

# INSPECTION REPORT

**MILVERTON COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Taunton

LEA area: Somerset

Unique reference number: 123703

Headteacher: Mrs J Gray

Lead inspector: Mr F Ward

Dates of inspection: 7<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> March 2005

Inspection number: 267331

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary  
School category: Community  
Age range of pupils: 4 – 11 years  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll: 197

School address: Milverton  
Taunton  
Somerset  
Postcode: TA4 1JP

Telephone number: (01823) 400439  
Fax number: Not applicable

Appropriate authority: Governing body  
Name of chair of Mrs H Clark  
governors:

Date of previous 22<sup>nd</sup> February 1999  
inspection:

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Milverton is the same size as most primary schools, catering for pupils aged four to 11. The number on roll has fallen slightly since the last inspection. A few more able pupils leave at the end of Year 5 to attend private schools and those joining in the juniors have tended to have special educational needs. Ninety three per cent of pupils are of white British heritage, with the rest of mixed descent from a range of ethnic backgrounds; none are in the early stages of using English as an additional language. Pupils come from the village and, increasingly, from the surrounding area; most are from families with incomes around the national average. The number of pupils with special educational needs varies from year to year but is usually around the national average; most have communication and behavioural difficulties. Currently, three pupils have a statement of special educational needs. The overall attainment of children starting school aged four varies but, this year, is above that expected for their age. In recent years, there have been some important staff changes with more pending: the deputy headteacher has been on secondment to the local education authority for 18 months, the special educational needs co-ordinator has left for a promoted post, the reception teacher is on long-term sick leave and the headteacher retires at the end of this school year. The school was involved in the Virtual Education Action Zone initiative until November 2004 and gained the School Achievement Award in 2002.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
18605	Mr F Ward	Lead inspector	English as an additional language Mathematics Information and communication technology Personal and social education Modern foreign languages Religious education
11566	Ms H Smyth	Lay inspector	
18322	Mrs S Smith Airey	Team inspector	Special educational needs English Art and design Design and technology Music Physical education
10611	Mr M James	Team inspector	Foundation stage Science Geography History

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This is a good school.** Pupils achieve well as a result of good teaching. Standards are generally above average. The school is well led and managed, providing good value for money.

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

- Standards in mathematics in Year 6 are well above average but infants find writing difficult and the juniors' handwriting is unsatisfactory.
- All pupils attain better than expected in science, art and information and communication technology (ICT).
- Pupils with special educational needs and more able juniors make good progress.
- Pupils love coming to school, get on very well together and attendance is well above average.
- Teachers and assistants make sure all pupils are fully included in lessons and behave very well.
- Pupils enjoy very many additional activities, especially in the sports and arts.
- Pupils are very well looked after, gaining in self-confidence and maturity.
- Parents are very appreciative of the school but written reports do not give specific enough information on pupils' progress.
- Governors and senior managers know what needs to be done to improve the school but their development plans do not clearly show how pupils' learning will be developed.

Since the school was inspected in 1999, improvement has been good. Standards in Year 6 have risen faster than in most schools and improved in Year 2, especially in mathematics, but not yet in writing. Standards in ICT are now above average. Teachers' planning is effective and managers are more involved in checking and developing teaching and learning.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
English	C	B	A	A
mathematics	A	B	A	A
science	A	B	A	A*

*Key: A\* - very high; 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.*

**Pupils achieve well.** The overall attainment of children starting school aged four varies but, this year, is above that expected for their age. They make good progress through the reception class and nearly all have already reached the early learning goals in all areas of learning; most will be working within the National Curriculum by the time they start Year 1. Pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2 but do not write easily to support their learning. Unconfirmed 2004 national tests results for Year 2 pupils show that standards compared to

all schools are well above average in reading and mathematics, and below average in writing. Compared to similar schools, standards are above average in mathematics, average in reading and well below average in writing. Currently, standards in Year 2 are above average in speaking and listening, reading, mathematics and science but below average in writing. Achievement in Years 3 to 6 is good all round. Last year's national test results were particularly good as the Year 6 had more high attaining pupils than usual; the science results were amongst the top five per cent in the country. Currently, standards in Year 6 are not so high as there are more pupils who learn at a slower rate but are still well above average in mathematics and above average in English and science. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress as a result of effective support. While more able juniors are given harder work, sometimes this is not the case in the infants. The few from different ethnic backgrounds and those joining from other schools achieve well. Insufficient lessons were seen to make a secure judgement about standards of achievement in other subjects, apart from in ICT and art where pupils attain higher than expected for their age and in religious education where they reach the level required by the locally agreed syllabus.

**Pupils' personal qualities, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are very well promoted.** Staff take every opportunity to help pupils appreciate individual and cultural differences and similarities and develop a sense of fairness and tolerance; consequently, they play and work happily together, regardless of their background. They are fully involved in everything the school offers and are keen to take on responsibility, growing in maturity. Behaviour and attitudes are very good. Attendance is well above average and no time is wasted.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The school provides a good quality of education, as teaching is good.** Teachers and assistants make very good use of resources and achieve high standards of behaviour. Pupils respond well, settling quickly to their work. Effective use is made of test results to identify and tackle common shortcomings in pupils' learning. The curriculum is very well planned to develop pupils' numeracy and ICT skills but not sufficiently to improve the infants' writing. Many enriching opportunities are provided outside the classroom. Pupils feel very safe and secure; their views are valued and taken into account. Links with the community and other schools make a very effective contribution to pupils' learning.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are good.** The governors, headteacher and senior staff are working well together in improving the school. Governance is good and all statutory requirements are met. However, development plans do not directly focus on raising pupils' achievement nor show how managers can check the effectiveness of their actions or spending decisions. Financial and administrative procedures are efficient.

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

Parents are very appreciative of what the school does and feel very well informed. However, the inspection found many written reports do not indicate clearly what pupils need to do to improve. Pupils say they like school and have many good friends.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- further improve infants' writing by providing more opportunities in all subject lessons for different types of writing;
- teach juniors to develop handwriting that is fluent, joined and legible;
- produce written reports on pupils' progress that show exactly what they do well and what they need to do to improve; and
- sharpen up development plans so that they clearly indicate standards to be raised and agree specific measures to check the impact of actions and spending decisions on teaching and learning.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

Overall, pupils achieve well and standards are generally above average for seven and 11-year-olds but infants find writing difficult.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children in the reception class achieve well and nearly all have already exceeded the early learning goals set for them.
- Standards for 11-year-olds have remained above the national trend for some years and are well above average in mathematics but their handwriting is unsatisfactory.
- While standards for seven-year-olds in reading and mathematics have risen to above average, standards in writing have remained below average.
- Pupils with special educational needs and more able juniors make good progress.
- Pupils achieve well in science, art, ICT, reading and speaking and listening.

### **Commentary**

1. The overall attainment of four-year-olds starting school varies each year but the current reception class has a higher number of more able children. Despite changes of teacher due to illness, children are making good progress and nearly all have already exceeded the early learning goals set for them in all areas of learning. By the time they start Year 1, most will be working within the first level of the National Curriculum.
2. Since the last inspection, standards for 11-year-olds have improved at a faster rate than most schools and been in line for seven-year-olds. Parents are very pleased with the standards achieved. Mathematics is a strength of the school and unconfirmed national test results for 2004 showed standards at both the end of the infants and juniors to be well above average when compared to all schools. When compared to similar schools, standards for seven-year-olds were above average and well above for 11-year-olds. The inspection found standards in mathematics to be above average for seven-year-olds and well above for 11-year-olds, an improvement since the last inspection.
3. Standards for seven-year-olds in reading in 2004 tests were also well above average compared to all schools and average in comparison to similar schools. Teacher assessment of science showed standards very high, in the top five per cent of similar and all schools nationally. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Standards in writing have not risen as in other subjects and in 2004 tests for seven-year-olds were below average compared to all schools and well below in comparison to similar schools. Pupils of all capabilities, but particularly the more able, did not do so well in writing tests as they did in reading, mathematics and science.
4. Standards for 11-year-olds in English in 2004 tests were well above average in comparison to all and similar schools nationally. Results in science were in the top five per cent in comparison to similar schools and well above average compared to all schools. The more able did especially well in the English and science tests. This is a considerable improvement since the last inspection.

5. These tables show clearly the comparisons with national results:

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	17.0 (16.2)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	14.2 (15.1)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	17.5 (17.0)	16.2 (16.3)

*There were 19 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 2004**

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.5 (27.5)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	28.6 (27.5)	27.0 (26.8)
science	31.2 (29.7)	28.6 (28.6)

*There were 33 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

6. The inspection found that pupils achieve well in speaking and listening, reading, mathematics, science, ICT and art across the school as a result of good teaching that meets the needs of individuals effectively. Standards in these subjects are currently above average in both Year 2 and Year 6. The school has been tackling shortcomings in the teaching and learning of writing in the infants and there has been some improvement but the inspection found that standards are still below average. Many pupils, particularly the more able, do not easily write at length for different purposes, as much of their writing is restricted to developing skills. This limits their progress, making writing an exercise rather than a means of communication. Pupils are far better writers in the juniors as there are many opportunities to practise their skills, not only in English but to support their learning in other subjects. As a result, standards in writing are above average for 11-year-olds. However, the quality of handwriting in the juniors is unsatisfactory, as too many pupils do not write in a fluent, legible and joined manner. However, all pupils consolidate and develop their numeracy and ICT skills well in other subjects.
7. The achievement of boys, girls, pupils from different ethnic backgrounds and those who join from other schools is no different from those with similar capabilities. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from individual and small group support and make good progress. The more able in the juniors thrive on the harder work they are given and also make good progress. While more able infants are appropriately challenged in class sessions, they are sometimes left too long unsupervised when working independently. They can be distracted by talkative pupils, become less productive and not make sufficient progress in their learning.
8. It was not possible to make overall judgements about standards in design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education, as there were

insufficient opportunities to collect first-hand evidence. Standards in religious education were as expected by the locally agreed syllabus and pupils achieve satisfactorily.

9. The targets for national tests are realistically challenging as the school accurately assesses pupils' capabilities and their likely performance in national tests.

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

Pupils love school and grow in maturity. They behave very well and willingly take on responsibility. Pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is very good.

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

- Pupils come eagerly to school and enjoy everything on offer.
- Attendance is well above average.
- Pupils have a very positive attitude to learning.
- Pupils are confident, form many friendships and play and work happily together.
- Their personal development is very well provided for.

### **Commentary**

10. Parents overwhelmingly report that their children love coming to school, a view confirmed by pupils in questionnaires and in discussions. As a result, attendance rates have been sustained at well above the national median and there were no unauthorised absences last year. There have been no exclusions since the last inspection.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	3.7	School data	0.0
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.*

11. Pupils of different capabilities and backgrounds, including those with special educational needs, have a very positive attitude to learning and fully participate in all the school offers. Sometimes more able boys in the infants are too talkative when supposed to be working independently and distract others from their studies. The few pupils, who can exhibit challenging behaviour, are very well managed by skilled assistants and any incidents are quickly and sensitively dealt with.
12. Pupils grow in maturity and confidence because they are given responsibilities from an early age and their efforts are valued and appreciated. They report that one of the best things about school is the good friends they make. This is apparent in the high level of good behaviour and the very good relationships observed during the inspection between all pupils regardless of their race or background. There are very few incidents of bullying and any inappropriate behaviour is dealt with sensitively and quickly. Pupils' social skills are also very well developed through the many opportunities to work and play in large and small groups.
13. Pupils have many opportunities to express their opinions in lessons and, more formally, through the school council and questionnaires. When Year 2 representatives complained they did not have as many sports clubs as the juniors, Year 6 pupils organised a weekly lunchtime football skills session for them.

14. Pupils are helped to develop a strong sense of right, wrong, fairness and tolerance as moral values are very well promoted. The school has very effectively helped widen pupils' awareness of their own and other cultures and the contribution of different ethnic groups to British society. In lessons and assemblies, pupils are encouraged to reflect on their place in the world and how they can make it better. Overall, these findings are similar to those in the last inspection.

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

The quality of education is good. Teaching, learning and the curriculum are good, with very many enriching opportunities. Pupils are very well cared for. Parents are very appreciative of the school.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching, learning and assessment are good.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are better in the juniors where some teaching groups are smaller.
- The teaching of mathematics is a strength.
- The recent focus on improving pupils' thinking skills has been most effective in developing their problem solving and investigative skills.
- The teaching of writing in the infants and of handwriting in the juniors is not as effective as it could be.
- New technologies are a very effective part of lessons.
- Staff set and achieve high standards of behaviour.
- Teachers and assistants work well together to include all pupils in lessons.
- Test results are used very effectively to check pupils' progress but not yet to inform them what they need to do to improve in subjects other than English.

### Commentary

15. Teaching and learning are good overall. This is an improvement on the previous inspection as the amount of good or better teaching has increased from 62 per cent to 89 per cent. Parents appreciate the hard work and dedication of staff.

#### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 58 lessons*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
2 (3%)	15 (26%)	30 (52%)	11 (19%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

16. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is consistently good. In eight out of ten lessons in the juniors, teaching is good or better and on occasions excellent; in the infants, this is the case in two thirds of lessons. The main difference occurs because there are smaller classes in Years 5 and 6 for the teaching of English and mathematics. In these lessons, staff are able to plan activities that are a better match to the stage, style and rate of learning of individuals and then provide more individual and group support. This is particularly beneficial for pupils with special educational needs and the more able, who consequently make good progress. This is not always the case in the infants where the more able are sometimes not productive enough when working on their own. When teaching is excellent, teachers set and achieve high expectations by structuring stimulating learning activities and providing just the right amount of challenge and support to keep pupils working hard and interested.
17. Teaching and learning in mathematics has been a strength of the school since the last inspection and staff expertise has continued to grow as a result of national numeracy training. Pupils are given plenty of first-hand practical experience in applying mathematical skills in the infants so that in the juniors they have the basic skills to be able to carry out investigations and explain their calculations easily.

18. The recent focus on developing pupils' thinking skills has also contributed to the high standards in mathematics as well as in science. Pupils readily reflect on what they are trying to do and are becoming adept at talking about different approaches. They are ready to take risks, trying out new ideas, and as a result are more in control of their learning and achieve well.
19. Despite considerable training, improvements in writing in the infants have been limited. Staff are still too reliant on worksheets that cover the mechanics of writing but do not give pupils enough opportunities to practise and develop their skills as a form of communication. Also in the past, not enough attention has been given to implementing the handwriting policy to help pupils acquire a fluent, joined and legible style so that the handwriting of many juniors is currently unsatisfactory.
20. On the other hand, training in the use of new technologies has been most effective. All staff are gaining confidence, particularly in using the interactive computerised screen to make teaching and learning meaningful and interesting. Pupils are eager to demonstrate their understanding by presenting their thinking on these screens and make good gains in their learning.
21. Generally, pupils are productive and very well behaved as staff make sure their high expectations are realised through gentle reminders and encouragement. Teachers and assistants work effectively together to make sure all pupils are fully involved in lessons. This is particularly helpful for pupils with special educational needs and the few with challenging behaviour, who feel very well looked after and make good progress as a result.
22. The school undertakes a rigorous and systematic analysis of national and school tests to identify and tackle common shortcomings in pupils' learning. This information is used well to set class and school targets. While pupils are given individual targets in English, this has not yet been extended to other subjects. There is also some inconsistency in the marking of pupils' work. As a result, they are not clear what they need to do to improve and continue to make mistakes.

## **Curriculum**

Pupils benefit from a well-planned curriculum that includes many enriching activities beyond the classroom.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The curriculum is rich and varied with strong links between subjects.
- The school provides a very good range of enrichment activities.
- Generally, good provision is made for pupils of different capabilities but more able infants are sometimes not given hard enough work.
- Opportunities for art and personal development are good.
- The very good school buildings and grounds and the wide range of good quality resources support pupils' learning well.

## **Commentary**

23. The school provides a broad, balanced and enriched curriculum for all pupils, including the youngest. There have been significant improvements since the last inspection.

The time allocated for science and religious education is now properly balanced and a new approach to planning ensures that pupils have access to all the programmes of study. Provision for literacy and numeracy in Years 5 and 6 has recently been reviewed with the result that these pupils have now been split into three smaller groups so that their needs can be targeted more successfully. This has especially helped pupils who learn at a slower rate, including those with special educational needs and the more able, to make good progress.

24. The revised curriculum strengthens links between different subjects and fosters creativity and thinking skills to make learning meaningful and interesting. The school regularly holds topic weeks where everyone works together on one project: for example the 'Healthy Me, Healthy World' week where one of the activities was whole school aerobics sessions at the beginning of the school day. Teachers are keen to introduce new technologies to support learning and this is planned into nearly all lessons. For example, teachers use their interactive whiteboards very well in literacy to present texts and in numeracy to demonstrate skills such as the use of the protractor.
25. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. In lessons, activities are well planned to take account of their needs and reflect the targets in the individual education plans. Activities are well planned to break learning down into manageable steps and pupils achieve well. Harder work is planned in the juniors for the more able and they make good progress. However, work for higher attaining pupils in the infants is sometimes too easy and they are not productive enough when working on their own.
26. The school has a very good personal, social, emotional and health education programme that is evident in the weekly planned lessons covering a range of topics suited to the age and maturity of pupils. These sensitively cover sex and relationships, drug education and issues such as bullying. Many informal opportunities are also taken to help pupils grow in maturity. Religious education follows national guidance but meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. The daily act of collective worship is effectively used to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
27. Good imaginative artwork is to be seen everywhere in the school and pupils' experiences in art and other subjects are broadened by trips linked to the topics being studied, including a residential trip for Year 6. Visitors to the school include professional music workshops, science demonstrations and storytellers and these activities are testimony to the imaginative way the school seeks to bring the curriculum to life. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 benefit from lessons in French and German and Year 6 pupils will shortly be visiting Normandy on an exchange visit. After school clubs offer a wide range of experiences, particularly in sporting activities, which are very well attended by pupils. All these experiences make a very positive contribution to pupils' education.
28. The accommodation and grounds are great assets. The building provides a large hall and well-designed teaching areas, which are light and modern. The school is set in beautiful grounds, which include an adventure playground as well as an environmental area and large field. Effective use is made of these and the local area to support work in subjects such as science, art and design and geography.

29. Overall, staffing and resources are very good enabling pupils to be given effective support. Temporary arrangements to cover staff sickness in the reception class are good. Very good use is made of the of the up-to-date computer suite but as this is sited in the library, it means that the library resources are somewhat constricted for individual study. However, the school ensures that all pupils have access to the library every week.

### **Care, guidance and support**

Pupils are very well looked after and guided; their views are taken into account.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Provision for child protection is very good.
- All pupils have a good and trusting relationship with one or more adults in the school.
- All members of staff know pupils very well, and they provide very good quality guidance and support.
- Pupils settle quickly into school, as a result of the very good arrangements made for induction.

### **Commentary**

30. The very good quality care and support provided helps pupils to feel secure in school, and this enables them to concentrate well during lessons and to achieve good standards. Pupils are very well supervised during the school day, and all adults in the school know pupils very well. There are trained members of staff to deal with the medical and welfare needs of pupils, when these arise, and teachers are vigilant about the pupils in their care. All receive regular training in child protection procedures.
31. Pupils with special educational needs are given very good support to ensure that their specific needs are met. Parents participate in annual reviews and contribute to the individual education plans. These provide clear and helpful guidance, showing clearly the additional learning opportunities each pupil requires to improve. Consequently, pupils with special educational needs feel safe and secure knowing that they can always rely on the adults in school to offer help and give appropriate advice.
32. Praise and encouragement for pupils' academic and personal achievements are a high priority, and teachers foster the development of personal and social skills very well. Pupils receive very good guidance and support. The school takes pupils' views seriously, and is very good at involving them in putting forward ideas and developing projects in school. The school council is very active in this direction. All staff work extremely hard to develop and maintain the very good relationships observed within the school.
33. Very good procedures are in place, for when pupils join the school. Every opportunity is taken to ensure that they are made welcome and become familiar with the various routines of school life. Younger pupils report that they are happy in school, and they greatly value the 'buddy system', that allows them to seek out the support and

friendship of older pupils. These procedures ensure that pupils settle quickly into the everyday life of the school.

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

Parents are very appreciative of the school and have very good contacts with staff. Links with other schools and the community are very good.

### **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- Parents report they are very well informed but written reports do not clearly show what pupils do well and what they need to improve.
- Parents are very supportive of the school, providing their time and funds to enrich pupils' experiences.
- Links with other schools and the community make a very effective contribution to pupils' learning.

### **COMMENTARY**

34. Parents are kept very well informed about their children's education. Very positive comments were made about the morning workshops where parents join in lessons with their children. They feel very welcome, find staff very approachable and feel that their concerns and queries are dealt with quickly and sensitively. Parents find the termly interviews with staff very helpful. However, while the school now provides three end of term written reports a year, not all teachers are recording specifically what each pupil does well and what they need to do to improve. As a result, parents are not sure what they can do to continue helping their children tackle shortcomings in their learning.
35. While many parents are at work, they are very willing to help outside of the school day and fund activities. They gave wholehearted support to the formation of the after-school sports club that has flourished since 2001, providing specialist coaching for 13 different sports on four evenings a week and on Saturday mornings. In addition, parents have raised over £50,000 in recent years to improve school facilities, most recently the computer suite and playground furniture.
36. Until last November, the school was part of the Virtual Education Action Zone and linked to a number of schools from different parts of the country. Pupils were able to communicate with other young people from different backgrounds; this was especially effective in raising their awareness of the richness and diversity of the culture of other ethnic groups in British society. There are also close links with the specialist secondary school with modern language teachers providing weekly French and German lessons. This effectively helps prepare Year 6 pupils for the next stage of their education as well as making transfer to the secondary school smoother.
37. The school is very much part of the village community. Visits and visitors are a well-established part of the programmes of study, particularly in geography, history and religious education. There are also very good links with local businesses, sports clubs and the local education authority. All these contacts help broaden pupils' awareness and understanding of society. Overall, these findings are an improvement on the last inspection.

### **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership, management and governance are good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The experienced headteacher provides very good leadership.
- Governors are supportive, involved and well informed.
- While current co-ordinators are effective, staffing uncertainties have meant temporary management arrangements in some areas that limit development.
- Governors and senior staff know how to improve the school further but their development plans are not clearly focused on raising achievement.
- The school gives good value for money.

### **Commentary**

38. The experienced and long-serving headteacher has very successfully ensured that the school has made good progress since the last inspection. In particular, standards for 11-year-olds have been well above the national trend and 2004 national test results in mathematics and science were in the top five per cent in the country. This year, she has been especially effective in dealing with unforeseen staffing problems. In addition, she has provided valuable help to the governors in preparing for the appointment of her successor, who takes over from next September on her retirement. Parents are very appreciative of her long service to the school.
39. The governing body has a mix of very experienced governors and newcomers, who are being well supported. The chair is in regular contact with the headteacher and makes sure that important decisions are fully discussed by governors. There is an efficient committee structure with well-planned agendas that has ensured all statutory requirements are met. Governors have an accurate picture of the school's strengths and shortcomings as they receive clear and up-to-date reports from the headteacher and senior staff at their meetings and visit the school whenever they can. This enables them to have well-informed discussions about the future development of the school, a significant improvement in their role since the last inspection. As a result, governance is now good.
40. Governors are careful in their use of finances. They have supplemented their budget with considerable funds raised by parents to improve ICT facilities and develop the school grounds. Currently, there is an eight per cent balance carried forward from the last financial year, which includes an under-spend from the previous year. These funds are earmarked for building improvements but have proved difficult to allocate because proposals being considered cost considerably more than the sums available. Governors have wisely postponed decisions until the new headteacher is in post in September.

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

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	545,791	Balance from previous year	35,791
Total expenditure	537,111	Balance carried forward to the next	44,479
Expenditure per pupil	2,726.45		

41. Management responsibilities have had to be reviewed in the past 18 months to meet staffing changes. The deputy headteacher has been seconded to the local education authority over this period; the experienced special educational needs co-ordinator was promoted to another school at the end of the summer term and her replacement then left in the autumn term; and, the reception teacher had to take long term sick leave just before the inspection. Currently, the headteacher looks after the maintenance of religious education and music as well as having an overview of special educational needs; she is supported in her headship role by the experienced Key Stage co-ordinators. These temporary arrangements are proving satisfactory for subject management, as these are not currently priority areas. However, until more permanent arrangements are made, further development is limited. The local education authority is providing a specialist teacher on one day a week for special educational needs, which is also ensuring staff are receiving effective support. The inspection found children are making good progress in the reception class as a result of consistently good teaching by the replacement teacher. The headteacher and senior managers are working as an effective team to keep the focus on maintaining high standards.
42. The leadership of mathematics, science and ICT is very good as co-ordinators have been very effective in raising standards through helping improve teaching and learning. Overall, leadership and management are judged as good because more improvements are needed with infants' writing and juniors' handwriting; also religious education, music, special educational needs and the Foundation Stage are being looked after under temporary arrangements.
43. However since the last inspection, all co-ordinators are now more involved in checking and developing teaching and learning. They have a better picture of what needs to be done to tackle shortcomings. Their actions have been particularly effective in helping pupils develop their thinking skills, which has had a significant impact on their achievement in mathematical investigations, scientific experiments and problem solving using new technologies.
44. The school improvement plan identifies the most important priorities, as confirmed by the inspection, but also covers a wide range of other areas. Few of the action plans focus directly on the particular area of pupils' learning to be tackled or provide specific targets by which to measure progress. Therefore, the headteacher, senior managers and co-ordinators have no way of checking the effectiveness of their actions and governors are unable to evaluate their spending decisions properly. This makes the current school development plan cumbersome and less helpful to governors and staff, who are working hard to drive up standards. However, they have made effective use of performance management procedures to link staff training into the school improvement cycle.
45. The school applies the principles of best value when considering areas for development; costs are carefully considered and compared and wide consultation undertaken. Usually, this process has proved efficient as in the refurbishment of new technology facilities. However, in the recent upgrading of computer network systems, the school has been let down by the suppliers and service breakdowns have interrupted teaching and learning.
46. Overall, teaching and learning are good, pupils achieve well and standards are above average, indicating that leaders and managers are effective and dealing well with

recent staffing issues. As a result, the school provides good value for money. This is an improvement on the previous inspection when value for money was satisfactory.

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

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

Children enter the school with a wide range of abilities, and different intakes vary considerably year-by-year. However, the overall attainment of children this year was higher than expected. The majority of children are on course to be well above the expected level, in all areas of learning, by the end of reception, as they achieve well; a good improvement on the previous inspection.

The children receive consistently good teaching, with the temporary teacher and experienced assistants working supportively together. They use assessment well to provide children with suitably demanding work, and a varied range of good learning experiences is provided. Despite the absence of the permanent teacher, interim arrangements have made sure that children's learning has not been disrupted. The early years are well led and managed.

The classroom is rather small, but it is well organised and effectively used; colourful displays of the children's work enhance its appearance. It is a warm, welcoming environment and the children clearly enjoy being there. Their attitudes are very good, they are happy and this helps them to achieve well.

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

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

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

- Children have very good attitudes to their work, and they behave very well.
- The children play well with each other, and they readily take turns.
- The teacher encourages the children to be polite.

#### **Commentary**

47. The children have settled very well into school life. They have learnt how to behave in school and be part of a social group. They are eager to explore new learning, and they are able to concentrate on work being undertaken. The children are prepared to work with other children, take turns and share fairly. They are able to move confidently around the classroom and the school, and they ask for assistance where necessary. In a very short time, the teacher has got to know the children well, and she responds very appropriately to their individual needs. As a result of the consistently good teaching, children achieve well. They are continually encouraged to be involved in a range of activities, and, where necessary, they are reminded about such things as sharing and politeness. Many have already exceeded the early goals set for them and nearly all will do so by the time they start Year 1.

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

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

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The children are making good progress with their writing skills.
- Children show good appreciation of books, and enjoy reading.
- The children are provided with many opportunities to talk and think, through good questioning.

## **Commentary**

48. All children pay close attention to their teacher, listening with interest and concentration to stories, poems and instructions. Many children are beginning to provide detailed spoken comments when asked. They show a keen interest in books, handling them with care. Most pupils understand letter sounds and are able to recognise a range of words, which they readily read. Children write their names with good control, and many are able to write short phrases and sentences on various topics, such as toys. The teacher provides an interesting range of books to read to the children, as well as suitable opportunities to develop their speaking skills. They are also encouraged to develop their writing skills through appropriate activities, with particular attention being paid to careful letter formation. Teaching and learning are good and children achieve well; nearly all have reached the early learning goals set for them and the rest are likely to do so by the end of the reception year.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children's basic knowledge of number is good.
- They are increasingly confident in using mathematical language.
- The teacher provides many number games and activities.

## **Commentary**

49. Teaching and learning are good and children achieve well. They can successfully count to ten, with many counting further. Many children are able to add two numbers, and some are equally confident with subtraction. In using water and sand, most pupils understand such words as 'empty' and 'full', and in comparing size they are aware of 'tall' and 'short'. Most children successfully name a variety of two-dimensional shapes. The work is well planned and carefully matched to the needs of the children. Many opportunities are provided for the children to count, often within practical activities, such as counting shapes or coins. Good resources, such as water, sand and number games and number lines, help children develop their mathematical language and understanding. Nearly all children have exceeded the early learning goals set for them and are working in the early level of the National Curriculum.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The children's knowledge of the human body is good.
- They show considerable interest in different types of plants.
- The children readily produce work on the computer.
- The assistants are well deployed in supporting the children.

## **Commentary**

50. Children can name the main external features of the human body, such as hand, foot and elbow. They show interest in different plants and talk enthusiastically and knowledgeably about roots and leaves. All children have used the computer and control the mouse, such as when producing a picture of an animal. They know some of the stories of Jesus. Teaching and learning are good and children achieve well. They are provided with a very wide range of experiences to extend their awareness, such as looking at pictures and photographs, tackling simple experiments, being taken on trips around the school, using the computer and undertaking practical activities. The assistants provide most effective help to the children in many of these activities to focus their attention and carefully observe the world around them. Nearly all children are in line to reach and many to exceed the early learning goals set for them.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children skilfully use and handle small items.
- They use the outdoor play equipment well in developing their physical skills.
- Adults ensure the children's safety at all times.

### **Commentary**

51. Children's dexterity in handling small items in the classroom is developing well, such as when they use construction kits and jigsaws, and undertake threading activities. Children's manipulative skills are good. Malleable materials, such as play-dough, are used successfully, as when making small animals. Nearly all enjoy using a range of apparatus in the hall and playing on wheeled vehicles in the outdoor area. Both the teacher and the assistants join in with the children introducing and developing new skills effectively. Teaching and learning are good and children achieve well. A wide and varied array of activities is provided and children are encouraged to practise and reinforce these skills throughout the day. In particular, all adults are keen to emphasise the need for the children to carry out all activities safely and develop personal responsibility. Nearly all children already have reached the early learning goals set for them and most will exceed them by the start of Year 1.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision for creative development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The children produce a variety of quality drawings and paintings.
- They use their imagination creatively in work and structured play.
- Children's independence is encouraged well.

### **Commentary**

52. Children confidently use a variety of paints and crayons, producing pictures from direct observation as well as from their imagination. They have successfully drawn their faces, showing their feelings, and different animals. Children readily take part in role-

play activities, in the home corner, which has been both a 'Health Centre', and a 'Vet's Surgery', where they play enthusiastically. Teaching and learning are good and children achieve well. Through careful planning, the teacher ensures that children take part in all activities. Staff also encourage the children to develop their independence by arranging sessions when they are allowed to move from one activity to another when they are ready. They also make sure, however, that the children sustain their attention by providing appropriate support and encouragement. Nearly all children will exceed the early learning goals set for them by the time they leave the reception class.

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

### **ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

#### **English**

Provision in English is **good**.

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

- Standards for seven year olds and 11 year olds in speaking and listening and reading are above average.
- Standards in writing are above average for pupils in the juniors but pupils in the infants do not make sufficient progress in their writing.
- Pupils' handwriting and presentation are unsatisfactory in the juniors.
- Overall, learning and teaching are good.
- Leadership and management are good but development plans have no measures by which to check effectiveness.

#### **Commentary**

53. Standards of speaking and listening and reading are above average because of the consistently good approach to the teaching of these skills across the school and pupils achieve very well in these areas. Teachers pay very good attention to developing pupils' vocabulary across the curriculum and give the pupils many opportunities to discuss their work in pairs and groups. Assistants know the pupils well and provide very effective support to individuals, especially those with special educational needs and those from different backgrounds, who make good progress.
54. In national tests, standards of writing in the juniors have improved from average to well above average but have declined in the infants. In the 2004 national tests, standards of writing for pupils in Year 2 were below average and were well below average compared to similar schools. Standards in reading in 2004 national tests were well above average for both year groups.
55. Developing pupils' speaking and listening skills is seen as one of the most important ways of encouraging pupils' thinking skills and developing their learning. As a result, pupils aged seven are confident in expressing their own opinions and join in enthusiastically in class discussion. By the time pupils are 11, they are confident, thoughtful speakers and employ the language well to clarify, extend and express their ideas, being particularly good at giving clear explanations and summaries.
56. Following an analysis of pupils' test results, writing was identified by the school as needing attention. As a result of introducing regular practice in joined handwriting from Year 1 and a new spelling programme in Year 2, improvements are evident. However, the inspection found that pupils' knowledge of letter sounds is patchy, which continues to hold up progress in spelling new words. Also, despite the emphasis on explicitly teaching a range of writing skills, pupils do not have enough opportunities to apply these either in literacy lessons or in other subjects. Consequently, they do not use writing easily as a form of communication and their achievement is unsatisfactory. By contrast in the juniors, pupils are expected to write in a wide variety of styles and contexts in most lessons and are becoming confident writers. They are adept at

employing strategies to grab the reader's interest and achieve very well. In a Year 5/6 lesson, pupils wrote stunning descriptions of an alien after listening to a short piece of music linked to images of space and reading a passage from 'War of the Worlds' by H G Wells. However, pupils in the juniors do not regularly use joined handwriting, formation of letters is often incorrect and presentation is untidy.

57. Reading standards are above average in Year 2 and Year 6. Reading is given a high profile across the school and pupils have regular and frequent practice in developing their reading skills. In Year 2, pupils are well launched into reading and confidently tackle new texts. By the time they reach Year 6, they are confident, fluent readers who read a wide range of books. They competently locate non-fiction books they need for research in the library and can quickly find the specific information they need by using contents and indexes.
58. Teaching and learning are good overall. Teachers plan their lessons well giving pupils systematic practice in reading and writing skills. This is coupled with effective use of speaking and listening techniques such as 'just a minute' and drama activities so that pupils fully explore the language of a task. Pupils are motivated to learn by the enthusiasm of their teachers and the exciting materials they present to them through the use of the interactive whiteboards. This ensures that they concentrate well and are productive in lessons.
59. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The expertise and knowledge of the subject leader is a source of inspiration to the rest of the staff. She has analysed data well to identify areas to improve. The actions on the development plan have prioritised the most important weaknesses. The school's drive to improve writing by developing expertise in capturing boys' interest in the subject has resulted in higher standards. However, the co-ordinator has been less successful in improving writing in the infants as she has had insufficient time to check and develop teaching and learning. Here, development plans lack focus and there are few measures by which to judge the effectiveness of actions to tackle these shortcomings.
60. The resources are very good. There is a wide range of quality reading books in class libraries and the non-fiction library has recently been reorganised and updated. Teachers have access to range of resources for their interactive whiteboards, which they use to good effect to support learning in reading and writing. These are helping pupils, particularly in the juniors, to achieve well. Overall, the quality of provision has improved since the last inspection.

### **Language and Literacy across the curriculum**

61. The school's focus on developing speaking and listening skills is effectively applied in all subject lessons. Pupils frequently discuss their work in pairs and as a class, for example in art in Year 6, they gave each other advice on the techniques involved in making a mask. In the juniors, pupils apply their writing skills in all lessons but the infants are over reliant on worksheets and do not write easily.

### **French and German**

These subjects were sampled.

62. No lessons of French and German could be observed in the inspection. Judgements have been made based on interviews with staff, talking to pupils and looking at

displays. Pupils in Year 5 are introduced to either French or German, which they then study for two years. Currently, Year 5 pupils are being taught German and in Year 6, they are in the second year of French. Teachers from the local modern language specialist secondary school visit to provide one session a week for each year group. Their approach is mainly oral, with some re-enforcement of the spoken language through colourful posters and the labelling of objects in the room. Pupils are very enthusiastic about these lessons, particularly enjoying the singing and games. They also like using foreign language words and many already show they are developing good pronunciation, recalling simple phrases accurately.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are above average in Year 2 and well above average in Year 6.
- Pupils are good at solving problems and explaining their thinking.
- Pupils' progress is very effectively checked through tests but not always when they are working independently.
- Leadership is very good but development plans do not show clearly by how much standards are expected to improve.
- Numeracy skills are very well developed through other subjects.

### **Commentary**

63. Pupils now achieve well in the infants; a significant improvement since the last inspection when their progress was unsatisfactory. Currently, standards for seven-year-olds are above average; a slight fall on 2004 test results when they were well above average. However with such small numbers in each year group, this difference is not significant. Year 2 pupils are good at recalling and using number facts to help them with simple addition and subtraction calculations. They have many opportunities to practise and develop these skills when carrying out practical activities, such as measuring, weighing and handling data. They are also becoming good at explaining their thinking.
64. In the juniors, pupils make very good gains in their learning and achieve very well, partly as a result of the school's decision to make smaller teaching groups in Years 5 and 6. Also, there has traditionally been a strong focus on practical investigations where pupils are encouraged to try out different approaches and discuss their findings. As a result, lessons are well tailored for the narrower ability range and staff are able to give more individual help. This is particularly helpful for pupils with special educational needs who make very good progress and reach the level of attainment expected for their age. Consequently, results in national tests are usually well above average, as they were last year. This trend looks like continuing as the inspection found standards to be well above average, despite there not being so many high attaining pupils in the current Year 6.
65. Teaching and learning are consistently good in the infants and very good in the juniors. All staff are very secure in their subject knowledge as a result of national training so they readily adapt their teaching to meet the needs of individuals. They also make very effective use of resources, particularly new technologies, to make learning interesting and meaningful. In a Year 5 geometry lesson, pupils very quickly grasped how to measure a range of angles accurately with a protractor and calculate the unknown angle, given one in a divided right angle, as a result of the teacher's clear demonstration on the computer-generated projected image.
66. Teachers keep a very close check on pupils' progress through tests, which they analyse thoroughly to identify and tackle common shortcomings. In the juniors, staff are very good at making sure that pupils of all capabilities are working as hard as they can. More able pupils thrive on the many interesting challenges they are given. However in the infants, higher attaining pupils are not always as productive as they

could be when working without direct adult supervision. The few pupils who joined from other schools and those from other ethnic backgrounds achieve as well as others with similar capabilities because any dip in their progress is quickly spotted.

67. The co-ordinator has played a key role in making sure that pupils' thinking and problem solving skills are developed in all lessons. She has also helped revise the scheme of work to provide a greater range of activities to meet the different capabilities in each year group. While she knows what needs to be done to tackle shortcomings in teaching and learning, particularly in the infants, development plans do not provide measures by which she can evaluate the effectiveness of her actions. Overall, improvement has been very good since the last inspection.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

68. Teachers plan many interesting activities for pupils to practise and develop their mathematical skills in other subjects: during a special mathematics day, Year 4 pupils produced symmetrical patterns from different cultures, and plotted and calculated the distance travelled by various exotic fruit on a world map; in Year 1, pupils produced Chinese 'tangram' puzzles; and, Year 6 studied perspective in paintings, drawing in the sight lines. As a result, pupils' numeracy skills in other subjects are very well developed.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are above average at both Year 2 and Year 6 and pupils achieve well.
- Teachers make good use of practical activities to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding, and the quality of teaching and learning is good.
- Pupils' work is regularly marked but staff do not always provide them with appropriate advice on how to develop their work further.
- Pupils greatly enjoy practical investigations.
- Leadership is very good.

### **Commentary**

69. In 2004 teacher assessments and national tests, standards were very high at Year 2 and well above average at Year 6. Current standards are not so high, as both year groups have more pupils who learn at a slower rate. However, these pupils are still achieving well.
70. In Year 2, pupils successfully undertake experiments in many aspects of their work. They demonstrate good knowledge and understanding of science, for example, they name the main parts of the human body and a flowering plant. Pupils are able to explain scientific ideas well, such as how and why materials change when heated. In Year 6, pupils carry out a range of experiments competently, using suitable equipment, making observations and recording their findings. Most pupils are confident in explaining their knowledge about all areas of science. For instance, they correctly identify gravity, air-resistance and up-thrust, successfully explaining the direction in which forces work and the result of forces being balanced.

71. Teaching and learning are good and pupils achieve well. Lessons are well planned, with teachers throughout the school making particularly good use of practical activities. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Staff are also very careful to use and emphasise the correct scientific terminology, which has a beneficial effect on the pupils' overall learning. Teachers also make good use of assessment, to ensure that pupils are presented with activities that are suitable to their needs. The teachers have good subject knowledge, and provide clear instructions and helpful demonstrations of the work that is to be undertaken. They make particularly effective use of the computerised whiteboards in this direction. As a result, all pupils, including those from minority ethnic backgrounds, are fully included in lessons. Good use is also made of assistants, who provide skilled support to pupils, especially helping those with special educational needs to make good progress.
72. Pupils show great interest in the subject, displaying very good attitudes and enjoying the practical work in particular. They work hard, concentrate well and are keen to find answers to problems. Pupils' behaviour is also very good. They work well with other pupils in carrying out activities, they are aware of safety procedures and most produce their work neatly and tidily. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly, but although some add useful comments of support and advice to help the pupils develop their work further, this does not always happen in every class.
73. The subject coordinator supports his colleagues well, and his leadership is very good. He keeps samples of pupils' work, and regularly observes class lessons to see for himself the standards being achieved. He is a very good practitioner himself, and he regularly provides advice and help. He has contributed very significantly to the overall good improvement in standards since the last inspection, as well as the overall provision in such areas as planning, assessment and use of new technologies. He has drawn up a most appropriate action plan for the further development of the subject, but, in common with other subjects, these plans do not provide appropriate information on how much learning is expected to improve, or identify ways in which this can be measured.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in ICT is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Staff expertise, facilities and resources are very much improved.
- The skilled co-ordinator has very effectively helped staff gain confidence and has a clear view of future developments.
- Standards are above average for Year 2 and Year 6 pupils.
- Pupils and staff enthusiastically try out new ideas to develop a full range of ICT skills.
- Progress is sometimes limited when systems break down and tasks are too difficult.
- Many interesting and varied opportunities are planned to support teaching and learning across subjects.

### **Commentary**

74. There has been very good improvement since the last inspection when standards were below average for seven-year-olds and average for 11-year-olds. The very good leadership of the skilled and experienced co-ordinator has been the driving force

behind developments that have ensured that staff have completed nationally funded training, that a computer suite large enough for a class has been completed and resources updated. As a result, pupils achieve well and standards are now above average at the end of both the infants and juniors. The co-ordinator has a clear view of what needs to be done next and is currently looking at ways to check and track pupils' progress more accurately.

75. Nearly all classes have an interactive computerised screen and staff and pupils enthusiastically experiment and try out new ideas. Considering the short time these have been operating, they are already having a very positive effect. Teaching and learning in most lessons are now good. In Year 2, pupils' understanding of money and the way coins of different value can be interchanged was considerably helped by seeing and moving images on the screen. In Year 5, the teacher very effectively selected and showed a video clip and projected photographs of the Hajj at Mecca to help pupils appreciate some of the feelings experienced by British Muslims on their pilgrimage.
76. Staff have adapted national guidance very well to make sure that pupils have opportunities across the whole range of the required programme of study. By seven and 11 years of age, pupils are attaining higher than expected in word processing, data handling, computer-assisted design and control technology. In Year 6, pupils quickly grasped how to compose a series of instructions for controlling a range of security devices in a 'virtual house' because of the very clear and helpful guidance and preparation by the teacher.
77. Staff and pupils' enthusiasm has been sustained despite the difficulties caused by the incompatibility of the new network system installed by the local education authority causing frequent breakdowns in the service. On occasions, some pupils find tasks too difficult as not all staff have the skills to break down the learning into smaller steps. As a result of these barriers, progress is limited, with pupils not being able to complete tasks and wasting time. However, generally all pupils, including those from different backgrounds, enjoy ICT and are fully included in lessons.

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

78. There has been a considerable increase in the use of ICT to support teaching and learning, as has been reported under other subject headings. As a result, pupils' skills in using new technologies are being well developed. The class production of Rumpelstiltskin at the end of the autumn term illustrates the way the school has wholeheartedly embraced the use of new technologies. Pupils composed tunes on an electronic keyboard; music notation was computer generated; pupils word processed the script, verses and programmes; overhead transparencies were used to help pupils learn the songs; and, the final production was videoed and the cast's photograph taken with a digital camera.

### **HUMANITIES**

Geography and history were sampled.

79. No lessons of geography and history were observed. Inspectors talked to pupils and staff and looked at recorded work and curriculum plans.
80. Pupils cover an appropriate range of **geography** topics during the year. For example, pupils in Year 1 have studied different types of houses in the area, and they have

produced simple maps of the school. Those in Year 2 have further developed their knowledge of places by studying maps, and looking at geographical features on the imaginary Isle of Struay, as well as following the journeys of 'Barnaby Bear'. Pupils in Year 3 have examined a range of climate conditions around the world, those in Year 5 are studying a contrasting area in Bristol, and pupils in Year 6 know suitable information about coastal features around Minehead, especially appreciating the problems caused by erosion. Pupils throughout the school, and especially those in Year 4, show appropriate concern for the environment and the ways it can be protected.

81. Pupils report they enjoy **history**. In the work seen, pupils in Years 1 and 2 are attaining as expected for their age. For example, Year 1 pupils had a suitable knowledge of toys, especially teddy bears, in the past. They attempted to put them in order, and as a result showed a developing understanding of chronology. In Year 2, pupils could talk in detail about aspects of the Great Fire of London, and they could describe how holidays at the seaside have changed over time. However, discussions with older pupils suggest that they have knowledge of history that is better than expected. For instance, pupils in Year 3 could discuss in detail the lifestyles of the Romans, and those in Year 4 could explain many facts about Tudor times, especially relating to Henry VIII and his wives. Pupils in Year 5 had a clear understanding of many aspects of more recent British history, and they had a good knowledge about life in Victorian times, especially when comparing the lives of rich and poor people. In Year 6 pupils are most knowledgeable about the Ancient Egyptians, in particular the importance of the pyramids and the River Nile.

## **Religious education**

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils enjoy discussing their personal feelings and exploring their beliefs.
- There are effective links made to topics being studied in other subjects.
- Not all staff confidently use local guidance in planning lessons.
- Interim management arrangements are satisfactory.

### **Commentary**

82. Pupils report that they like lessons in which they can relate their personal feelings to the topic being covered and their achievement is satisfactory. This was very apparent in a Year 5 lesson studying the Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca. The teacher very effectively used video clips and photographs of Hajj to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding of what the event means to Muslims. British Muslims on the video talked about their excitement and reactions on arriving in Mecca. Pupils were skilfully helped to identify and explore what special event would evoke similar feelings for them.
83. Teachers make every attempt to link religious education lessons to topics being studied in other subjects, particularly geography, history and science. In the infants, Year 2 pupils celebrated Diwali and made sweets and decorations in art and design and technology. In Years 5 and 6 historical studies of Greek mythology and ancient Egypt, pupils found out about how the worship of gods and religious ceremonies influenced peoples' lives.
84. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers use national guidance that covers the locally agreed syllabus, but do not sufficiently adapt their lesson plans to provide enough interesting and stimulating approaches. However, coverage of the required programme of study is thorough and pupils in Years 2 and 6 achieve satisfactorily and attain the standards for their age. This is sound improvement since the previous inspection.
85. Currently, the headteacher temporarily oversees the subject satisfactorily, following the promotion of the previous post holder. Her leadership and management are sound. She has ensured that local requirements are met but recognises that the subject does not have a high enough profile. The inspection confirms there are effective plans to provide for the permanent leadership and management of the subject.

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

Design and technology, music and physical education were sampled.

86. Only one lesson of design and technology and two short lessons each of music and dance were observed. Inspectors talked to pupils and staff and looked at recorded work and curriculum plans.

87. In **design and technology** pupils develop their designing and making skills progressively as they move up the school. Teachers ensure that pupils plan what has to be made, select materials and identify what works well as well as identifying improvements. The puppets produced by Year 2 pupils show they can competently assemble and join materials and use simple finishing techniques, like sewing on buttons for eyes to enhance the appearance of the finished product. In a Year 5 lesson, pupils reflected well on the design and materials used in making a variety of musical instruments with regard to the quality of sounds they make. As a homework task, Year 6 pupils had used their designing and making skills to construct shelters. Their models showed how skilled they were in using a wide range of materials and techniques, bearing in mind the aesthetic as well as the practical qualities for which their shelter was intended.
88. Pupils enjoy singing, composing and listening to **music**. The scheme of work devised by the subject leader ensures that pupils develop their performing and composing skills in a progressive way. There is good emphasis placed on responding to music through exploring and expressing their ideas and feelings about music. Year 2 pupils copy and perform simple rhythms and make up their own tunes. The teacher ensures that they are learning the correct vocabulary such as 'piano' and 'forte' for soft and loud; pupils use this knowledge successfully to vary the volume of their performance. They sing with obvious enjoyment and are able to manage a two part round with help. Pupils in Year 6 explored, chose and organised sounds and musical ideas to create a composition on a theme, after listening to Mussorsky's 'Pictures at an Exhibition'. They sing well, holding their parts in three different tunes and combining these tunefully. The curriculum is enriched by visiting musicians, involvement in county and school performances and instrument tuition for some pupils.
89. In **physical education**, pupils often use movement imaginatively in response to music. In a Year 2 dance lesson, the pupils really enjoyed themselves creating simple movement patterns and developed these by adding stretches and facial expressions. They were able to say how the music made them feel and modify their movements accordingly. In Year 3, pupils worked in pairs, changing their movements and creating a pattern that they were able to perform together. They enthusiastically added an explosive movement to their sequence and concentrated well to create a four-part dance. The scheme of work has recently been reviewed and dance has been given a higher profile. The school provides a wide range of after school sporting activities, which are well attended. In addition, pupils take part in a number of competitions with other schools such as netball and football tournaments. The expert coaching pupils receive both in and out of school motivates and encourages them to improve their skills and fitness.

## **ART**

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

- Standards in art are above average.
- Pupils are very enthusiastic about their work and achieve well.
- There is a wide range of very good resources.
- There are good enrichment activities and the subject is linked effectively to other areas of the curriculum.
- Leadership and management are good and the subject leader inspires and empowers the staff to teach the subject well.

## Commentary

90. Standards in art are above average in Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils achieve well, developing good creative, imaginative and critical skills. They thoroughly enjoy their lessons and are inspired by the wealth of imaginative activities they experience.
91. Throughout the school, there are many examples of painting, printing and collage that are of high quality. From Year 1, pupils investigate materials and processes and then select ideas to use in their work. Pupils in Year 2 have examined the patterns and images portrayed in landscape photographs to help them develop their ideas for picture frames, which complemented the photographs. Their chalk pictures of plants in pots show good observation for detail and colour. They discussed Jackson Pollock paintings, making thoughtful comments about the artist's technique.
92. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning are good. In an excellent Year 6 lesson making headdresses, there was a buzz of enthusiasm and productivity. Some pupils were selecting materials and adjusting designs whilst others were carefully constructing the mask part of the headdress using plaster strips and foil. The very good demonstration by the teacher enabled the pupils to proceed with confidence and suggest ideas, modifications and improvements. They showed a high level of self-reliance and technique, particularly in collecting and selecting ideas and materials to use to inform the design process.
93. The subject leader has raised the profile of three-dimensional work in the school. On a Year 3 class visit to sculpture parks, they gained inspiration and produced imaginative works of art from a variety of materials. The well-produced scheme of work provides effective links with other subjects to make learning meaningful. Interesting collages made by Year 5 pupils were inspired by their history work on Ancient Greece and the computer assisted paintings in the style of Jackson Pollock.
94. The subject is led well and the leader is successful in helping teachers to develop their own skills. She has made sure a wide range of very good resources is readily available. She has been the driving force behind enriching the curriculum by involvement in community art projects, such as the village 'Scarecrows week', visiting artists and trips to galleries. Teachers and pupils benefit greatly from these initiatives that ensure teaching and learning remain good or better. This is good improvement since the last inspection.

## PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Personal and social education was sampled.

95. Only three short personal, social and health education sessions were observed in the inspection. Pupils in Year 2, 4, 5 and 6 were spoken to and discussions held with staff about their plans. This is insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement about provision.
96. The school has always made pupils' personal development a key focus and this is evident throughout all activities and not just the weekly **personal, social and health education** lessons. Staff follow a well-structured programme that covers a range of topics related to the age and maturity of pupils, as well as focussing on relevant issues

as they arise, such as bullying or international events like the Tsunami tragedy. In a Year 4 lesson, the teacher effectively helped pupils to reflect on what actions made them feel good about themselves. They enthusiastically discussed and planned how to demonstrate their ideas in small groups. While they came up with a range of interesting and very appropriate examples, they were not given sufficient guidance to organise their presentations effectively. An innovative approach successfully enables pupils with low self-esteem build their confidence. A small group of Year 4 pupils were sensitively helped by an assistant to make appreciative comments about each other, such as how they had been helped in the playground or with their work. A feature of all classes is the warm welcome pupils are given when they come to school in the morning, usually during registration, helping make pupils feel good about themselves in preparation for their work.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

### *Inspection judgement*

### *Grade*

<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3

<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>3</b>
Pupils' achievement	3

<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	2
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	2
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
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	2

<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	2
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).*