school prepares pupils well for the next stages of their education.
16. Teachers and teaching assistants form strong and effective teams which ensure good achievement throughout the school. One result of this level of co-operation is the sharply

focused and successful support for pupils with special educational needs. Good co-ordination of this provision ensures thorough understanding of each pupil's specific needs, and of the targets set for them, by all teaching and non-teaching staff, and ensures that the pupils achieve as well as their classmates. At the time of the last inspection it was judged that special educational needs pupils did not have the same equality of opportunity as other pupils because they were withdrawn from lessons. Although the school has gone some way to addressing this issue by restructuring the timetable so that pupils do not miss the same lessons throughout the year, there are, however, still times when pupils miss key parts of whole-class lessons, such as the literacy hour, and this reduces pupils' experiences in order to gain new knowledge and understanding in other subjects. At present, no strategies are being used to inform pupils of what they have missed. Opportunities are also missed for teachers, teaching assistants or other pupils to communicate key points.

17. Pupils benefit from a good range of additional curriculum opportunities for this stage of their education, which enrich their learning outside the classroom. There are several well-attended clubs on offer and activities include many sporting and musical opportunities. Parents feel that the school now provides a far better range of off-site visits than at the time of the previous inspection and feel that the school's recent trip to Oldbury was, quote, '*fantastic*'.
18. Even though new school buildings have been planned with construction set to begin in the near future, the school's present accommodation is unsatisfactory and a constraining factor in delivering the National Curriculum. The school is presently accommodated in two main buildings situated some way from each other, the oldest of which is used as the main Year 3 base and is quite isolated from the accommodation used by other year groups in the school. Some of the older, temporary classrooms are in a poor state of repair and show their age by leaking in water when it rains. In addition the Year 3 library is small and difficult to use as it is presently situated in part of a converted cloakroom and the Year 3 playground is small and cramped and unsuitable for the number of pupils using it. Furthermore the Foundation Stage classes presently use an unfenced area of the playground as their outdoor learning area and this is unsuitable for a number of reasons, including issues regarding safety and security. Playground surfaces are poor. The school site as a whole is under-used as an educational resource. This is due in part to the school's tolerance of the incorrect assumption by local residents that a public right of way crosses the site. However, the school recognises that the security fencing being erected offers opportunities for the curriculum to be enhanced by improved external facilities.
19. The school is well resourced for teaching nearly all aspects of the National Curriculum and resources for teaching ICT are especially good. Effective links between different year groups in the school and also between the school, local playgroups and also the local junior school help pupils transfer smoothly between different stages of education because these links enable the curriculum at each stage to build successfully on what pupils have experienced in the past.

Care, guidance and support

Pupils are cared for, guided and supported **well**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The Breakfast Club and the pupil/parent support worker make a significant contribution to the well-being of pupils.
- Pupils enjoy very good relationships with staff.
- There are two health and safety concerns.

Commentary

20. The Breakfast Club is very well run and provides a calm and positive start to the day for those pupils who attend. The pupil/parent support worker makes a significant contribution to the emotional well-being and personal development of the pupils who come under her care. She provides a useful line of communication between pupils, parents and the school. The school has effective child protection arrangements.
21. Relationships within the school are very good at all levels. Staff are very good role models. Pupils receive good pastoral care; staff know pupils and their families well. Almost all parents consider that staff treat pupils fairly. There are good induction arrangements and pupils are prepared well for the transfer to junior school. Parents agree with these judgements. Educational guidance, in the form of setting appropriate targets for individual pupils, is less well developed. The school does not have a formal council to canvass pupils' views, but the headteacher listens well to what pupils have to say.
22. The arrangements for some Year 3 pupils to eat their packed lunch are unsatisfactory. Eating lunch whilst sitting on carpet squares means that appropriate standards of hygiene cannot be guaranteed. There is no lighting on the path between the two sites and this causes concerns for staff working before and after school in the winter. In all other respects the school ensures well the health and safety of pupils, staff and visitors.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school works hard to achieve an **effective** partnership with parents.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are very good links with the community and other schools.
- The school provides very good information for parents.

Commentary

23. The school has very good links with the local community and other schools. There is close liaison with a Beacon school so that very good practice can be shared. This has helped the school to develop ICT and better ways to manage behaviour. The school also plays an active part in the local cluster of schools in discussions about curriculum. Some of these close links have continued to build on the liaison created by the former education action zone. The close connection with the local junior school ensures the smooth transfer of pupils at the end of Year 3. Other links have a more pastoral focus. For example, the headteacher is invited to play the piano for pre-school events. Pupils are taken on a number of educational visits using the good contacts that the school has developed. During the inspection pupils took part in a Christingle service at a local church. Through the Hearing Impaired Resource Base the school maintains excellent links with the Royal National Institute for the Deaf. The pupil/parent support worker also has close links with similar workers in other local schools.
24. The school provides parents with very good information about their children's progress. Reports are clear and comprehensive, and parents are given two formal and many informal opportunities to discuss their children's progress. The school's 'open door' policy is appreciated by parents. Parents of pupils attached to the Hearing Impaired Resource Base have an excellent partnership with the school, and parents of pupils with other special educational needs are also given useful guidance on how to help their children at home. Nearly all parents report that they feel comfortable about approaching the school with concerns, and that they feel well informed about progress. Nearly 90 per cent of parents consider that the school seeks their views. The school has appropriate systems for dealing with concerns and

complaints. Some parents do not support the work of the school by ensuring the regular attendance of their children.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall quality of leadership and management is **good** and that by the headteacher is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership style of the headteacher is very good.
- Very good deputy headteachers work very effectively with the headteacher and other staff.
- The governance of the school is good with many governors demonstrating a significant commitment.
- Teamwork at all levels is constructive and supportive.
- The school has effective systems for managing all aspects of school life.
- Leadership in foundation subjects is variable due to inconsistencies in the arrangements for co-ordinators to monitor and evaluate pupils' standards and the quality of teaching.

Commentary

25. The governance of the school is good with many individual governors demonstrating a high level of commitment to the school's work and direction. They have a well-defined structure of committees and individual responsibilities that are conscientiously carried out. All governors carry out a curriculum responsibility very diligently. They report directly on standards, teaching and learning which are seen as central to all the decisions of the governing body and this is a considerable strength. Many governors bring considerable experience and talent to the governing body and there is a strong collective will to see the school succeed. Another area of strength of the governance of the school is the continuity that governors provide through steady membership, with many visiting the school regularly to assist with monitoring tasks and contributing fully to the life of the school. The governors ensure that the school fully meets statutory requirements.
26. The headteacher has very good vision and this is best illustrated in the school's Improvement Plan that has an exciting long- term forecast for the future development of the school. The headteacher has a pragmatic and thoughtful approach to the vision and direction of the school. The vision is a shared one and is based on the views and ideas of the governors and staff, with parents also making a valuable contribution. To compliment his own style, the headteacher has made best use of the energies and talents of his two deputies and collectively their work impacts very positively for the benefit of the school. The promotion of teamwork in the school is very effective and ranges through the senior management team, year group teams and subject teams. This ensures that all members of staff are involved in the leadership process and are using their strengths for the benefit of the whole school.
27. The role of subject co-ordinators, however, is more variable especially in some of the foundation subjects and this is an area for further improvement. Co-ordinators do not always have sufficient opportunities to demonstrate their expertise explicitly or to monitor teaching and learning across the school on a consistent basis. Within school improvement planning, each year sees a focus on named subjects. However, even when subjects are named as priorities, there is insufficient planning of opportunities for co-ordinators to be released from class teaching in order to observe or work alongside colleagues to monitor teaching and learning. The contribution of subject leadership to school improvement is very good in music and good in English, mathematics, science, ICT, art and design, design and technology and special educational needs. It is sound in the Foundation Stage, history, geography, physical education and religious education. The good progress made by the school in developing procedures for assessment owes much to the dynamic leadership of the co-ordinator.

28. All systems for the management of the school are in place and are good. Monitoring and evaluating have been high priorities for the school community with the lead being taken by the headteacher who keeps a close eye on what is happening. Good use is made of available data and other information, such as that provided by the local education authority to identify trends and make comparisons. The evaluation of assessment data is used effectively to inform strategic planning. For example, in the past data indicated that the school needed to focus its improvement on challenging its more able pupils. It has done this to good effect by the introduction of setting in Years 2 and 3 for mathematics.
29. Senior staff's monitoring of teaching in English and mathematics and evaluating the observations has also been a priority and this has benefited the school by ensuring a greater consistency of approach and improved teaching standards. Feedback is given to staff and this often results in individual and whole-staff training to develop understanding and improve performance. Both the statutory induction of newly qualified teachers and the performance management of teachers are being carried out consistently and efficiently. The recently acquired Investor in People award recognises the effectiveness of the school's personnel systems that strengthen teamwork and identify future training. Mendip Green is also recognised for its commitment to initial teacher training by being awarded an initial teacher training partnership with the University of the West of England. The school embraces this work and sees it as a way to keep abreast of new teaching ideas as well as a way of monitoring its own teaching.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	1,220,503	Balance from previous year	52,093
Total expenditure	1,257,127	Balance carried forward to the next	83,002
Expenditure per pupil	2,249		

30. The school follows the recommended practices for financial management and this is confirmed in the latest North Somerset audit report. All the report's minor recommendations have quickly been implemented to further improve best financial practice. The school uses the best value approach to achieve its educational priorities and this is a strength. Through carefully controlled expenditure, the school is able to compensate for lack of external support and target its own funds to secure improvement in the quality of education for pupils in the hearing impaired resource base. The good accommodation now provided for this base is the result of such expenditure.

OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES

The provision for pupils in the hearing impaired resource base (HIRB)

The provision for pupils in the hearing impaired resource base is **very good**. The provision for hearing impaired pupils adds significantly to the ethos of the school. There is good quality teaching and learning in a caring, secure and happy environment and, in this respect, the HIRB is a strength of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Overall there is good teaching that is planned to meet the needs of the individual pupils.
- The planning of the integration of pupils into the life of the school is very good.

- The use of total communication, where necessary, to develop pupils' language is effective.
- The use of sophisticated auditory equipment to make maximum use of pupils' residual hearing is effective.
- The Base is well managed, and the teacher promotes liaison with outside professionals very well.
- Very good relationships exist between the staff of the Base and the pupils.
- The teacher of the deaf gives regular guidance and support to mainstream staff.
- With few pupils on roll, the provision is expensive.

Commentary

31. The local education authority has a well-established provision in the school for pupils with hearing impairment. At present there are four on roll, but the HIRB can accept up to eight pupils. The Base is appropriately staffed with one full-time teacher and a support assistant. All the pupils have a statement of special educational needs before they are admitted. The statements are reviewed annually with all the interested professionals, the teacher and the parents taking a lead role in the process; this is good liaison. There are good links with all the interested parties who are invited to attend the meeting or present a written report. From the statements and annual reviews, good individual plans are developed with appropriate targets for the coming year.
32. In relation to their degree of deafness and their abilities, pupils make very good progress. These very good gains in learning are a direct result of very good planning and, in this respect, full advantage is taken of opportunities in the whole curriculum to reinforce pupils' self-esteem and confidence. This is especially noticeable in pupils' ability to integrate with hearing pupils and they obviously enjoy these experiences.
33. The policy for integration and its implementation is very good. The pupils have access to all aspects of education provision. The pupils with hearing impairment are expected to obey the school rules and procedures. The school's staff has had appropriate training in deaf-awareness. The staff of the school and the pupils in mainstream classes welcome the hearing-impaired pupils to their classes and work well with them on the projects that are set. The Base has appropriately modified the curriculum to meet the need of those hearing-impaired pupils with limited communication when admitted to the school, and all the work is methodically planned to meet individual needs. Assessment is very good and future programmes of learning as well as the individual integration of the pupils are planned as a result of their progress.
34. The quality of teaching in the HIRB is good with many very good features. Lessons are carefully planned and conducted at a brisk pace that makes the best use of time available. The lessons are characterised by a wide range of activities undertaken and by the very good relationships between the pupils and all the staff. Pupils contribute positively and all show an interest and an understanding of the main theme and aims of the lessons.
35. Links with parents and outside professionals are very good. The school has very good support from the speech and language therapist. The therapist also advises and guides the staff on the individual pupils' programmes she has prepared, and these are supplemented in the whole-school curriculum. The Bristol Service for Hearing Impaired also provides audiological support when required by arrangement between the local education authorities. The involvement of parents has a high priority in developing pupils' full potential and every effort is made to secure this aim. Two-way communication and parental access to staff has been established to ensure that all pupils thrive through ongoing education, whether at home or school.
36. The teacher and the support assistant are well qualified. Both have attended courses to enhance their skills to make the best possible provision for the pupils in their care. The audiological resources are good and are used well. The staff also recognises the different

audiological needs of one pupil who has had a cochlear implant and they have had appropriate training for this. All the pupils have been issued with high-quality digital hearing aids that have been individually programmed. In the mainstream class lessons, pupils use good radio hearing-aid systems.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Children in the Foundation Stage are taught in four reception classes and they soon settle quickly and happily into school because of the good induction arrangements the school has established. As a result of a well-planned curriculum and consistently good teaching children achieve well and reach standards expected of children of this age in all areas of learning. In personal, social and emotional development and creative development they reach above average standards. However, children do not achieve as well as they might in physical development because of limited outdoor resources and accommodation to develop their gross motor skills. Teachers use assessments effectively to monitor the children's progress and attainment. Children who have special educational needs achieve well because work is appropriately planned by teachers to meet their specific needs. Support staff are deployed very effectively to support children's learning and they make a significant contribution to the good achievement of the children. Teachers effectively provide children with a lively, stimulating learning environment in which to learn, through good quality displays and through well-planned and structured activities. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are satisfactory. Staff work very effectively as a team in order to plan and deliver an effective curriculum to meet the needs of young children. However, there is insufficient opportunity for the recently appointed co-ordinator to monitor teaching and learning in other classes in order to develop even further curriculum provision and standards.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average.
- Children have very good attitudes to their learning and their behaviour is very good.
- Very good relationships between adults and children ensure that children settle quickly and happily into school.
- Adults provide good role models.

Commentary

37. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection and remain above average. Because personal and social skills are well promoted by all adults, children soon develop a sense of right and wrong and soon learn how to interact appropriately with others and their behaviour is very good. Children engage in a range of well-planned activities with good levels of interest and concentration and this contributes well to the good rate of progress they make in all areas of learning. Very good relationships exist between all adults and children and this enables children to settle quickly into school routines and take part in activities happily and with confidence.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The achievement of children is good.
- Teaching is good and reading skills are particularly well promoted.
- Sometimes teachers miss opportunities to promote speaking skills.

Commentary

38. Children achieve well because of good teaching and by the end of Reception children reach standards in line with those expected for children of this age. Early reading skills are well promoted by teachers. The good levels of parent support which enable children to practice their letter sounds at home enables children to make good progress in early reading and writing skills and, by the age of five, children know initial letter sounds and can read and write simple words and sentences. Children listen attentively to their teachers and others and they respond quickly to instructions. Sometimes teachers miss opportunities to develop children's speaking skills through activities such as role play and consequently the children do not make the same rate of progress in speaking as in other areas of communication, language and literacy.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching impacts well on the good achievement of children.
- Teachers promote mathematical skills effectively in other areas of learning.

Commentary

39. Children achieve well because of good teaching. Teachers not only promote numeracy skills effectively in lessons but also in a range of other activities across the Foundation Stage curriculum and through daily routines. For example, in a literacy lesson the teacher encouraged the children to count the number of characters on the cover of a book being shared with the class and count how many children were present at registration. By the end of Reception, children achieve standards in line with those expected for their age and can count and write numbers nought to nine, order numbers to ten and understand early addition and subtraction skills. In shape, space and measure, children can order size and can recognise and name basic two- and three-dimensional shapes.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The achievement of children is good.
- Teaching is good.

Commentary

40. Children achieve well because teachers plan interesting activities and use learning resources imaginatively to promote children's knowledge and understanding of the world. For example, Santa's bag of Christmas presents is used effectively to use the sense of touch in order for children to reach inside and describe the items that they can feel. Daily tasks, such as changing the weather chart, develop children's awareness of seasonal changes and well-planned group activities such as sorting shiny and non-shiny objects into appropriate sets helps them to recognise the properties of different materials. By the end of Reception, children achieve standards in line with those expected for their age.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers provide a good range of opportunities for children to develop their fine motor skills across other areas of learning.
- The accommodation of the outdoor area is limited and unsuitable for children of this age and this restricts the rate of progress children make in physical development.

Commentary

41. Children make good progress in developing their fine motor skills through well-planned activities that require them to manipulate and use a range of tools such as pencils, paintbrushes, scissors and glue sticks in order to write, draw, paint, cut and stick. Children show they are quite skilful for their age in cutting out shapes and applying paint when engaged in activities. Although children have the opportunity to use small apparatus and equipment such as hoops, balls and wheeled toys, overall the limited outdoor accommodation, which is unsatisfactory, restricts the rate of progress children make in developing their gross motor skills. In gymnastics children show good variety of response and confidence when climbing and jumping off apparatus and by the end of Reception children reach the standards expected.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The achievement of children is good.
- Standards are above average.
- Teaching is good.

Commentary

42. The achievement of children is particularly good in creative development and by the end of Reception standards are above average. Teachers provide a good range of well-planned activities that enable children to make good gains in their learning. They provide children with a variety of different media and materials with which to make a range of models and collages. Children are given opportunities to build imaginative structures and engage in role-play activities. ICT is used well to create computer-generated art work. In music, teachers develop well children's sense of rhythm and singing skills.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning is good and pupils achieve well.
- Pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills.

- The library in the Year 3 building is not as stimulating as it might be due to accommodation issues.
- Assessment procedures are very effective in setting precise targets for further learning.
- ICT is used effectively to enhance learning.

Commentary

43. Standards in English are average in Year 2 and Year 3 and most pupils achieve well. Current standards reflect the school's 2003 national test results at the end of Year 2. However, standards in speaking and listening in both Year 1 and Year 2, commented on by the previous inspection, are still below those expected for these year groups as pupils get only limited opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills in lessons. Pupils with special educational needs, and the small number for whom English is not the first home language, are supported effectively and achieve well as a result.
44. Standards in speaking and listening are below average in Years 1 and 2 and average in Year 3. Many younger pupils find speaking to groups of pupils or to adults especially difficult and are limited by a quite restricted vocabulary and limited confidence. Consequently, both their understanding and their ability to communicate effectively are hampered. In some observed lessons pupils were not encouraged to discuss amongst themselves even though teachers tried hard to extend pupils' vocabulary by repeating and explaining unfamiliar words. Questioning techniques led to the same groups of pupils offering answers and, even when less confident pupils joined in discussions, there was a tendency for them to use single words instead of sentences and even then their replies were sometimes barely audible.
45. Standards in reading are consistent with the national average and pupils achieve well in the development of reading skills in all year groups. There is a structured reading programme with pupils working through a published scheme and the National Literacy Strategy is used well to enhance learning. However, whilst pupils have a positive attitude to reading and the improvement of reading skills has a high profile within the school, the use of non-fiction books to aid learning is under-developed. In addition library facilities in Year 3 are unsatisfactory, the library presently being housed in part of a converted toilet and cloakroom!
46. Book areas in classrooms are well organised and classroom displays are bright and capture pupils' interests. By Year 2 most pupils are able to read simple texts accurately and many lower ability pupils have developed a range of strategies to help them to sound out unfamiliar words. By Year 3 pupils are able to self-correct and more able pupils read with fluency and expression. They are clear about the strategies that they need to use to work out how to read words and sentences and many tackle new reading material with a certain amount of confidence.
47. The school has worked successfully to maintain standards in writing to match those reported by the previous inspection. Standards are presently in line with the national average in all year groups and pupils achieve well because of not only good teaching but also the high profile the continuing development of writing has in all aspects of work in the school. The progressive build up of writing skills was evident from a scrutiny of pupils' work in all year groups. Whereas most Year 1 pupils display only limited writing skills, by Year 2 a majority of pupils write in sentence form and use simple punctuation accurately. For example, nearly all understood that a word at the beginning of a sentence would need a capital letter when they wrote the story of the *'Gingerbread Man'*. By Year 3 many pupils have a firmer grasp of language structure and write in both narrative and non-narrative styles and with an ever-increasing range of vocabulary and higher-order spelling skills. Presentation of pupils' work is satisfactory overall although this varies between classes, and the handwriting skills of a majority of Year 3 pupils are quite well developed.
48. Teaching and learning are good overall. Most lessons are usually interesting and challenging and tasks are matched well to pupils' different abilities and experiences. There is an effective

emphasis on helping pupils to develop their literacy skills through purposeful and enjoyable activities. This is reflected in pupils' attitudes to the subject, which are good. They concentrate well in lessons and work hard.

49. In a very well taught Year 2 lesson pupils were engrossed in their work on phonemes because teaching was stimulating, challenging and consistently supportive and very good use was made of the teaching assistant and parent helper to aid the learning of the less able. The teacher used follow-up questioning techniques very effectively to enhance learning even though many pupils were at first reticent to join in the discussions. As a result all pupils enjoyed the lesson and made very good progress in their understanding of how plural words were formed. In a Year 1 lesson where teaching was less successful, pupils did not achieve well because the pace of the lesson was slow, more able pupils were insufficiently challenged by the work and teaching was uninspiring.
50. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The subject co-ordinator has a firm grasp of standards across the school and is supported well by an effective curriculum team. Monitoring of how all aspects of English are taught is shared between members of the team and this results in a clear picture of strengths and development needs. The school has developed a detailed progress tracking system, which is used well to gain a good understanding of the standards and achievement of the majority of the pupils. This information is then used to alter lesson planning in order to give pupils better chances of continuing to make progress in their learning.
51. The school is well resourced for teaching all aspects of English. However, library facilities, especially in Year 3, are cramped because of inadequacies in the school's present accommodation. Consequently, opportunities to enrich pupils' reading experiences are limited.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

52. The use of language and literacy across the curriculum is **satisfactory**. Reading and writing skills are developed effectively in other subjects but there are only limited opportunities for pupils to further develop their speaking and listening skills during structured discussion periods within lessons.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well because of sound, consistent teaching and learning.
- Standards have improved since the last inspection especially for the more able and older pupils.
- There is a strong focus on developing pupils' numeracy skills.
- Leadership and management by the subject co-ordinator in mathematics are good.
- Opportunities for pupils to speak about their work are limited.
- Opportunity for pupils to apply skills and knowledge is also limited.
- There is insufficient use of ICT to support pupils' learning in classroom-based lessons.
- Unsatisfactory attendance by a significant minority impacts negatively on standards and achievement.

Commentary

53. Standards in mathematics in Year 2 are average. In 2003 national tests, 94 per cent of pupils at Year 2 reached the expected standard when compared to all and similar schools, with nearly a third of this age group achieving higher levels. This is a good improvement on the

previous year's test scores and also when compared to the previous inspection where progress was considered as unsatisfactory for higher ability pupils. The introduction of ability setting for this subject at Years 2 and 3 has contributed significantly to improving standards.

54. All pupils make sound progress and achieve well. Unsatisfactory attendance by a significant minority of pupils impacts negatively on achievement and standards. Pupils with special educational needs, and those who have English as an additional language are well supported through the use of the setting arrangements. Support offered by the classroom assistants in lessons ensures that these groups of pupils make equally sound progress as the other children.
55. Since the last inspection the school has worked hard to raise standards in mathematics especially in Years 2 and 3. The proportion of pupils achieving the expected levels has risen steadily year on year in line with the national trend except in 2002 when there was a dip. Pupils attaining the higher levels are now average when compared to all and similar schools and this is a significant improvement over time since the previous inspection. The National Numeracy Strategy is well implemented at the school. Planning is more rigorous and progression in the development of the subject is thorough. Regular monitoring of mathematics' lessons by the headteacher and the subject leader has ensured greater consistency in teaching and learning across the age groups and the whole school. Teaching and learning resources are well organised and are of good quality and they contribute to improving levels of teaching and learning.
56. The Maths Games Lending Library, the Maths Club for Year 2 pupils and the use of ICT in the teaching and learning of mathematics are significant developments and enrich the mathematics curriculum considerably and this should be further built upon. Although, ICT was observed in the teaching and learning of this subject in lessons in the ICT suites, it is as yet underdeveloped and not always used appropriately to enhance the learning intentions of classroom lessons. However, the provision for ICT has recently improved and there is evidence to suggest from the inspection that the observed improvements in other subjects will in time benefit mathematics.
57. Pupils' attitudes to mathematics are positive and there was a keen level of interest in every lesson observed. Pupils listen well and contribute answers readily but there is too little opportunity for pupils to explain their learning, develop their thinking and use a wide range of mathematical vocabulary. More opportunity also, should be given to pupils to apply their skills and knowledge in problem solving and investigative type work. The lack of opportunity for pupils to apply, explain and reflect on their work means limited chances for teachers to make informed assessments of learning.
58. In all lessons seen during the inspection teaching was at least satisfactory and sometimes it was good. Strengths include:
 - carefully planned lessons with clear learning objectives impacting positively on pupils' learning and standards;
 - teaching that provides the pupils with good explanations and demonstrations;
 - teaching that builds on previous learning and experience;
 - encouraging pupils to take risks in their learning;
 - the use of work activities that match the range of pupils' attainments and ability levels;
 - the use of learning support assistants to ensure that all pupils are engaged and confident.In some lessons that were satisfactory overall, the pace of teaching was occasionally too slow and pedestrian resulting in pupils working at a minimally acceptable rate. In other lessons, teachers left insufficient time at the end of the lesson to reinforce or challenge pupils' learning.
59. The subject leader consistently monitors the teaching, planning and work of pupils and this has resulted in her own leadership and management of the subject being informed. She has successfully involved the governor with responsibility for mathematics who gives an impressive amount of time to monitoring activities providing the subject leader with a good

degree of challenge and support. The school is currently working with North Somerset Education Authority in ways to further strengthen this subject. The subject leader is ambitious for mathematics to continue to improve; evidence from the planning file suggests that further development is imminent.

Mathematics across the curriculum

60. Teachers' planning indicates that pupils are given good opportunities to use their mathematical knowledge in other subjects. These include data handling in science to present results of investigations in appropriate forms of graphs and charts. Measurement is practised regularly in design and technology.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good subject leadership and management by the co-ordinator and the science team are having good impact on subject development and are raising standards.
- Arrangements for the co-ordinator to observe or assist in colleagues' lessons are unsatisfactory.
- Pupils in Year 3 achieve well and standards are above average due to consistently good teaching.
- Teaching and learning are good overall but there are inconsistencies in teaching within Years 1 and 2 that lower achievement in some classes.
- A good, broad curriculum is enhanced well by educational visits.

Commentary

61. A significant strength in the subject is the contribution of the group of teachers and governor forming the science team. Their success in developing the subject owes much to the good leadership and management of the co-ordinator. Together they have a very good awareness of strengths and areas for development in the subject. Science is a focus subject in the current school development plan and a constructive action plan identifies clearly how weaknesses are to be rectified. Through monitoring of teachers' planning and pupils' work, the science team has a good awareness of inconsistencies in provision in some year groups. However, despite being a priority in school improvement, there is no planned opportunity for the co-ordinator to be released from class teaching in order to extend her awareness of what is actually happening in lessons in classes across the school. This is unsatisfactory.
62. There has been a concerted drive to raise pupils' standards in recent years and the success of this is seen in the above average standards at the end of Year 2 as assessed by teachers in 2003. This group of pupils goes from strength to strength as a result of the consistently good teaching it is now receiving in Year 3. Increasing proportions of the year group are attaining above average standards and this is good achievement. A further consequence is the good understanding of the principles of scientific investigation that is now demonstrated by pupils of all ages.
63. The good teaching in Year 3 is matched by some, but not all, teaching in Years 1 and 2 but teaching and learning are judged good overall. The good characteristics of Year 3 teaching that are not consistently present elsewhere are:
- the emphasis placed on technical vocabulary which is prominently displayed in Year 3 lessons in the form of a 'word bank' and which is constantly referred to by teachers;
 - the planning of different learning activities for groups of pupils of different abilities which benefits more able pupils because they are really challenged by their work;

- the planning also helps pupils with special educational needs to achieve well because the task is at the right level and, additionally, teaching assistants are providing very effective support;
 - marking of pupils' work is helpful, being a combination of praise when good work deserves it and guidance on how work can be improved further.
64. The variations in the quality of teaching between teachers in Years 1 and 2 result in standards that are average and achievement that is satisfactory, and are also evident in how topics are being taught and resourced. In Year 1, there is over-reliance on worksheets in some classes while other teachers give pupils good opportunities to write about what they are learning in their own words and sentences. Lessons on electrical circuits in two Year 2 classes showed contrasting attention to resources by the teachers. Learning and achievement in one were hampered by pupils not having a means of connecting wires to other components in a circuit and being frustrated by knowing what they had to do but being physically unable to do it. In the other lesson, the teacher's good preparation ensured that pupils had everything they needed to do their practical work. From discussion of the task, the transition to all pupils busily working in pairs on creating a circuit to light a bulb in the context of an educational game was instantaneous.
65. Through their evaluation of work across the school, the science team has a good understanding of what needs to be done to eradicate differences in teachers' planning. However, there is a whole-school strength in the breadth of the science curriculum and the opportunities taken to use educational visits and specialist visitors to the school to raise pupils' levels of interest. Good use is made of diversity in local environments, for example by visits to local woods, Bristol Zoo, a power station and the Slimbridge Wetlands Centre. Regular visitors contributing to pupils' scientific learning include a Theatre Company, the school nurse, a mother of a baby and a toddler, and personnel from the Dartmoor Wildlife Centre. In conversation, pupils have demonstrated their good recall of what they learned from these experiences.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Resources are very good and have a positive impact on achievement.
- ICT is not used consistently in classrooms to support learning in other subjects.
- Leadership and management contribute very effectively to raising standards.
- Good use is made of the school's two ICT suites to aid learning in other subject areas.
- Direct teaching of ICT skills is good.
- Procedures for monitoring and evaluating provision and standards are good.

Commentary

66. Pupils achieve well in ICT and this results in standards that have improved since the last inspection and are now good in all year groups. By Year 2 and Year 3 pupils are attaining standards above those expected nationally because of good teaching, which enables pupils to make rapid progress and achieve well. Lessons are well planned and delivered by competent class teachers with good subject knowledge who make very good use of the school's two well-equipped ICT suites to teach new skills successfully.

67. Standards have improved since the last inspection because:
- funding has been used effectively to invest in two well-equipped ICT suites and in other well-used resources such as computer projectors, interactive whiteboards, laptops and digital cameras;
 - teachers have attended effective training in how to teach ICT and display a positive and confident approach to teaching;
 - the co-ordinator and key staff have worked with great enthusiasm to ensure that the school has effectively developed all aspects of ICT.
68. Pupils are given regular opportunities to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding in all areas of the subject and their attitudes towards ICT are very good. They learn how to use ICT for word processing, art and graphics, the Internet, and data handling as well as controlling equipment and modelling. In addition pupils are given regular opportunities to use the resources of one ICT suite to enhance their studies in other subjects. For example, Year 3 pupils used an Internet search engine effectively to find out about the weather in other countries in a geography session. An anomaly, however, is the use of ICT within individual classrooms, which is inconsistent. In some classes computers are seldom used appropriately to enhance learning in other subjects.
69. Teaching and learning are good throughout the school. Teachers used their subject knowledge well to give clear succinct explanations and demonstrations to pupils by the use of either networked computers or a digital projector. Good use of exemplars coupled with effective questioning made the most of pupil input and a brisk pace to lessons meant that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and the small number for whom English was not the first home language, achieved well. Year 2 pupils quickly and accurately selected appropriate tools from a menu when combining art and graphics to create pictures that communicated ideas. In a Year 3 lesson pupils shared ideas with each other and their understanding of terms such as 'hyperlink' was extended and reinforced because practical tasks were well matched to their abilities and previous learning.
70. Both leadership and management of ICT are very good and the co-ordinator has played a key role in maintaining the good provision reported by the previous inspection. Standards have improved significantly and procedures for monitoring and evaluating provision are now used effectively to alter planning in order that pupils make continuous progress in their learning.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

71. The use of ICT across the curriculum is **good** overall and it is used well to support learning in many other subject areas in lessons in the ICT suites but inconsistently within classrooms.

HUMANITIES

72. In humanities, work was sampled in history and geography, with only three lessons seen in history and one in geography. It is therefore not possible to form an overall judgement about provision in these subjects. There is evidence from pupils' work to indicate that standards are broadly average in Years 1 and 2 and above average in Year 3. This is different from the previous inspection report when history was considered a strength and geography satisfactory with better progress seen at Years 1 and 2.
73. In both subjects pupils experience a range of visits and special days to make the work interesting and to give them first-hand experience of their environment and of past events and times. The Comenius Project with its links to other European schools enriches the geography curriculum. It provides opportunities for pupils to make comparisons with other schools and settlements and when this work is shared using ICT it makes learning very exciting and

relevant. Plans to share weather data with the Swedish school are in hand as well as e-mail links for certain classes with schools in Italy, France and Sweden.

74. Wall displays for history and geography are of a high quality particularly in Years 1 and 3 and the artefacts and posters provide much stimulation for discussion and teaching. However, only in a few displays is pupils' work celebrated and this tends to be drawings with little evidence of examples of pupils' writing on either history or geography. In Year 3, digital and traditional cameras are used to good effect to record fieldwork.
75. The leadership and management of these subjects are satisfactory but the subject leaders have not had the opportunity to monitor the quality of teaching even though history was a recent focus in the last school improvement plan. Subject leadership has focused on teachers' planning, the introduction of a new programme in history and on levels of resources and is therefore having a positive but limited impact on standards. Assessment and moderation of work is in its infancy and requires further time to become an influence on the planning of future work.

Religious education

Provision for religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' attitudes to the subject are good.
- Opportunities for pupils to develop an understanding of other religious beliefs are limited.
- Pupils achieve well throughout the school.

Commentary

76. Standards of attainment in all year groups remain in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus, as they were at the time of the last inspection. Evidence from lessons and analysis of pupils' work indicates that pupils' achievement is good throughout the school. The main focus of learning in all year groups revolves around Christian teaching as set out in the locally agreed syllabus. However, although pupils learn about other faiths and religions, they are given only limited opportunities to extend their knowledge and understanding of the values and practices of other beliefs and traditions through first-hand experiences.
77. Pupils' attitudes towards religious education are good and this was evident in observed lessons. Year 1 pupils explored religious ideas through the Christmas story and increased their understanding of why Jesus was special, whilst Year 2 pupils reflected on the importance of special occasions and acted out their own version of the nativity play. This work was built on in Year 3 when pupils learned about 'The Christingle' and were encouraged to justify their ideas about the use of symbols to represent, for example, the blood of Christ with a red ribbon or the Earth with an orange. Effective teaching led to a good level of debate and, as a result, most pupils increased their understanding of the importance of symbolism in religious practices.
78. The quality of teaching and learning in religious education is good overall. When teaching is most successful, lessons are well structured and pupils' achievement is good. This was evident in a well-taught lesson to Year 2 pupils about the beliefs and meanings of Christmas. The teacher began the lesson with a very detailed account of the Christmas story and developed the concept of '*special occasions*' well by constantly referring to pupils' own experiences. The lesson was well paced and the teacher's subject knowledge good. By the end of the lesson nearly all pupils made good progress in their understanding of the importance of Christmas to the Christian faith.

79. Co-ordination is presently shared between several teachers, who lead and manage the subject soundly and have ensured that standards and provision have been maintained at the levels reported by the previous inspection. Resources for teaching religious education are good and are used well to enhance learning. Links between religious education and other curriculum areas, such as personal, social and health education, are satisfactory.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design

Provision in art and design is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The achievement of pupils is good.
- Standards are above average.
- Year 1 pupils produce artwork of a particularly high standard for their age.
- Teachers provide good opportunity for pupils to work with a range of materials and they develop skills and techniques very effectively.
- Extra-curricular activities contribute significantly to pupils' good attainment in Year 1.

Commentary

80. Pupils achieve well across the school and standards in both Year 2 and Year 3 are above average. Through well-organised extra-curricular provision and a very good focus on skill and technique development in lessons, Year 1 pupils make particularly good progress and are able to produce work of a high standard for their age.
81. Throughout the school teachers provide pupils with a good range of experiences that develop well all areas of learning in the subject, including two- and three-dimensional work and appreciating and working in the style of many different artists. Opportunities for pupils to work with a range of media are also good and they are able to experience painting techniques, drawing, printing and three-dimensional modelling and sculpture. Teachers make good use of ICT to enhance learning in the subject and pupils are able to use art computer programs well to produce good quality work, such as abstract designs.
82. Teaching is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and this enables them to skilfully develop skills and techniques. Teachers value pupils' work and use it very effectively to promote the good achievement of pupils through high quality wall displays around the school.
83. The co-ordinator has good subject expertise and this enables her to promote the subject effectively across the school. Planning is well structured to ensure all areas of learning in the subject are appropriately covered. Resource provision for the subject is good and is used well by teachers to support learning in the subject. Good links with a local Arts college contribute significantly to the good provision in the subject.

Design and technology

Provision in design and technology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The achievement of pupils is good.
- Standards are above average.

- Teaching is good and planning is well structured in order to ensure that all areas are effectively taught.
- There is insufficient opportunity for the co-ordinator to monitor the subject across the school in order to improve provision and standards even further.

Commentary

84. Pupils achieve well and standards in Year 2 and Year 3 are above average. From Year 1, teachers develop design skills effectively and from an early age pupils soon begin to understand how simple plans of the things that they intend to make can inform the making process. For example, in a Year 1 lesson, pupils were observed referring to their plans in order to make a range of items such as model vehicles and Christmas cards. Pupils show they can select and use a range of tools and materials suggested by the teacher well and they show good attention to how the products they make are finished. They are able to mark out, cut and shape a range of materials such as card, paper and clay quite skilfully for their age. Pupils soon learn how materials can be joined together in different ways. Teachers promote skills well in lessons and effectively encourage pupils to make choices concerning what materials they intend to use and how they will join different materials together. Pupils are encouraged by teachers to evaluate the products that they make and they can suggest ways on how their products might be improved. For example, in Year 3, after making and tasting sandwiches that they have made, they evaluated and suggested ways in which different fillings might have improved them.
85. Teaching is good. Curriculum planning is well structured to ensure that all appropriate areas of learning are covered. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and this enables key skills to be taught effectively.
86. The subject is well co-ordinated but there are too few opportunities for the co-ordinator to monitor teaching and learning in other classes in order to improve provision and standards in the subject even further.

Music

Provision in music is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in singing are above average.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- Good teaching helps pupils of all abilities to achieve well.
- A very good curriculum is extended by a wide range of stimulating experiences outside normal lessons.

Commentary

87. The significant strengths in music at the last inspection have been more than maintained, with further good development of the music curriculum and a general raising of teachers' expertise, contributing to good improvement since that inspection.
88. With a focus on Christmas, related activities, such as performances for parents and large group carol singing, and class lessons in Year 1 were the main sources of evidence during the inspection. Additional tape recordings of past work in other years confirm that, throughout the school, pupils are achieving very well and standards are generally above average. This is especially true of singing and the tremendous joy in singing that pupils communicate. Building successfully on good creative development in the Foundation Stage, pupils acquire a very wide repertoire of memorised songs and hymns that they sing very tunefully and expressively. The

standards of Year 2 pupils in other aspects of music cannot be judged as they have not been observed as a single year group. However, Year 1 pupils have a good understanding of the way that music can express feelings. This was seen in the variety of ways that pupils recorded reactions to a selection of short excerpts of classical music. In discussion or written recording, pupils accurately linked a piece of music to an emotion although the teacher's encouragement of pupils to explain their reasons showed that speaking skills in general were not as well developed as they should be. In contrast, Year 1 pupils' performance of rhythmic patterns is better than is expected of this age group. They keep a beat well and can vary performance to include short and long beats very successfully. Recordings of Year 3 pupils' performance of rhythmic patterns show that they have progressed successfully to performance in groups on a variety of tuned and un-tuned percussion instruments, maintaining a rhythm very well while performing their collaborative compositions.

89. Teaching and learning are consistently good with confident teachers presenting well-planned lessons and enthusiastic pupils working hard in pairs, small and large groups. Class lessons frequently include good opportunities for pupils to work together in pairs and small groups. This is a good contribution to pupils' social development in which pupils show a mature capacity for working with others, respecting their skills and ideas. Music is also making a very good contribution to pupils' cultural development through the frequent opportunities planned for them to experience music from an extensive range of countries and historical periods. The very good links with schools in many parts of the world are a good source of such musical experiences. Large group teaching, such as that by the headteacher in hymn practices, combines a high standard of accompaniment with brisk pace, high expectations and an enthusiasm for music that is truly infectious.
90. The experienced co-ordinator provides very good leadership and management. Since the last inspection she has successfully overseen a change in the guidelines for teaching the curriculum. This is now to be extended by more detailed guidelines for the teaching of singing in order to develop still further both the quality of teaching and the level of pupils' achievements. Staff development is good, whether for the whole staff or for individuals wishing to improve expertise in specific areas. The co-ordinator has clear plans of action for subject development. In addition to monitoring provision within the school, the co-ordinator maintains excellent links with other schools and the local education authority advisory service. The school is regularly visited by the local secondary school's swing band and a junior school orchestra. Pupils attend workshops organised for local schools and they have opportunities within school for extra-curricular activities such as choir and a recorder club in Year 3. All have regular opportunities to perform in public that culminate, for Year 3 pupils, in ambitious productions before they leave the school. In 2002 this was the musical 'Oliver'. Parents, pupils and teachers talk with pride of the status of music in the school – it is a pride that is richly deserved.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in dance are above average in Years 2 and 3.
- Good teaching promotes good learning by all pupils and helps them to achieve well.
- Provision of swimming within the curriculum is a good commitment by the school.
- Poor playground surfaces have an adverse effect on games' skill acquisition.

Commentary

91. There has been good improvement overall since the last inspection because weaknesses in curriculum planning and aspects of teaching have been rectified. The subject is currently a priority in the school development plan.

92. The way that the subject is timetabled has resulted in dance being seen in Years 2 and 3 and gymnastics in Year 1. Achievement is good overall because pupils enter Year 1 having experienced some limitations in the provision for their physical development in the Foundation Stage. The good standard of dance seen in both Year 2 and Year 3 indicates that pupils are on track to achieve above average standards by the end of the year. Year 2 pupils show good imagination and creativity in their dance, for example when they interpreted a 'Toyshop' theme. Through experimentation and then refining the actions they had selected, pupils showed a good ability to link different actions together smoothly. They also used different gestures and qualities in their movement very successfully to communicate their ideas about how different toys might move. In the more formal activity of folk dance, Year 3 pupils perform to above average standards and their knowledge of the components of English country dance is well above average. In Year 1, pupils move confidently on gymnastic apparatus and successfully use a variety of actions for travelling along it.
93. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. When it is very good, as in a Year 1 lesson, this high quality was the prime reason for pupils making very good progress in the course of the lesson. The teaching, like that in a Year 2 dance lesson, had clarity of instruction, excellent organisation, knowledgeable guidance and feedback for pupils based on very good observation of individual pupils' work. Pupils were encouraged, corrected if needed, challenged when ready and given good levels of responsibility for organising themselves. All teachers pay good attention to health-related factors, providing warming-up and cooling-down activities but they do not question pupils sufficiently about why these parts of a lesson are important.
94. A broad, balanced curriculum is provided and the school is committed to providing the opportunity for Year 3 pupils to learn to swim. This more than exceeds the statutory requirements. Pupils have access to extra-curricular activities in dance and drama, football and cricket and this is a good level of provision for the age range in the school.
95. Leadership and management are satisfactory at present because the two new co-ordinators have not yet had time to have an impact on the subject's development. However, their great enthusiasm, good levels of subject expertise and obvious ability to work well together indicate an exciting future for the subject. As part of their action plan for the year, they have already attended year group meetings to consult colleagues, the policy has been revised and a manageable system of assessment is being devised. Such actions indicate that much has been achieved in a short time. While it is right that there is a specific focus on gymnastics this year, it is nevertheless important to review arrangements for teaching games lessons on the playground now that the surface of the ground has deteriorated so badly in some areas. Unevenness of surface will limit the extent to which some games skills can be acquired by pupils.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision in personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A good curriculum provides a broad, balanced range of learning opportunities.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- Leadership and management are good.

Commentary

96. The school pays good attention to this aspect of pupils' education and all classes have at least a weekly lesson in which learning activities build well on pupils' previous learning. These experiences make a good contribution to all aspects of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and

cultural development. The current curriculum provides a good balance of opportunities for pupils to consider themselves as individuals, as members of groups, the school community and the larger community beyond the school. While the structure of this curriculum is very sound, it is currently being developed still further through a review, led by the co-ordinator, that has been established as a priority in the current school development plan. Learning activities encourage pupils to consider how they can lead healthy lives and how they can work well with others. This is achieved through a good balance between acquiring knowledge and understanding and expressing personal beliefs and feelings. The developing maturity of pupils' consideration of others was clearly demonstrated by a Year 3 class which discussed the value of friendliness by identifying a wide range of ways to show this as well as what both they and others gain from positive, friendly relationships. Such values were frequently seen being put into practice by pupils in all year groups during play and lunchtimes as well as in the course of lessons.

97. Teaching and learning are good because teachers plan learning activities thoroughly, make good use of teaching assistants to support individual pupils needing guidance and always explain the purpose of activities in terms of what it is expected that pupils will learn. Beyond personal, social and health education, lessons in many subjects include planned opportunities for pupils to work together and levels of co-operation and collaboration are generally good. The one opportunity being missed is that of speaking and listening in pairs and this is limiting the quality of spoken responses, which generally are below average in Years 1 and 2.
98. An enthusiastic co-ordinator leads and manages this area well. As a focus subject in the current year's school development plan, a range of appropriate targets have been set by the co-ordinator. The further refinement of the curriculum that is planned sensibly builds on the good range of learning opportunities already being provided and aims to consolidate the links with other subjects in order that personal, social and health education permeates as much of the curriculum as possible.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	6
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
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	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
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	2
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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

