

INSPECTION REPORT

AWLISCOMBE C of E (VA) PRIMARY SCHOOL

Awliscombe, Honiton

LEA area: Devon

Unique reference number: 113422

Headteacher: Mr T Johns

Lead inspector: Mr M Burghart

Dates of inspection: 27th - 29th September 2004

Inspection number: 266346

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	5 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	89
School address:	Awliscombe Honiton Devon
Postcode:	EX14 3PJ
Telephone number:	01404 42031
Fax number:	01404 46295
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr D Mansfield
Date of previous inspection:	May 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a small primary school at the centre of the rural village of Awliscombe near Honiton in Devon. The Victorian church school building was extended in 1994 to provide space for four classes. Numbers have fallen since the last inspection, but four classes have been maintained. Of the 89 pupils on roll over 17 per cent have special educational needs. This is slightly above average. The proportion of pupils joining or leaving the school at times other than in reception or from Year 6 is about average. No pupil requires extra help for having English as an additional language. The school was awarded with a DfES Achievement award in 2002 and became an Investor in People in 2001. It is currently working towards becoming a Healthy school and to achieving Activemark status. In a new initiative a dedicated ICT suite is being built for school and local use. The attainment of children when first entering reception is usually above average. All teachers except the head were appointed in the last twelve months and the school has been through a considerable period of staff uncertainty, but this is now resolved.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
20865	Mr M S Burghart	Lead inspector	Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage, English, Information and communication technology, Creative, aesthetic, practical and physical subjects, Personal, social and health education
9487	Mrs F Hurd	Lay inspector	
22578	Mr D G Jones	Team inspector	Mathematics, Science, Special educational needs, Humanities.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This continues to be a good, very caring school. It has come through a difficult period, but now with a stable staff working very effectively as a team it is back on track. Standards remain high. Good efficient use of resources ensures good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards are well above average in English, mathematics and science when pupils leave.
- Science is a particular strength of the school.
- Teaching is good and frequently better.
- Pupils enjoy school and respond particularly well. Relationships are excellent.
- The school is well managed and effectively led.
- Provision for special educational needs (SEN) is good.
- Standards and provision in information and communication technology (ICT) are not yet good enough.
- Some aspects of provision for the Foundation Stage (reception) are in need of further development.

Despite problems of staff change and illness in the last year the school has made sound progress overall since the last inspection in 1999, with notably good progress recently. Teaching is better monitored and supported, and assessment is used much more effectively to set targets. The newness of some staff means that subject co-ordinators' roles still need further development in some areas. Improvements to the building and the use of space have developed the learning environment and a new ICT suite is due for completion in spring 2005. Pupils' work is better organised and provision is now successful in challenging more able pupils. The school is well placed for future development.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	A*	A*	A	B
Mathematics	A*	A*	A	B
Science	A*	A*	A	A

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

The table shows standards, although slightly lower as the school expected in 2003, have been well above average over time. Early indications from 2004 results are of continued high standards in all three subjects with notable continued strengths in reading and science. It is clear that the school helps pupils to make good use of what they already know and can do to achieve well. Children in reception make a sound start and achieve all the goals expected of them. Pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2 and standards of reading, writing and mathematics are above average at age seven. The school is aware that standards of ICT fall short of expectations because provision has not been good enough. Standards in other

subjects from the limited evidence available are at least satisfactory throughout, with noted strengths in singing and some aspects of art, geography and history.

Pupils' personal development is very good with clear strengths in moral and social aspects. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are judged very good, as is attendance.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a good quality of education for pupils of all abilities. Teaching is good with a significant proportion of very good and better lessons. Improvements to planning and now good assessment, notably in English, support good quality learning. All teachers had good lessons with particular strengths in literacy, numeracy, music and physical education. Two Years 3 and 4 lessons were excellent. Provision for SEN is consistently good. Learning support assistants make a strong contribution to teaching and learning. Extracurricular provision is a strength. Provision for reception has strengths in developing personal and communication skills. There is more to do to encourage even more learning through play. There are very good links with the church and the school plays a significant part in the life of the local community. Links with parents are good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The school is well managed and effectively led by head, governors and staff working as a very good team. Development planning effectively supports improvements. The governance of the school is good with very good features in budget management. Because the majority of staff are relatively new to their roles there is still a need to further develop some aspects of monitoring. Staff are excellent role models and these have a very positive impact on leadership and management.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The school has a high reputation. Parents are especially pleased with teaching, high expectations and the school's approachability. Some have concerns about the large Years 3 and 4 class and the school's links with parents. Inspectors find provision for Years 3 and 4 to be very good, and that information available for parents is good. Pupils enjoy school. They like the family atmosphere and the staff. Everyone is looking forward to the new ICT suite.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The school knows its strengths and areas for further development well. It is aware that the most important things it should do to improve are:

- To improve, as planned, provision and standards in ICT.
- To provide, as intended, more opportunities for reception children to learn through play, especially outside.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Standards are high.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- By the time pupils leave the school standards are well above average in English, mathematics and science.
- Pupils of all abilities make the most of their potential to achieve well.
- Standards of ICT are below what is expected because provision is not yet good enough.

Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	16.6 (18.6)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	14.8 (14.6)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	14.6 (19.3)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 18 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.9 (30.5)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	28.5 (30.5)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	31.1 (31.5)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 16 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

1. The tables show that standards continue to be well above average. National test results at seven and eleven over time have been high compared with all primary schools, frequently putting the school in the top 5 per cent especially in science which is noted as a strength of Awliscombe. Comparisons with similar schools have been good although there have been variations year on year: for example such comparisons in 2003 (although above average) were not as good as previous years, but the school expected this and predicted lower results from its own assessment. To the school's credit 2004 results for eleven year olds are likely to be high in English and very high in mathematics and science despite a period of unsettled staffing.

2. Standards of speaking, listening and reading are well above average and are used well to support the whole curriculum. Pupils are confident and articulate and usually very keen to learn. Pupils' good language structure helps them to speculate, hypothesise and evaluate their own performance. This has very positive impacts on science and design and technology (DT). Because pupils read well they are able to access and assimilate information effectively. This particularly enhances subjects such as geography and history.

3. Numeracy skills are very well established by the time pupils leave. Pupils build well on good standards reached at the end of Year 2 to become proficient at problem solving and data handling by the end of Year 6. More able pupils do particularly well to reach higher than average levels.

4. Standards in science are high and have been so for the last five years. Pupils' understanding of experimental and investigative science where fair testing and drawing conclusions from evidence are key factors, is an obvious strongpoint of learning.

5. The school is aware that standards in ICT are below expectations because not all required elements have been covered in sufficient depth. This is especially true of older pupils who have lacked opportunities to develop their own ideas: for example to produce multimedia presentations to a suitable standard. Limitations in resources and space (and until recently the expertise of some staff) and too little time spent on the subject, have all had negative effects.

6. Pupils' attainment is satisfactory, being in line with what is expected nationally for ages seven and eleven in geography, history and PE (where much improved provision is leading to pupils making rapid progress). Standards in personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) are good throughout the school with pupils reaching better than what is expected for their ages.

7. Too little evidence was available to make judgements about attainment in music, art and design and technology (DT). However there are obvious strengths in singing and the use of art skills to illustrate other subjects.

8. Pupils with SEN achieve well from reception to Year 2 and then very well up until the end of Year 6. Some of these pupils reach nationally expected levels in English, mathematics and science and this is a sure sign of good progress.

9. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well for their ability and experience, and the vast majority will reach all the expected early learning goals before leaving reception. There are particular strengths in personal, social and emotional development, and communication, language and literacy, where standards are often well above expectations.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' interest in, and enjoyment of, school life is excellent.
- Relationships within the school community are excellent.
- Pupils develop an excellent level of confidence and self-esteem.
- The school has excellent expectations of pupil behaviour and works hard to achieve them.
- The school's provision for the social, moral and spiritual development of pupils is very good.

Commentary

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	5.0
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0
National data	0.4

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

10. Attendance is well above national averages. Absences are followed up on the first day, and the school secretary keeps a close eye on any patterns of absence or late arrival. The school stresses the importance of regular attendance, and reminds parents to avoid taking holidays in term time if possible. Pupils arrive promptly, eager to get to work, and parents do their best to ensure regular attendance.

11. Pupils with SEN show good and often very good attitudes to their work and the school. This has positive effects on the progress they make.

12. Pupils are noticeably confident and articulate, and are excellent ambassadors for their school. There have been no exclusions in the last academic year. Behaviour is managed to a consistently high standard, in line with the school's stated aims of mutual respect and courtesy. Pupils respond very well to very good and excellent teaching, and the level of discussion in the older classes was very impressive. Pupils' enthusiasm for learning extends to the additional activities offered: a quarter of the school attends the chess club, and an equal proportion enjoys folk dancing. Older and younger pupils mix together in clubs and on the playground: relationships are notably affectionate and caring. All staff have high expectations of pupils' personal and academic abilities, and provide excellent role models by their conduct and teamwork. Pupils were emphatic that bullying and harassment simply do not happen, and that staff will help sort out any personal disagreements. The wide range of clubs allows pupils to mix together in different social groupings, as well as enriching their curriculum.

13. The school council is gaining confidence in its role as a voice for pupils, but members were equally confident that they could always raise any concerns or suggestions directly with staff. In such a small school, pupils expect to help their peers and their teachers and do so cheerfully and without hesitation. Teachers are adept at creating opportunities for spiritual development in lessons. For instance in an art lesson pupils discussed the work of great artists, made life drawings of flowers, and planned and created their own displays of spring bulbs. Art and music make a good contribution to spiritual and cultural development. Pupils learn about life in a multicultural society through well chosen visits and visitors, as well as through formal teaching.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

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

No of pupils on roll
87
2

Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
0	0
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 for pupils of all abilities.

Teaching and learning

Teaching is good throughout with notably some very good features in Years 2 to 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- English, mathematics and science are consistently well taught.
- There are highlights in music and physical education teaching.
- Mixed age classes are well managed.
- Assessment is used effectively to set targets notably in English.
- Staff's participation in providing extracurricular activities is a credit to the school.
- Homework is well managed to enhance learning.
- ICT teaching has been restricted by space and resources.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 26 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	6	14	4	0	0	0

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

14. Very good features of teaching were observed in all classes. All teachers had good lessons and three had very good. English and mathematics were consistently well taught and there was evidence of very good teaching in science, music and some physical education (PE) lessons. The very positive influence of a member of staff who is a leading PE teacher for the county is having a fine effect on provision. Opportunities in PE have been improved from satisfactory in 1999 to good with very good features and this is irrespective of the small size of this school.

15. Standards are high because of the quality of teaching which involves very good contributions from the learning support assistants (LSAs). This is especially the case in support for reception children and in some outstanding contributions from LSAs working in an excellent partnership with the teacher in the large Years 3 and 4 class. Parents who expressed concerns over provision in this class can rest assured that, as a result of high quality teaching and support, learning is very good and pupils are achieving very well. All sessions observed in Years 3 and 4 were at least good and two were excellent.

16. Staff build very well on excellent relationships (established as much in extracurricular activities as in class) to encourage and challenge pupils very effectively. Consequently all pupils achieve well with strengths in provision for those with SEN and those who are potentially high achievers. Evidence of this is clear in national test results where nearly all pupils reach at least national average levels and the proportions reaching the higher levels at seven and

eleven are frequently well above average. Expectations are high and this has a significant impact on the school's very good ethos.

17. Good and still improving use of assessment to gauge progress and set targets for improvement are being effectively driven by the senior teacher. Her example in planning and record keeping in English is an excellent role model for colleagues and underpins the good and often very good teaching observed in Year 2.

18. Other strengths in teaching are in:

- Good use of relevant homework;
- Praise used well to encourage and reward pupils;
- Good marking which refers to targets set and shows how pupils can improve.

19. Areas for further improvement even in this good overall profile are in:

- Making more use of ICT to support the curriculum and being sure to teach ICT skills in ways in which they build on previous learning;
- Paying more attention to pupils' handwriting;
- Further developing opportunities for Foundation Stage children to extend their learning through play, especially outside.

20. The rapid progress recently achieved which has put the school back on track has been very heavily dependent on the stability which good teaching and very good team work has brought to the school. This is a credit to the staff whose teaching is a strength of the school.

The curriculum

The good curricular opportunities offered to pupils enable them to achieve well in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- Extracurricular provision is a strength.
- The school provides very good access to the curriculum for all pupils.
- Work in Year 6, linked to pupils' transfer to secondary school, is very effective.
- ICT needs further development, of which the school is aware.
- The accommodation and resources for the Foundation Stage show some weaknesses, which do not support the raising of standards.

Commentary

21. The school provides its pupils with a broad, balanced and well planned curriculum, as it did at the last inspection, which includes an introduction to French for pupils over the age of seven. The school is anxious to maintain its very good standards, especially for the oldest pupils, but still wishes to enrich experiences further. It is moving further to a thematic approach to learning, which links areas of learning together within well designed topics. Its rolling programme of work designed to cope with the two year age span in each class, has recently

been revised and is a good working document. Less successful at present are the long lessons seen in the afternoon which sometimes test both teachers and pupils in concentrating on a single subject for up to two hours.

22. All pupils have access to the full curriculum showing clearly the school's wish to be fully inclusive. The school provides well for pupils with special educational needs. These pupils receive good support in order that they may take full advantage of the curriculum opportunities on offer. As a result, a number of them attain the rationally expected levels in National Curriculum tests. The school has a policy for its gifted and talented pupils, although there is a little way to go before this is fully effective.

23. The school is well aware that its provision for ICT is not yet good enough. The construction of a new ICT suite was underway during the inspection. This will help the school provide for the requirements of the National Curriculum in this area of study.

24. Support for learning outside the school day is very good. The school offers its pupils a wide range of club activities both at lunch time and after school, with teachers and support staff giving their time generously. French, folk dancing, singing, chess, dance, football, circuit training are but some of the clubs on offer. The quality of coaching and management in the clubs observed was very good.

25. The school provides extensive visits and visitors to enhance the curriculum. A number of older pupils go on an exchange visit to France, whilst other pupils attend a centre at which they can try their hand at exciting activities such as canoeing, climbing and sailing. Other visits include Bath, Cheddar Gorge and Exeter museum.

26. Since the last inspection the school has carried out work in refurbishing and extending the school building, within its physical restrictions. However, the school is still not yet providing sufficiently for play activities for those children in the Foundation Stage.

27. Support for the oldest pupils, at a time when they are leaving the school, is very good. The school, over time, has established very good links with its secondary schools and pupils benefit as the transfer from school to school is very well organised.

Care, guidance and support

Provision for pupils' care, guidance and support is good overall. Provision for support, advice and guidance based on monitoring is good. The involvement of pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Every pupil has an excellent relationship with one or more adults in their school.

Commentary

28. The outstandingly good relationships within the school community, both between adults and children, and amongst pupils, are strengths and real aids to learning. Staff get to know not only their own pupils, but those in other classes as they teach them for particular subject areas. They are well placed to offer them personal advice and guidance. Academic assessment is

not well developed in subjects other than English, mathematics and science, and the school is currently developing further opportunities for more able pupils. Support for pupils with special educational needs is good. Behaviour is consistently well managed, in and out of class. The fact that there are two clubs running every lunchtime means that pressure on the playground is reduced, and that the mix of pupils varies every day. Those who are outside enjoy a good range of toys, and are well supervised.

29. The caretaker checks the site daily for any hazards, and termly and annual risk assessments are carried out. All staff will be undergoing first aid training later this term, and the headteacher, who is the child protection liaison officer, will be updating his training in this area. The site is secure and the school has had no problems with vandalism. Some monitoring issues, which do not put children at risk, have been raised with the governing body.

30. The school has good links with local pre-school providers, and welcomes younger children into school for visits. Parents feel their children are warmly welcomed by staff and other pupils, and quickly settle in, whether they are joining the reception class or an older year group. This view was shared by pupils themselves in discussion during the inspection.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with the community, and with other schools, are very good. Links with parents are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents make a very good contribution to their children's learning and give very good support to the school.
- Procedures to ensure satisfaction and to deal with any concerns and complaints are very good.

Commentary

31. Over 60 per cent of parents responded to the Ofsted pre-inspection questionnaire. All thought the school has high expectations of its pupils, and virtually all that their children like coming to school, are treated fairly, and behave well. The findings of the inspection confirm these views. Twenty-nine per cent of parents however felt the school did not consult them sufficiently. Although the school has seldom used formal opinion-seeking methods such as questionnaires, staff are easily approachable and welcome parent involvement and initiative. The headteacher and several parent governors are always available on the playground for informal consultation. The inspection team does not, therefore, feel that this opinion is justified: it may reflect past concern felt during the school's staffing difficulties. Parents are strongly encouraged to get involved, and many do, offering time or expertise. The parents' association's fundraising makes a significant contribution to the school's budget: others help with special events or run clubs. Parents help in school every day, and are welcomed to church assemblies and special events.

32. Information for parents is much improved and further improvements are planned. There are weekly newsletters and termly curriculum information. The prospectus and governors' report fulfil statutory requirements and are attractively presented. Pupils' annual reports make very good use of pupils' own comments and encourage pupils to be aware of their own progress and achievement. Comments on personal development show teachers' detailed

knowledge of their pupils. At present, reports do not report on pupils' progress and achievement across all areas of the curriculum in all classes.

33. The screening of children when they are first admitted to reception points to both strengths and weaknesses in what they can do. Plans are drawn up accordingly to support the children. Pupils who join the school at other times are tested and screened to establish their needs. Individual education plans to support pupils with SEN are of good quality and set targets to gauge progress by.

34. Villagers are frequent visitors, helping with reading, providing expertise or stories about the past. School events are village events: for instance, the annual fair takes place sometimes on the school field, sometimes elsewhere as convenient, and the May Day dancing is a highlight of the calendar. Local people help to welcome the school's visitors from Normandy. The school's closest link is with the parish church, used for weekly assemblies and special occasions. It has long supported the local charity 'Send a Cow' and has strong links with the farming community. Local businesses, particularly a garden centre, provide expertise and materials.

35. Year 6 pupils have a well planned transition programme with the secondary school, involving visits and English and mathematics projects which are completed in Year 7. The school has a well established link with a Normandy school, and is now expanding the connection for other schools in Devon. It works closely with neighbouring primary schools, sharing resources and expertise, and its expanding sports programme allows pupils to compete against others from a wide area in different activities.

36. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept well informed of their children's targets and progress.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school by the headteacher are both good and are well supported by the governors of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is well led and effectively managed.
- Teamwork is the key to the school's current successes.
- The governors understand well the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
- All adults provide pupils with excellent role models.
- Subject leaders still need more time and opportunities to carry out their duties related to their roles as co-ordinators.
- Although governors are now more active in their roles, they place considerable reliance on the headteacher for information about many issues.

Commentary

37. Overall, the school is well led and effectively managed by the headteacher, supported well by governors and the rest of the staff, as was noted at the last inspection. The good management systems in the school create a sense of calm and help provide the backdrop for a good curriculum and good teaching, as it did at the last inspection. This is equally successful in the way that the provision of special needs support is managed.

38. The governing body is effective in supporting the headteacher and understands the strengths and weaknesses of the school, noted as a weakness at the last inspection. They have, over the last few terms, become more active in their roles, although they still place a little too much reliance on the headteacher providing them with information on a very wide range of issues.

39. The co-ordinator of the school's work in special needs was missing from the school for almost a year, as a result some procedures and systems were not followed. The new co-ordinator has re-established systems and the work in this area is now proving effective once again. Support is well directed to pupils with particular needs, although the co-ordinator does not have control over the budget. Governors have satisfied the key issue of the last inspection relating to reporting SEN in the prospectus.

40. On a day to day basis, teamwork is the key to the school's current successes. This was recognised with an 'Investor in People' award. The good management and leadership of the headteacher inspire a sense of commitment and purposefulness in order to provide the best and most appropriate education for all pupils. Recent improvements to overall curriculum planning, the developments to assessment in English, and good quality teaching, are seen across the school, illustrating the collegiate approach of all members of staff. The outcomes of this are clearly seen in the school's high results at the end of Year 6.

41. The school is very much committed to inclusion, providing equal access to the full curriculum for all pupils. This is reflected not only in academic work, but in the school's social provision. In this and many other aspects of school life, all adults provide excellent role models for pupils to follow.

42. As there have been several staffing changes over the recent past, subject co-ordinators have not been in place very long. As a result, they have not had opportunities to monitor their subjects in classes, other than their own. In spite of the budget restrictions the school may experience, it is important that this issue is addressed as soon as possible, as it was noted in the previous inspection report.

43. New staff, including a newly qualified teacher, have been very well inducted into the life of the school. At the same time, the performance management of teachers and support staff is seen to be supportive of their own improvement and the improvement of the school as a whole.

44. There is an effective school development plan in which the school is committing itself to place a higher priority on a thematic approach to learning, whilst still concentrating on retaining its high standards.

45. Finances are looked after well by the efficient school administrator, headteacher and the finance committee of the governors, allowing monies to be spent wisely in support of achieving the highest standards. Overall, despite the high unit costs associated with small schools, expenditure matches income and the school continues to give good value for money.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	327100	Balance from previous year	19865

Total expenditure	305133
Expenditure per pupil	3112

Balance carried forward to the next	21967
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PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision in the Foundation Stage is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most children achieve all the expected early learning goals by the age of six, and in the case of personal, social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy well before this.
- There are too few opportunities for children to learn through play, particularly outside where lack of easy access is a restriction.
- Relationships are very good and children are very successfully introduced to school routines.
- Teaching and learning are overall satisfactory with strengths in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, and mathematical development.

Commentary

46. As with the previous report only four children were in reception for this inspection. They form part of the mixed reception and Year 1 class. They will be joined after Christmas by six more children. Currently children follow a mix of Foundation Stage and early National Curriculum Key Stage 1 activities. These feature less structured play activities than are recommended for this age group, but to a certain extent they are balanced by some advantages of working with Year 1. For example children are emerging as readers and writers ahead of national expectations, and their social skills are very well established early in their school career.

47. In common with most years all children have attended some form of pre-school setting. Although there is a range, children's attainment on entry is above average. Notwithstanding this children make very good progress in **personal, social and emotional development**. They quickly learn school routines, understand the need for rules, and take turns and share. Behaviour is very good and children respond very well to their teacher, learning support assistant and other children. There is a very good ethos of trust and children show consideration. Children exceed the early learning goals in this aspect and are happy to come to school.

48. In **communication, language and literacy** progress is good and children usually reach the early learning goals before the end of reception. Children respond very well to good teaching and high expectations that they should join in discussions. They soon learn to express themselves and to listen to other people. Strategies to sound out words help children with their reading, and standards for most are above average, and for the most able well above. Children are encouraged to write and the majority will be able to write simple sentences by the age of six.

49. In **mathematical development** and **knowledge and understanding of the world** children make sound progress achieving the early learning goals and responding to

opportunities to explore numbers and find out about nature and materials. They develop a good understanding of comparisons such as more than and less than; and begin to appreciate differences in shape and size. Strengths in knowledge and understanding of the world reported in 1999 have been sustained with children joining in Years 1 and 2 topic work (this term studying toys) learning to consider how things have changed over time.

50. Provision and teaching in **physical development** and **creative development** are satisfactory overall with children benefiting from work in music, art and physical education with Year 1 pupils. The school is aware that more opportunities for children to choose activities and be involved in a wider range of structured play would be an advantage. Limitations of space and access to the outside (where many such activities would normally happen) partly explains the situation, but there is a need to develop planning and provision from this point of view.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good** with very good features in the recently established stable staff working as a very good team to develop and make use of literacy skills.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average at the end of Year 2 and high, being well above average, at the end of Year 6.
- Standards in speaking, listening and reading are very good.
- Pupils achieve well including those with special educational needs and those who are more able.
- Assessment is used very well to judge progress and set targets.
- Handwriting is in need of improvement.

Commentary

51. Throughout the school pupils do well, making the most of their ability and experience. The school can demonstrate that it adds value to pupils' performance notwithstanding that children generally start school above average.

52. Standards are above average at the end of Year 2 and high by the time pupils leave Year 6. The school has frequently been in the top 5 per cent of all primary schools nationally over the past four years and has done well against similar schools. There was a slight drop in 2003 but the school's very good assessment systems had predicted this with what was a slightly less capable year group. Awliscombe has done very well to maintain high standards during a period of staffing difficulties. Early indications of 2004 results (where no national statistics are as yet available) are well above average for both Years 2 and 6.

53. Teaching is consistently good and frequently better in all classes. Because teachers' planning, questioning and assessment are very good pupils are very well challenged and respond very positively. The quality of learning is good throughout with very good features. Mixed age and ability classes are well taught with the particularly good contributions of learning support assistants and volunteers in the large Years 3 and 4 class, and where reception children are with Year 1. Pupils achieve well because teachers know what they have to do teach them effectively. New initiatives in assessment are used very successfully to set targets

for individuals. Pupils are made very aware of what they have to do to improve and are actively involved in their learning.

54. Pupils with SEN are well provided for and make good progress against individual education plans. Higher achievers are especially challenged with high expectations and high proportions of Year 6 pupils regularly reaching above average levels.

55. Pupils are articulate and confident and are usually eager to join in discussions: for example Years 5 and 6 skilfully debating features of Greek myths and legends, and Year 1 explaining what makes things special. Standards of reading are well above average. Most pupils read fluently and accurately and enjoy reading for pleasure as well as searching for information.

56. Writing standards have been a main focus of the school's efforts in recent years following dips in performance against similar schools in Year 2 in 2001 and 2003. This is having positive effects. Inspectors find standards are above average at age seven and well above at eleven. Pupils express themselves well, making good use of vocabulary and sentence construction to hold the reader's attention. An area for improvement throughout the school is in pupils' handwriting; too often this is not well formed or cursive.

57. The subject is very well led and managed. This results in very good teamwork, successful teaching, very effective learning and clear reporting to parents. English is well resourced. There are good plans to redevelop the library once the ICT suite is complete.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

58. Literacy is used effectively to support other subjects with notable strengths in the use of pupils' speaking and listening skills. Pupils are confident and their positive self esteem makes discussion very effective in subjects such as science, geography and history. Very good reading and research skills complement all curriculum areas, and pupils' ability to express themselves and record facts in their writing plays a significant part in the success of their learning.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good** by the end of Year 6 and consequently standards are consistently high.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have been consistently high, by the end of Year 6, over a number of years.
- Standards in Year 2 are improving.
- Teaching is good overall.
- There is a strong focus on developing pupils' numeracy skills.
- Although improved there remains insufficient emphasis on the use of ICT in mathematics.
- The assessment programme in mathematics is not yet as comprehensive as that in English.

Commentary

59. Standards in mathematics, by the end of Year 2, as evidenced by National Curriculum test results, fell slightly in 2003. However, raw scores for the results in 2004 suggest that standards have now risen again, due to more consistent teaching and better planning. By the end of Year 6, standards were high when compared with all schools nationally, as they were at the last inspection. It is anticipated that the scores for 2004 will show that results will be very high when compared with all schools and high when compared with similar schools nationally. This would be a continuation of five years of high standards, illustrating the strength of teaching and learning in the subject.

60. Pupils with special educational needs are catered for well in mathematics and a number of them have obtained the nationally expected level for their age. This would illustrate that all pupils, including those with special needs, have made good progress in their learning and achieve well in Year 2 and very well by the end of Year 6.

61. In spite of considerable staff changes, the school is to be congratulated on maintaining its high standards. This has come initially from continuing good teaching. During the inspection eight mathematics lessons were observed. Of these two were satisfactory, four were good, one was very good and one excellent. Strengths in all lessons were noted in planning, expectations and behaviour management. In the excellent lesson, the teaching skills of both teacher and assistant in the large Years 3 and 4 class ensured all pupils were challenged including extension work for the more able pupils. Questioning was at a high level and the pace of the lesson kept pupils motivated and on task.

62. As a result of high quality teaching, pupils showed good and often very good attitudes to work in mathematics. This in itself supports the progress pupils make in lessons. Relationships amongst pupils and with adults are very supportive of learning and pupils have no fear in contributing verbally to lessons, neither do they fear asking for help.

63. The new subject co-ordinator and the headteacher have looked at previous problems in standards in Years 1 and 2. These were issues concerning previous teachers. These issues have now been addressed and the new teachers are steadily raising standards particularly in numeracy. The co-ordinator recognises that the assessment programme for mathematics is not as well defined and useful as that operated in English. It does not completely address the issue of longer term target setting, neither does it involve pupils enough in their own assessment. At the same time, the school does not yet make enough use of ICT to support learning in mathematics and give pupils further opportunities to practise computer skills.

Mathematics across the curriculum

64. Pupils often use mathematics as part of their work in other subjects. For example, they draw graphs, create tables and take measurements in science. However, these opportunities tend to occur coincidentally rather than as part of a systematic planning for the further use of mathematical skills. Homework is set for mathematics and parents are appreciative of this and help by ensuring the work set is completed.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good** and as a result standards are high by the end of Year 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of work by the end of Year 6 are consistently high, and pupils achieve well and often very well.
- Teaching remains consistently good.
- Revision for the National Curriculum tests is well planned and helps pupils to achieve their potential.
- Investigation forms an important and well planned part of the work in science.
- Whole school regular assessment in science is not yet organised as well as the assessment work in English, but is nevertheless effective.
- The management of science is carried out very well.

Commentary

65. Standards of work seen for pupils in Year 2 were above the expected level for pupils of this age. This shows an improvement on standards noted in the last inspection and illustrates that pupils are achieving well. The school has completely answered a key issue noted about standards for more able pupils in Year 2 in the last report. In Year 6, the results of the National Curriculum tests in 2003 showed that pupils reached high standards when compared with national averages and those for similar schools. In the tests of 2004, for which there are not yet comparative figures, it is anticipated that results will be very high. This type of result has been consistent over several years, illustrating the strength of the subject in the school. Pupils all achieve well, with many pupils achieving very well.

66. Teaching was consistently good during the inspection and accounts for the very good results achieved. Teachers' questioning, relationships, expectations and planning are of very good quality. Even higher are teachers' expectations of pupils' behaviour. All of these very good aspects of teaching have a very positive effect on the progress that pupils make. The only element missing from the work in science is a consistent link to information and communication technology. The school knows this and plans are in hand to improve the situation.

67. In a very good lesson, seen in Year 2, pupils were engrossed in their work on investigating sound and as a result made very good progress in their learning and achieved very well. The teacher made the lesson stimulating and ensured the quality of learning by systematic step by step teaching.

68. Overall, investigational science is a well taught area of the subject. Through 'hands on' experiences, pupils tend to learn more quickly. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, are catered for well by teachers and as a result all make at least good progress in learning.

69. Sound links are made between science and mathematics, as pupils are asked to make measurements, draw graphs and create tables. Not as successful are the links with literacy. For example, in a Years 5 and 6 lesson, pupils were all given sentences to copy with gaps to fill in, with not enough thought being given to the differences in ability of the pupils in the class. At the same time, the scrutiny of previously completed work showed that there was not a consistent approach to writing out investigations. A much clearer writing frame for various abilities of pupils would have ensured that pupils would have been able to use their literacy skills more appropriately.

70. Science is very well led and managed. The co-ordinator gives good support to colleagues and is working towards developing assessment techniques. He makes good use of the budget to ensure that there are sufficient resources.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **unsatisfactory**, but will be much improved following the completion of the new suite currently being built.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are below expectations by the time pupils leave the school.

Commentary

71. As a result of lack of opportunity throughout their time in the school Year 6 pupils will not have covered all required elements in sufficient depth by the time they leave. Consequently standards are notably below expectations and pupils do not achieve as well as they should. The main causes of this are restrictions of space and equipment compounded by frequent staff changes. Too little time has been devoted to ICT as a subject in its own right. There are examples of computers being used to support other subjects: for example the internet for research, Textese and word processing. However, opportunities have been missed to advance pupils' understanding and skills. Very little ICT could be observed so no judgements can be made about the quality of teaching and learning.

72. The situation is a little better in Years 1 and 2, but even here pupils' proficiency is still limited by lack of opportunity and confidence.

73. The school's own analysis, led by the head as co-ordinator, has made staff and governors only too aware of deficiencies. There are good plans to create and resource the new suite, continue staff training, and develop planning and assessment to improve provision. Such changes are imminent and the future looks bright. The school is set to overturn the hitherto unsatisfactory progress in ICT since the last inspection.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

74. Where ICT is used to support other subjects this is satisfactory: for example in word processing, and individual spelling and mathematics programs. However, the school is aware that there is much greater potential. Plans to develop ICT use are being considered in the light of new facilities.

HUMANITIES

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

Provision in both geography and history is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Individual topics in history are well presented and topics in both geography and history are well planned.
- Visits and visitors add much first hand information for pupils in both subjects.
- The new subject co-ordinator has made a good start in overseeing work in both subjects.

Commentary

75. It was only possible to observe work in history during the inspection, as it was at the last inspection. However, a close analysis of the scheme of work and of planning in geography shows that provision in both subjects is satisfactory and that standards reached in history are in line with national expectations for pupils in both Years 2 and 6. This was the case at the last inspection and shows that in spite of several staff changes, standards have been maintained.

76. Recently the scheme of work for both subjects was reviewed and changes made to make it more manageable and appropriate for classes with two year groups in each. Whilst planning follows the general national scheme, it has been customised by the school to suit its particular needs.

77. Teaching of history is good overall. In a Years 3 and 4 lesson, teaching was noted as being very good. This resulted from excellent questioning, pace and relationships. Very good use was made of reference material relating to Anglo Saxons. As a result, pupils made very good progress in their learning and achieved well.

78. Work on display shows that pupils are given opportunities to use their good literacy skills in support of their work in history. Older pupils write about Greek myths, while younger pupils identify similarities and differences between old and new toys. Good links are made with art and design in a topic about Romans. Pupils make models of Roman villas, having first planned and drawn their designs.

79. The school is keen to improve further its work in geography and history by making even clearer links with other subjects as staff intend to replan their work in topics. This work will continue to be supported by very good visits and visitors such as the Roman Soldier visit, a trip to the Exeter Museum, Cheddar Gorge and many others.

80. The recently appointed subject co-ordinator has already begun to make inroads into managing the subject, although she does not yet have enough free time to observe colleagues teaching or pupils learning in other classes. She has begun to audit the resources available for the subject and arranges for regular loans from the Devon Resource Centre. She is proposing to complete a new policy statement for the subjects and then consider how to organise assessments in order to check pupils' progress.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

PHYSICAL EDUCATION (PE)

Provision in physical education is **good** and fast improving.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject is very effectively managed and promoted.
- There is a very good range of extracurricular activities on offer.
- The school makes very good use of limited accommodation.

Commentary

81. The well qualified and enthusiastic co-ordinator's input has a significant effect on the quality of provision. Standards are in line with national expectations and pupils are making good progress because planning is very good and ensures all aspects of the National Curriculum are covered. Dance and games are well catered for. Gymnastics provision (although severely limited by lack of space and climbing equipment) is satisfactory with some strengths in floorwork.

82. Good teaching and very good use of limited accommodation available helps pupils to achieve well. Good use is made of outside agencies to coach football and teach swimming. School records, the few lessons seen, and evidence from both breaktimes and extracurricular activities point to standards which continue to improve rapidly.

83. A positive feature of the good provision is the opportunity for older pupils to be involved regularly in adventurous activities such as kayaking and orienteering. The co-ordinator has developed strong links with other schools in sharing expertise and encouraging competition. The subject is very well led and managed.

84. Extracurricular opportunities are judged very good, a real credit to staff, parents and volunteers in such a small school. Activities are very well supported and attended and make a strong contribution, not only to pupils' physical development, but to widening social horizons beyond pupils' own age groups. A very good example of pupils enjoying themselves whilst learning and making progress in physical skills was seen in folk dance club, which over a quarter of the school attend each week. Currently the school is awaiting the final evaluation of their application for the Activemark which recognises schools highly committed to promoting healthy lifestyles through PE.

85. Only one **art** lesson and no **design and technology (DT)** sessions were observed. Consequently it is not possible to make judgements about standards, teaching or learning in lessons. Sampling of pupils' work on display and in their books, together with teachers' planning and records, confirms that provision in both subjects is at least satisfactory. Pupils cover all required elements and skills from both art and DT are used effectively to support other curriculum areas. Drawing and painting are used well to illustrate work in literacy, history and geography: for example Years 3 and 4 book jackets, and Years 5 and 6 Ancient Greek designs. Application of the design, make, and evaluate process is clearly evident in pupils' Roman villa models.

86. In the one art lesson seen in Years 3 and 4 teaching and learning were excellent. Pupils' drawing and painting skills were considerably improved because of the teacher's understanding and ability to communicate. Pupils achieved very well. Their appreciation of the work of different artists was significantly enhanced during the session with a very good impact on spiritual and cultural development.

87. Pupils' work is displayed well and there are indications that the positive standards reported in the last inspection have been sustained despite art and design and technology not being high priorities of the school improvement plan. From available evidence the leadership and management of both subjects is satisfactory.

88. Pupils, parents and staff report that Art Week, featuring 'Water', was very enjoyable and very successful not only in promoting art but as a focus for work in other subjects. Year 2 illustrations and poetry are good examples of pupils experimenting with expressing themselves well.

89. Provision in **music** is good. Only one lesson could be observed. However, evidence from music in assemblies and at church, and from videos of school performances indicates standards of singing are good as at the last inspection. Music lessons in each class are taken by a teacher with specialist skills. In the one lesson seen in Year 2 teaching was very good. Pupils achieved well, appreciating variations in pitch and made very good progress in learning about and understanding symbols to record compositions. Pupils responded very well and obviously enjoyed the session.

90. Music provision (which includes opportunities for pupils to learn to play instruments) is well managed. Resources are good including a good range of instruments from a mixture of cultures. The subject benefits from not only the expertise and enthusiasm of the co-ordinator, but the commitment of a skilled learning support assistant. Music clubs and activities are very popular with children and well attended.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL, HEALTH AND CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION (PSHCE)

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and response to the school's provision are very positive and very good examples of the school's success in PSHCE.

Commentary

91. Personal, social, health and citizenship education is timetabled for all classes, and planning ensures progression whilst including the revisiting of key topics at different levels. 'Circle times' are used to discuss social and moral issues. All staff are confident in teaching the subject and arrangements are effective. The school has a policy on sex and relationships education, developed in consultation with parents and health professionals. The school is working with the local National Health Service Trust to promote healthy eating and each day begins with a short exercise programme for all. A family aerobics club for parents and children was established last year.

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	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	2
Pupils' achievement	2
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	2
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	4
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	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2

The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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