

## INSPECTION REPORT

**Knights Templar Church of England & Methodist VA  
Community School**

Watchet

LEA area: Somerset

Unique reference number: 123860

Headteacher: Mr A Woollam

Lead inspector: Mr D Clegg

Dates of inspection: 6 – 8 December 2004

Inspection number: 267158

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:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	4 – 9 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	235
School address:	Liddymore Road Watchet Somerset
Postcode:	TA23 0EX
Telephone number:	01984 634385
Fax number:	01984 634386
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs P Gibbons
Date of previous inspection:	22 February 1999

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

An average sized first school catering for pupils aged between four and nine. There is a similar number of boys and girls. There are very few children from ethnic minority groups; all pupils speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average.

There is an above average number of pupils with special educational needs including some with significant learning difficulties. Main learning problems are social and emotional, moderate learning, speech and communications and physical difficulties. Two pupils have statements of special needs. When children start school they are attaining standards that are well below average.

The school shares a site with a Sure Start<sup>1</sup> facility that has just opened. The school was instrumental in gaining the funding. The centre provides a range of family and community based services that include the following:

- Adult education
- Family learning programme
- Family support services
- Community use of premises

The school has gained a number of awards including, most recently, the Activemark<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Sure Start is a government programme aimed at bringing together high quality child care and family services.

<sup>2</sup> Activemark is an award that recognises the work that the school does in encouraging physical activity and participation in sports.

**INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM**

<b>Members of the inspection team</b>			<b>Subject responsibilities</b>
3241	Mr D Clegg	Lead inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Art and design English as an additional language
13874	Ms J Chesterfield	Lay inspector	
4343	Ms S Billington	Team inspector	English Science Design and technology Physical education Special educational needs
23158	Ms M D'Arcy	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage Geography History Music
24528	Mr G Muton	Team inspector	Community Provision

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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, subjects and courses

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

#### **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

**10**

Teaching and learning

The curriculum

Care, guidance and support

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

#### **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**14**

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

**16**

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

#### **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2**

### **PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS**

**25**

## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a successful school that provides a **satisfactory** quality of education. It has some significant strengths. Standards are below or well below the national average but pupils' achievement is satisfactory and sometimes good. Overall teaching is satisfactory; it is often good in literacy and numeracy lessons. A high proportion of pupils find learning difficult. The school is well led and managed. It has been very successful in gaining extra funding to benefit pupils and their families. There are excellent opportunities to participate in sport and a very good range of other clubs and activities. The school is very much at the heart of its community and provides **good** value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Children make a good start in the foundation stage<sup>3</sup>
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning due to the good provision for personal development
- Although standards are low in writing and speaking some good teaching is leading to improved levels of achievement
- The headteacher provides a good sense of direction and purpose
- Up until recently, performance data has not been used enough
- There are very strong links with parents and the community and very good community provision
- There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs but the management of those with behavioural difficulties is not always effective

The school has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. There have been good improvements in the foundation stage. Governors are more involved in setting the direction of the school. Many of the strong features of the last inspection have been maintained, although standards have declined.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of <b>Year 2</b> , compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
Reading	D	E	E	D
Writing	E	E	E	D
Mathematics	C	D	D	C

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

Pupils' achievement is **satisfactory**. Standards are generally below or well below the national average. Standards in English are particularly low, especially in writing, but there are signs of some good progress being made in reading. Weak literacy skills impact on standards in other subjects particularly in science. Standards in mathematics are below average, although overall pupils achieve well from a low starting point.

Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are broadly in line with expectations. It was not possible to make a judgement about standards in other subjects.

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<sup>3</sup> The foundation stage refers to the children in reception classes.

Children enter school with very low skills in literacy and numeracy and, although they make some good progress, by the start of year 1 the majority have not reached the early learning goals (ELGs)<sup>4</sup>. Over time, girls tend to do better than boys. Pupils with special educational needs achieve satisfactorily; they benefit from the support they get from the teaching assistants.

Pupils' personal development is **good**; the majority has good attitudes to work, although a significant number find learning very difficult.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a **satisfactory** quality of education.

The overall quality of teaching is **satisfactory**. There are good lessons throughout the school, particularly in English and mathematics that are leading to some improvements. Teachers use resources very well and teaching assistants make a positive contribution to lessons. In most lessons pupils are well managed; there are some instances, however, where the management of pupils is weak and the teaching lacks focus.

The curriculum is broad and balanced. There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities. There is a good level of care and support to all pupils.

The school is very committed to serving the community and provides a high level of support to families. The partnership with parents is very strong.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The school is **well led**. The headteacher provides a good sense of purpose and direction. The governors make a significant contribution to the strategic direction of the school. Key staff make an appropriate contribution to how the school develops. The use of performance data is at an early stage of development. The provision for special educational needs is generally well managed but there are weaknesses in the management of the support for those with behavioural difficulties.

## PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Pupils and parents are extremely positive about the school. Parents feel that their children do well; they are particularly pleased with the way in which the school is led.

## IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve standards in English, especially in writing and speaking
- Make better use of performance data to drive improvements
- Improve the management of the support for pupils with behavioural difficulties<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> Early learning goals are the standards that most children are expected to reach by the time they begin year.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

Standards are below the national average in mathematics and science and well below the average in English. Overall however, achievement is satisfactory.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children make a good start in the foundation stage
- There is some good achievement in mathematics
- Standards in writing are well below average but there are improvements in achievement in years 2 and 4
- Limited literacy skills impact on pupils' achievement in other subjects

#### Commentary

1. The school has a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and this impacts on the results gained in tests.
2. Children enter school with very low skills in literacy and numeracy and, although they achieve well and make good progress, by the time they start year 1, the majority have not reached the early learning goals<sup>6</sup> in literacy and mathematics although results in mathematics are higher than in literacy. Many children reach the learning goals in their personal development and in the current year many are also on course to reach the goals in mathematical development.

#### **Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2004**

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	14.4 (14.4)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	12.9 (12.2)	14.4 (14.6)
mathematics	15.6 (15.6)	16.2 (16.3)

*There were 50 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

3. The results in the 2004 national tests at the end of year 2 also reflect the variation in standards between literacy and numeracy. Results in reading and writing are well below the national average and below the results in similar schools. In mathematics, results are below the national average but in line with the standards in similar schools. There is a steady trend of mathematics being stronger than English.
4. Overall the standards in the inspection broadly reflect the results. There is evidence of improving standards in mathematics in years 2 and 4 where pupils often achieve well in lessons. Similarly, in reading there are some improvements in how well pupils are achieving in year 2 and in some lessons in year 4. Overall, pupils' achievement is satisfactory and in some instances good.
5. Pupils' weak literacy skills also impact on standards in other subjects. This is the case in science where recorded work is limited. Although there was too little evidence to make an overall judgment about standards in history and geography there was very little recorded work. In information and communication technology (ICT) pupils reach expected levels in their skills although they have limited understanding about the uses of ICT.

6. Over time, boys are generally doing better than girls in writing and mathematics; there is little difference in reading. Pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as other pupils. They often benefit from the specific support in mainstream lessons.
7. It was not possible to make any judgments about standards in other subjects. However, the school makes a significant commitment to sport and there is some good evidence – mainly success in competitions - to indicate that in some aspects, pupils reach high standards. This is particularly the case in swimming.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Pupils' attitudes to school are good and their behaviour is satisfactory. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Attendance at the school is in line with the national average. Pupils' punctuality is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils enjoy what the school offers
- Some pupils have difficulty behaving acceptably in class
- The school works hard on pupils' social and moral development

### **Commentary**

8. Pupils are very enthusiastic about school life because of the wide range of opportunities open to them. The many clubs, organised by the school, are very well attended by pupils of all ages and abilities. Pupils are proud to take on responsibility and to show what they can do for their school. Older pupils readily help with younger ones at lunchtimes, and the school council officers are keen to have extra meetings and to represent their school at the local education authority (LEA) pupils' parliament. Reception children are very happy and well behaved as they go about their activities.

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9. Most pupils behave as they should and respond appropriately to their teachers. Some pupils, though, find it hard to concentrate and behave for any length of time in lessons. While there is specific support for these pupils, arrangements for reintegrating those who have been withdrawn from lessons are not always effective. Behaviour around the school, in the dining hall and in the playground is good. Pupils know the rules and there are good levels of supervision to help pupils stick to them.

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10. Pupils' good behaviour around the site results from the emphasis the school places on their social and moral development. Teachers and support staff are good role models for children, treating them with courtesy and respect and helping them develop good manners and a sense of right and wrong. The school does not neglect other aspects of its pupils' personal development. It makes the most of the natural beauty of the school's setting to build a sense of spirituality in pupils. The school is keenly aware of the need to give pupils an understanding of the many cultures living side by side in modern Britain and to make them realise that their mainly white community is not always the norm. It does what it can to bring different cultures to the pupils.

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### **Attendance**

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.3	School data	0.3
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

## Exclusions

11. There have been two temporary exclusions in the last school year. The reasons were unacceptable behaviour.

### *Ethnic background of pupils*

### *Exclusions in the last school year*

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	226	2	0
White – any other White background	4	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	3	0	0

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

### Teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory but it varies from very good to poor. The teaching in the foundation stage and year 2 is good. The quality of learning varies; it is generally better for the younger children. In too many lessons in years 3 and 4 pupils struggle to learn. The use of assessment is satisfactory.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Basic skills are well taught in the foundation stage and assessment is well used
- Teachers make good use of resources, particularly ICT
- Teaching assistants are generally well used
- Some teaching lacks focus and occasionally pupils are not managed in the most effective way
- The small group teaching for higher attaining pupils is effective
- The older pupils' work habits are not well established

### Commentary

12. There is good teaching throughout the school. The teaching in the foundation stage is effective, particularly in teaching children early literacy and numeracy skills. The activities that the children are given are well planned and based on careful assessments of what they already know and understand. Teaching is also consistently good in year 2. Lessons here are also well planned and learning moves on at a brisk pace with a good sense of purpose and direction. Pupils respond to this approach and many are making good progress.

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13. The teachers are keen to make good use of the resources. The impact of the interactive whiteboards is very positive; children enjoy seeing the images and teachers are skilled at making the most of the exciting possibilities the boards present. Teachers are also adept at using 'on-line' resources to support their teaching; this was particularly evident in mathematics lessons.

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14. Teaching assistants are usually well used. In the most effective lessons they are used to support particular pupils by reinforcing what the teacher is saying at the start and working with a small group during the middle part of the lesson. They usually have very clear guidance about what

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they need to emphasise when working with the group and make careful notes to feedback to the teacher. This small group work is particularly effective in helping those pupils with special educational needs. The support they are given in literacy and numeracy lessons is a key factor in the progress they make. In some lessons the assistants are not used enough in introductory sessions to help particular pupils.

15. The recently introduced teaching for the higher attaining pupils is giving this group of pupils an opportunity to work together. The teaching is challenging and often imaginative, with an emphasis on encouraging pupils to apply their skills to new problems.

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16. In many lessons teachers are making effective use of the national guidance about teaching different subjects. However, in some lessons teaching lacks a clear direction and is not guided enough by what children need to be learning. This is the case in some literacy lessons where pupils learn something at the start of the lesson that does not always bear any relation to what comes next.

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17. In most lessons pupils are well managed; there are some instances however where the management of pupils is weak. The systems that the school has for managing behaviour are not always used consistently and some behaviour is not tackled early enough and is allowed to affect the learning of other pupils. There are some children who have not got well established work habits and find sitting still, paying attention and applying themselves for a sustained period very challenging. This lack of application makes a significant impact on the progress that this group of pupils, and sometimes others, makes.

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**Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 35 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0%)	3 (8%)	20 (57%)	10 (29%)	1 (3%)	1 (3%)	0 (0%)

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

**Curriculum**

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum; the curriculum for the foundation stage is good. Extra-curricular opportunities are very good. The school's accommodation is very good and resources are good.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Literacy planning does not match the pupils' needs closely enough
- There are very good opportunities for pupils to develop their talents and interests
- There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs and a good programme for pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE)
- Teaching benefits from very good accommodation and facilities

**Commentary**

18. The school makes some good use of national guidance to plan subjects. In English, though, the guidelines of the literacy strategy have not been well enough adapted to suit the school's pupils and this results in some lessons not being as effective as they could be.

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19. Outside the classroom, the school offers pupils a tremendous range of clubs, from singing to stamp collecting via country dancing and computers. Opportunities for sport, in particular, are excellent. Boys and girls of all abilities get the chance to develop their skills, both for personal enjoyment and to represent the school in competitions.

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20. There is a good level of support available for pupils with special educational needs. For those pupils with learning difficulties, specific programmes to boost literacy or numeracy skills often have a very positive impact, for example, in boosting reading skills. However, there are occasions where the withdrawal of these pupils for individual or small group work means that they miss key parts of a lesson, for instance, a well taught whole class session on basic literacy skills. For those pupils who present challenging behaviour, in-class support from teaching assistants is usually successful in enabling pupils to participate in, and benefit from, the lesson. Where this support is not available, inappropriate behaviour sometimes has an impact on the quality of learning of the rest of the class. The timetabled small group sessions provided for these pupils are bringing mixed benefits; the withdrawal session has a very high level of adult support and children get a good deal of individual attention. However, the sessions are not always well structured because there are disruptions to the planned activities.

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21. All pupils benefit from the PSHE programme, which is strongly focused on their needs and the lives they lead. Recent initiatives, for example, include road and cycling safety.

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22. Very good specialist facilities help teachers demonstrate and explain ideas in subjects such as ICT, and the good-sized classrooms with additional areas make it easier for them to organise group work. The school libraries though are difficult for pupils to use without adult supervision. Some of the non-fiction library stock is outdated and misleading and needs to be reviewed.

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### Care, guidance and support

The attention given to pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is good. Support, advice and guidance for pupils, based on monitoring, are good. Involvement of pupils in the school's work is good.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships with adults are very supportive for pupils
- Pupils with special educational needs get good support but there are some weaknesses in records kept on them
- Reception children get a good start to their schooling
- Pupils play their part in the life of the school

### Commentary

23. The number of support staff in the school and the emphasis the school places on care mean that pupils always have someone to turn to when they have a problem. This is especially valuable for the high proportion of pupils who have difficulties coping at school because of their particular needs. Staff make sure that the school's daily routines run smoothly and that pupils are well looked after if they are ill or injured. However, minor accidents are not always recorded and not all staff are trained in child protection.

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24. For pupils with special educational needs, individual education plans (IEPs) include clear targets that are generally focused on their identified areas of difficulty. However, for those with behavioural difficulties, targets are sometimes primarily concerned with learning and not with addressing behavioural issues. IEPs are reviewed regularly, but the outcome of the review and the subsequent action needed is not always recorded, similarly it is not always clear who has contributed to the review. As a result, it is sometimes difficult to assess the progress that a child has made or to be clear about the basis for the next set of targets.

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25. The children in the reception class, along with their parents, enjoy a carefully structured induction programme which helps the children settle quickly and easily into their new surroundings. Well designed monitoring and assessment of their needs helps children make good progress. Elsewhere in the school, pupils' personal development is well tracked, but monitoring of their academic achievement is not consistently well used.

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26. The school values the contribution made by its pupils and gives them good opportunities to do their bit for the school and the wider community. Through the school council pupils have a say in school improvement, such as development of the new wild area, and have the chance to help others by raising money for charities.

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

Links with parents and the community are very good. Services and support programmes for parents and the community are also very good. Links with other schools are good.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school's open door policy leads to very positive relationships with parents
- The school makes the most of what the local community can offer its pupils
- There is a very good level of provision for the community

### Commentary

27. The school is genuinely committed to an open door policy for its parents. In practice, this means that parents can, and do, bring their children into class every day and chat to their teachers. This means that any concerns, personal or academic, are shared at an early stage, and any potential problems can be nipped in the bud. Some of the written information for parents is very good, including the prospectus, the governors' report and the weekly newsletters, all of which celebrate the school's and the pupils' successes. A number of teachers make very good use of their windows and doors as noticeboards for parents; some also send home good information about what children will be covering although this is not consistent across the school. Reports to parents on their children's progress give plenty of detail about what pupils can do, but do not make it clear how well they are doing for their age. Some contain good targets for improvement, but others are not specific enough to be helpful for parents.

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28. The school is at the heart of the local community and takes advantage of the opportunity to play a prominent role in the life of the town. Very good relationships have been built up with local people and organisations who are keen to come and make their contribution to the school. Pupils get to display their writing in the nearby supermarket and sell their poetry books in the art gallery, for example, and work with a local sculptor and the town's boxing club. They sing carols in the harbour, enjoy visits from the coastguard and the navy, and go to local farms and churches. All these experiences give pupils the chance to broaden their education and also a sense of the community to which they belong. Good links with schools in the area help to extend the range of opportunities further, particularly in sport. Schools are able to share expertise and pupils are able to compete with others.

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29. The school has fostered very good links with community partners over a number of years and has earned a high reputation for taking advantage of the learning opportunities available through these links. The school works very hard to reach out to those parents who may for a number of different reasons find it difficult to establish positive relationships with the school. There is a strong commitment within the school to provide support programmes and family learning courses whenever possible.

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30. The courses offered are very effective in achieving their central purpose of encouraging parents and their children to enjoy new experiences together. Parents who have participated in the 'Step Ahead'<sup>7</sup> course report how their own and their child's confidence has increased and how they are more knowledgeable about what their children do in school. A number of other courses have been run by the school including an innovative 'Active Adults Course' which encouraged the involvement of parents through sport, and also ICT courses, First Aid and Hygiene courses.

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<sup>7</sup> Step Ahead is a course to help parents with developing literacy skills with their children

There are a number of significant success stories of participants on courses going on to apply for adult literacy and other courses, to apply for jobs and to offer to help in school. The benefits to the children of parents who join these courses are very wide ranging but include most significantly enhanced relationships between parents and children, and between parents and teachers.

31. The school is very proud of its community status and opens its doors to all the community groups in the vicinity. The school facilities, especially the indoor pool and the hall, are used extensively throughout the year for sport, social events and public meetings. The community has been very supportive in a number of major fund-raising efforts aimed at improving community facilities. The establishment of the Sure Start pre-school on the school site has greatly enhanced community provision.

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## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The school is well led. The leadership is good and the management is satisfactory. The governors play a good part in leading the school.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides a clear sense of direction and purpose
- Not enough use is made of performance data to identify key priorities
- The support for pupils with literacy and numeracy difficulties is well managed but there are weaknesses in the management of the behaviour support
- The foundation stage is well led and managed
- The governors make a good contribution to how the school develops

### Commentary

32. The school is effectively led by the headteacher and the governors. There is a very strong commitment, shared by all staff, to serve the community and respond to its particular needs. The headteacher has intimate knowledge of the community which he uses to develop very good relationships with parents and the wider community. His positive leadership has resulted in school staff sharing this commitment including some teachers who are dedicated to providing family learning opportunities. The commitment, drive and energy of the headteacher were hugely influential in the decision to bring Sure Start to the town and to establish the pre-school facility on the school site.

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33. There is an equal commitment to improving standards and the school has put in several initiatives, particularly to support writing. However, it is only recently that the school has begun to organise and analyse information about how well pupils are doing to identify key weaknesses. Assessment information is not recorded in a common format in all year groups and this presents problems when trying to analyse the information. Key staff make an important contribution; subjects are generally effectively managed.

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34. There is a large number of teaching assistants deployed to support pupils with special educational needs. They have a positive impact in their work with groups and individuals on specific support programmes and in many lessons are given helpful guidance from the teacher on the organisation and expected outcomes of the tasks that they support. However, there are some whole class lessons where there is no support available and teachers struggle to manage a significant number of pupils with behavioural and learning difficulties. At the same time, there are teachers and teaching assistants working with small groups on a withdrawal basis. There is not enough focus on ensuring that pupils integrate into mainstream classrooms or in supporting class teachers in managing poor behaviour.

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- 35. The foundation stage has made some significant improvements since the last inspection. It is well led, teaching has improved and the provision is much better.

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- 36. Governors do a good job. They are instrumental in setting the strategic direction of the school and are very supportive of, and committed to, the school's community provision. They are fully aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses but they do not always challenge the school enough.

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- 37. There are good financial procedures in place. The school has an entrepreneurial approach to seeking financial support from a range of sources. It receives substantial funds through lettings, that include the swimming pool, and this helps provide a good level of staffing and resources. The school finance officer is committed to the community use of the school facilities. Her efforts result in considerable funds being raised each year from community hirings. Governors have made a positive decision to carry these funds forward over a number of years to maintain the staffing ratios and to maintain a contingency fund to cover any major problems with the swimming pool.

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**Financial information**

***Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004***

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	£804,857	Balance from previous year	£126,860
Total expenditure	£679,396	Balance carried forward to the next	£125,460
Expenditure per pupil	£3,424.92		

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

### AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

#### PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

##### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's confidence, behaviour and social skills are promoted effectively
- Behaviour is very good

##### Commentary

38. Teaching is good and children achieve well; many are on course to reach the expected goals by the end of the year. Although they have only been in school for a short time, even the youngest children show confidence and security in class and during outdoor play. This is attributable to the sensitive and caring way that all adults treat children reflecting the staff's good understanding of their needs. The very good role models set by staff promote children's very good behaviour and developing social skills. For example, good manners are reinforced throughout the day in many situations resulting in children saying 'please' and 'thank you' and showing kindness to each another. Children are responding well to improved opportunities to work and play together. Many are happy to share resources and very few incidences of conflict were seen. The children also enjoy the improved opportunities for them to make some choices about their work.

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39. Children have settled quickly into school routines. They understand the need to walk around school sensibly and quietly, and are not overawed by events such as whole school assemblies or eating their lunch in the hall with older children. Self-care skills are developing well. For example, children know to wash their hands after using the toilet or before handling food. They show competence when changing for PE. Here the children are given support by adults, but encouraged to be independent.

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#### COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

##### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Speaking and listening skills are constantly promoted
- Teachers promote positive attitudes to books and teach letter sounds well

##### Commentary

40. Although standards are well below the expected goals by the end of the reception year, the children make good progress from a very low starting point. Speaking skills are very weak so teachers do much to promote this aspect in all areas of learning; overall teaching is good. This represents good improvement since the last inspection. For instance, teachers constantly ask questions that require children to give more than a one-word answer, encouraging them to speak in sentences and give as much detail as possible. The children enjoy the many role-play activities that are planned to promote these skills, such as enacting parts of the Christmas story.

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41. Stimulating and appropriate books are provided in classrooms. However, many children are still at the stage of flicking quickly through the pages and their concentration levels are low. Although

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some know that the print carries meaning, many pay little attention to this. Whilst children clearly take pleasure in listening to well-read stories, they have difficulty in providing explanations about, for example, what the illustrations might communicate. Children's knowledge of letter sounds is developing very well. They enjoy finding items that begin with the 'letter of the week', as well as singing and performing the actions to jingles linked to individual letter sounds. Some very good teaching of letter sounds was seen. The teacher taught and reinforced the 'b' sound in ways that really stimulated the children and maintained their attention. For instance, there was creative use of a puppet who made 'mistakes' with sounds and activities requiring children to form a letter in paint and modelling dough. There was an outdoor activity in which children had to chant a letter sound and find their same-sound partner; and, for higher attainers, opportunities to draw objects beginning with the sound and have a go at writing the word.

42. Writing skills are very weak for many children. A minority attempt to use what they know about letter sounds to write simple words, such as 'bat' and 'btn' (button). Others are beginning to include some of the key words, such as 'l' and 'a' that they are learning each day through practical activities and games. Whilst all children's work shows good progress since the beginning of the term, many are still not at the stage of making letter-like marks. Basic writing skills are taught frequently and effectively, however, with good opportunities for children to learn correct pencil grip, letter formation and to write in pretend-play situations.

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## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children achieve very well
- Teaching is very good and relevant to children's age and interests

### **Commentary**

43. Children make very good progress in response to extremely effective teaching and learning experiences. In the past, they have not reached the expected goals, but such is the progress made to date, many of the current reception children look to be on course to achieve these by the end of the year. Children's skills with number are developing particularly well. Even the youngest count confidently to 20 and count back from ten. Many know what number is 'one more than' another and show the correct number of fingers and objects up to ten. Teachers have high expectations and set challenging work in activities that interest children and are relevant to their age and experience. For example, during the inspection, work on identifying and understanding the properties of three-dimensional shapes was reinforced very well as children were required to cut appropriate sized Christmas paper to wrap different shaped objects and roll out marzipan to fit pieces of Christmas cake. Teachers promoted correct mathematical vocabulary, for instance, when helping children to order different sized objects, describing these in terms of which was bigger, smaller, the biggest/smallest etc. Activities in other areas such as in art, and work in the sand and water, help children to develop an early understanding of other key mathematical ideas, such as capacity and pattern.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children use ICT confidently and competently
- Teachers have high expectations and give children plenty of opportunities to learn from first-hand experiences

## Commentary

44. Although standards are generally below those expected by the end of the year, children make good progress. Teaching is good; teachers have high expectations and provide children with interesting and relevant experiences. Children do particularly well in developing technological awareness and skills. During the inspection, for example, they controlled the computer mouse very well to draw detailed pictures of Jesus, Mary, angels and stars. They also showed good awareness of how to control a programmable floor robot, pressing directional and number keys to make it move forwards, for increasing distances, on its pretend journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem. The development of early design and technology skills were evident in the good models that children made from wood. They chose different shaped pieces, cutting these with saws and joining them using hammers, nails, screws and glue.

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45. The many practical experiences provided by teachers, such as making fruit salad, vegetable soup and bread, promote early science skills. For instance, before cutting into fruits, children were asked to predict and draw what they might look like inside. Later they were asked to use all their senses to observe and describe the fruits as well as the changes that occur when various ingredients are mixed or cooked. Visits around the locality, to look at buildings and services, promote early geographical skills and discussions about important experiences in children's lives, such as birthdays, help to give them a sense of the past and present.

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## PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Thoughtful planning ensures children have good opportunities to develop physically
- Children make good progress but their small movements are still underdeveloped by the end of the year
- A well resourced outdoor area is used effectively to promote physical skills

## Commentary

46. Good teaching ensures that children make good progress in all aspects. By the end of the year, many should reach the expected goals in respect of developing large physical skills, but finer skills, such as holding and manipulating pencils, remain below expectations. This is despite the good provision to develop these skills. For instance, teachers provide lots of opportunities for children to develop dexterity and co-ordination through working with clay and other modelling materials as well as tasks such as threading, cutting, painting, drawing and specific handwriting activities. The outdoor area is well organised to promote skills such as climbing, balancing and jumping. The use of this area has improved greatly since the last inspection, with a good proportion of lessons including some work outside. The play area between the two classes is also well resourced to promote physical development, including resources such as slides and wheeled toys. During the inspection, the joint PE lesson for both classes showed the progress that children had made in developing a sense of space and awareness of others. Children also showed confidence in moving and the ability to respond to signals, such as stopping on command. Children's competence in this lesson showed that some effective teaching and learning has taken place since the beginning of the term. However, the lesson was too focused on giving children an experience of learning the rules of Christmas games. Whilst this was appropriate, teachers neglected to promote variation, quality and creativeness of movements, despite good opportunities to do so.

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## CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Many opportunities are provided for children to develop creativity

## Commentary

47. Whilst children make good progress in developing creative skills through a wide range of art\* activities, standards are below expectations by the end of the year. The teaching is good. Teachers plan many opportunities for children to be creative, for instance in art, pretend play, with construction toys and in the sand and water. Artwork includes drawing, painting, collage, weaving and modelling with clay and dough. Children sustain attention well in these activities and work hard, for example, in producing small, painted clay pots. Whilst children's paintings and drawings of people are still at a very simple level, they show progress since the beginning of the term, for example, by including more features, such as bodies and some facial features. Good opportunities are also provided for children to engage in pretend play, but their limited speaking skills and experience of storybooks inhibits their ability to be creative in this way. It was not possible to see any music lessons but in assemblies the children sang well, remembering the words to a good number of verses, and accompanied their singing with actions.

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## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well below average and pupils are not doing as well as they should in speaking and writing
- Some good teaching is leading to improvements, particularly in year 2 and year 4
- The introduction of targets and new assessment arrangements is beginning to make a positive impact

### Commentary

48. While standards overall are well below average, there is some variation in how well pupils are\* achieving in different aspects of the subject. For many pupils, limited skills in speaking and writing are having an impact on their achievement in subjects across the curriculum. Their skills in reading are showing good improvement from a low base.

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49. A minority of pupils have a good vocabulary and talk with confidence in a range of situations.\* The majority, however, struggles to explain ideas or to make more than a simple response in discussion. The contrast was evident in a year 4 lesson in which 'Cinderella' was 'hot-seated'<sup>8</sup>; the pupil who took on the role readily adapted her tone and vocabulary to convey her thoughts and feelings, but many of the pupils involved struggled to formulate an appropriate question to ask her. Teachers are aware of the need to improve pupils' skills; they encourage discussion and explain new vocabulary, but there is a need for a greater range of structured opportunities to tackle the weaknesses in this area.

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50. Pupils' written work varies in quality but overall it is of a low standard. In year 2, for example,\* only the higher attaining pupils are producing work of a broadly average standard. Some of these pupils are introducing good descriptive vocabulary and using a range of punctuation in their written work. Average attainers are slow to write a simple sentence and are still not secure

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<sup>8</sup> Hot seating is an activity in which pupils can ask questions of somebody who has taken the role of a character.

on the use of capital letters and full stops. In year 4, while there are also examples of good creative work, for example, in evocative poems, many pupils find it difficult to sustain an appropriate narrative form. In one lesson in year 4, a significant proportion of pupils made errors when copying a simple passage from the blackboard. Spelling skills are weak for many pupils and only a minority produces consistently legible and joined handwriting.

51. At the start of year 2, reading skills for many pupils are at a very low level. Reading tests at the start of this year showed that almost three quarters of the year group were more than a year behind. Good teaching of key skills and frequent reading practice is bringing about rapid improvement; while a significant proportion of the pupils are still at a very early stage, most are reading simple stories independently. Higher attainers generally show good understanding of the storyline. Most year 4 pupils read accurately and appreciate the main themes in a story, but often find it difficult to get beyond the literal meaning and, for example, explain the reasons for a character's actions. They are aware of strategies for finding information in books by using the contents and index.

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52. Teaching is satisfactory overall and there is some good teaching, particularly in years 2 and 4. The most effective lessons have a clear focus and a sustained emphasis on one key aspect of learning, building on pupils' previous experiences. In year 2, for example, work on 'instructions' took a variety of forms, including a class composition on instructions for getting ready for PE, following instructions for making pirate hats and working in a small group to write instructions for Father Christmas to get from the harbour to the school. However, in some lessons, too many different elements of literacy are introduced and pupils lack a coherent experience in learning.

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53. Targets have recently been introduced in reading and writing for year groups and individual pupils. This is helpful in focusing teachers' attention on key elements of literacy to be taught and assessed. The targets at whole school level are too generalised and need refinement to be measurable and to indicate whether or not standards are improving. Standardised tests are being used to identify pupils who need additional help and to evaluate the progress being made by individuals and year groups. However, the information is not yet in a format that gives an overview of the progress made as pupils go through the school and enables an evaluation of strengths and weaknesses of the provision.

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### Literacy across the curriculum

54. Weak literacy skills are impacting on other subjects. Pupils' lack of recording skills is very evident in science, history and geography. Year 2 pupils make lists to record key facts, for example, about the Great Fire of London, but overall the quality of written work is limited. In years 3 and 4 there is very little independent written work in pupils' books indicating that they are not used enough to reinforce writing skills.

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## MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most teaching is good; there is the occasional unsatisfactory lesson
- In year 2 pupils are generally doing well but the learning of pupils in years 3 and 4 is affected by poor concentration
- Teachers make good use of resources

## Commentary

55. Standards in mathematics are below the national average at the end of both year 2 and year 4. However, overall pupils make satisfactory progress from what was a low starting point when they began year 1. In some year groups pupils achieve well and make good progress. The key factor in the good progress is a combination of good teaching and pupils' hard work.

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56. By the time pupils leave the school most have some idea about how numbers work and understand ideas such as place value. They add and subtract confidently, although even the more able pupils do not always have rapid recall of simple number facts. The higher attaining pupils are often good at using what they know and are increasingly good at seeing how to tackle some complicated problems.

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57. Most lessons are well planned and teachers are very aware of the need to respond to the needs of different pupils. The work given to pupils is generally well matched to their needs although occasionally the work is too easy or the activities are undemanding. The use of the national guidance for planning work for year 4 is helping as is the use of ICT in teaching. The impact of ICT was evident in several lessons through interactive whiteboards and projectors that could make use of computer programs to support class teaching. There is also some very creative teaching; the use of a 'washing line' with pairs of socks was a very effective way to introduce year 2 pupils to the relationship between adding and multiplying. The good teaching is helping some pupils to achieve well. This is particularly the case in year 2, where the teaching is brisk, purposeful and imaginative. Most importantly, the good teaching is allied to pupils who try their best and keep working hard throughout the lesson. In lessons with the older pupils, good teaching is often less productive due to the inability of a minority of pupils to sit still, listen attentively and work hard for any sustained amount of time. This results in the progress of too many children being hindered.

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58. The support given to pupils with special educational needs in mainstream lessons is generally effective. Teaching assistants work with small groups and reinforce the key teaching points. In the best lessons, they are carefully briefed and involved right from the start in sitting with individual pupils and making sure they benefit from the teaching.

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59. The subject is well managed. There is regular checking up on the quality of teaching and the feedback to teachers is leading to some improvements. There is not enough use made of the performance data to track different groups of children as they move through the school although this is beginning to improve.

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### Mathematics across the curriculum

60. There is limited evidence of mathematics being used across other subjects. There is some use of ICT in mathematics to extend work in data handling and in control technology. There is, however, very little evidence of mathematics impacting on subjects such as science or geography.

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## SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy a good range of practical experiences
- Skills in investigative aspects of the subject are weak
- Weak literacy skills and limited speaking skills make it difficult for many pupils to express their understanding

### Commentary

61. While standards overall are below average, and in some aspects of the subject are well below, pupils' positive attitudes and good opportunities for first hand experiences ensure that their achievement is satisfactory overall. Pupils enjoy science; they are keen to undertake practical activities and often work well together in pairs or small groups. In a year 1 lesson, for example, pupils enjoyed a range of opportunities to explore the properties of light using torches, reflective materials and kaleidoscopes. A year 4 lesson on solids and liquids saw the pupils watching with great interest as different solids were added to water and comparing notes on the changes that they observed.

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62. Teaching is satisfactory. All aspects of the subject are taught and the environment is used particularly well to promote pupils' understanding of the characteristics and needs of living things. However, despite the range of practical experiences, pupils' skills in investigation and experimentation are very limited. In a year 3 lesson, for example, many pupils lacked awareness of ways in which a simple test might be made 'fair'. Although they followed instructions to make predictions of the outcome, very few could explain the basis of their thinking. In the year 4 lesson on solutions, initial organisation of a test was haphazard and the pupils needed a lot of guidance from the teacher and assistant to begin to work systematically.

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63. Limitations in pupils' speaking and literacy skills mean that their work gives little indication of their knowledge. Much of what is recorded is in the form of drawings or labels. At times, this shows good understanding, for example, in year 2 work on life cycles some pupils have produced a clear illustration of the changes from pupae to butterfly. However, pupils often struggle to describe what they have observed; this was evident in the year 4 lesson where many pupils found it very difficult to find the right vocabulary to explain the outcome when solids had partially dissolved. Teachers in years 3 and 4 often provide simple pro-formas to enable pupils to concentrate on the scientific aspects of their learning, but, even with these, it is apparent that pupils' abilities to explain their predictions and conclusions are very limited.

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## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Skills are at expected levels but pupils lack understanding of the potential uses of ICT
- Resources are well used to support teaching and learning
- The subject is well managed
- ICT makes a good contribution to other subjects

### Commentary

64. Throughout the school pupils attain skills in line with expectations. However, the level of understanding about how ICT might be used is more limited and below what might be expected. For instance, pupils can use computers to produce short poems and combine a picture to illustrate the writing. They change the size and style of the lettering but they have very limited idea about matching the pictures and the style of the writing to what is written. Year 2 pupils struggled to describe the impact of technology on everyday objects.

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65. The good level of resources make a difference to the overall quality of teaching. It is overall satisfactory and some is good. The school has benefited significantly from participation in a national pilot programme to promote the use of ICT in teaching in different subjects. This has resulted in most teachers feeling confident in using and teaching ICT. Some good teaching was evident although there was only limited opportunity to see ICT lessons. A lesson with year 2 was well planned and, using national guidance, taught both skills and understanding. Children worked on producing a picture of the Great Fire of London. Not only did children extend their

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skills, but they were also encouraged to think carefully about how to produce the most effective picture by using variations in the 'fill' command. They begin to explore data handling, how to use technology to control movements (through the use of computers or 'roamers') and how ICT can be used to present information.

66. The subject is well managed. There is a very clear view of how the subject will continue to develop and a good commitment (shared by teachers) to make the best possible use of ICT to improve teaching and learning. The school has been astute in seeking resources and has ambitious plans to increase the level further. There is, however, very little checking up on how well pupils are doing or how the subject is being taught; this means that developments are not as sharply focused on standards as they could be.

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### Information and communication technology across the curriculum

67. This is a strong feature of the subject. ICT is used in a range of subjects to supplement both teaching and learning. In subjects such as history and geography pupils have researched information and ICT is used to produce pictures in art. There is also evidence of ICT in science where children classify different forms of life. ICT is particularly effective in supporting teaching in numeracy and literacy.

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### HUMANITIES

68. Work in **geography** and **history** was sampled, so secure judgements about provision, standards and achievement in these subjects are not made. In both subjects planning is linked to national guidance and a good range of visits supports learning experiences. No history lessons were seen and only two geography lessons were seen in years 3 and 4.

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69. In years 1 and 2, pupils learn about important events in history, such as the Great Plague and the Fire of London. The lives and influence of key people, such as King Charles II and Samuel Pepys, are also studied. Simple timelines help pupils put the events into some context. Pupils' work shows that teachers in years 1 and 2 make satisfactory efforts to promote literacy skills in both subjects. For example, by encouraging them to write diaries following the example of Samuel Pepys. In their geographical studies about the Isle of Struay, pupils record what they have learned about places and services by producing tourist leaflets identifying important events, activities and places to see. Work also involves pupils in drawing simple maps and discussing photographs of key places in Watchet, such as the church, shops and the railway station.

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70. There was very little recorded work in either subject from pupils in years 3 and 4. Literacy skills are not well promoted, with over-use of worksheets and pupils sometimes being required to copy from books or the board. In one of the geography lessons the teaching was good, but pupils' very limited literacy skills prevented them from satisfactorily conducting the fairly simple research and recording tasks that had been set. They did, however, benefit from the teacher's good subject knowledge and skills in pupil management, which allowed them to learn some interesting facts about life in the Middle East. In the other lesson, teaching was satisfactory overall but learning was hindered by pupils' misbehaviour, which was not always handled appropriately by the teacher.

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### CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

71. No **art and design** lessons were seen during the inspection so it is not possible to make a judgement about the overall quality of provision. Evidence from work on display suggests that pupils are given a full range of experiences in art and design. Observational drawings in year 1 showed a sharp eye for detail and made links with some aspects of science. Similarly, year 2 made links between art, ICT and design and technology when they made puppets and explored

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particular patterns. Work by older pupils was also well up to expected standards; some of the pastel work in year 4 was particularly effective.

72. It was not possible to see any **music** lessons so no judgements are made about provision, standards or achievement. However, all pupils joined in with singing in assemblies, where they sang tunefully. Some extra-curricular activities, such as a lunchtime recorder club and multicultural music workshops enhance learning experiences.

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73. No **design and technology** was being taught during the inspection and there was very little evidence of pupils' work. The subject is taught as a 'blocked activity' so that there is opportunity for pupils to experience all elements of the designing and making process to produce a specific product. During this term, year 1 pupils have planned and made salads and yoghurts as part of their work on healthy eating. Year 2 pupils have designed and made a coat for Joseph. A link has recently been established with the middle school so that pupils participate in a technology day on an annual basis. The first of these focused on a range of technology activities, including designing biscuits.

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74. It was not possible to see any **physical education** lessons during the inspection. However, there was ample evidence of the status given to this subject and the commitment of the school to providing excellent opportunities for pupils to participate in sport. All aspects of PE are taught and there is a very wide range of clubs and competitive activities. Coaching has been provided for Kwik-cricket, tennis, multi-skills, skipping and dance. All classes use the swimming pool regularly and a coach for this area has also recently been recruited; the school holds an annual gala and has been very successful in a variety of swimming competitions. The school gained the 'Activemark' award last year in recognition of the quality of the provision in this area.

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## PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision for PHSE and citizenship is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a well-planned programme

### Commentary

75. Topics are well planned and taught throughout the curriculum, particularly in science and religious education (RE). Sex and drugs education are covered as they should be. The most important strength of the PSHE provision is that it is designed to be relevant to the school's pupils and their particular needs. The younger children benefit from the chance to develop their social skills during circle time, while the recent focus on being safe outdoors has been valuable for pupils of all ages. The school's enthusiastic involvement in projects such as the healthy schools' initiative contributes successfully to the well-being of both staff and pupils.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	3
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>4</b>
Pupils' achievement	4
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>3</b>
Attendance	4
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	4
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>4</b>
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	2
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	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	4

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

