

INSPECTION REPORT

AVISHAYES COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Chard

LEA area: Somerset

Unique reference number: 123671

Acting Headteacher: Peter Morton

Reporting inspector: John Lilly
12487

Dates of inspection: 7 – 10 February 2000

Inspection number: 191290

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:	3 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Fairway Rise Avishayes Road Chard Somerset
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Sylvia Murphy
Date of previous inspection:	20 – 23 January 1997

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		Special educational needs (lead)	Teaching
			Leadership and management
Cliff Hayes	Lay inspector	Equal Opportunities	Attitudes, values and personal development
			Partnership with parents
			Care for pupils
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		Design and technology	
		Physical education	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Avishayes Community Primary School serves a residential area of Chard, with a mixture of housing, mostly privately owned but with a significant proportion of social housing. Most pupils come from homes that reflect nationally average economic and social backgrounds, but many come from less favourable backgrounds. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is low for this type of school. Few pupils join or leave the school other than at Reception or Year 6. No pupils have English as second language, or come from ethnic minority communities. The average attainment of children aged five is slightly below the national average. The school has a nursery for children aged three and four years, and there is also an on-site community pre-school for younger children. The school has additional resources to support pupils with special educational needs; some of these pupils come from further afield. In consequence, the proportion of pupils with special educational needs is much higher than the average for schools of this type. In total there are 93 pupils on the register of special educational need, fourteen of whom have Statements of Special Educational Need. There are 340 girls and boys on the school roll, between the ages of 3 and 11. The acting headteacher and acting deputy headteacher lead and manage the school due to the long absence of the headteacher. The school's aim is to 'Work and learn together'.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school has gone through a period of considerable insecurity caused by the long absence of the headteacher. Even so, attainment in national tests at the ends of both key stages improved at the national rate, and the present attainment at least matches the average for all schools nationally and for similar schools. The teaching is effective and has many good features. The pupils are keen to come to school; they work hard and behave well. Relationships in the school are good and attendance is satisfactory. The curriculum is broad and balanced, and provides very good opportunities for the pupils' personal development. The partnership between the school and parents is not as good as it needs to be. The governing body is caring and supportive but does not give sufficient lead in the drive towards improvement. The acting headteacher provides clear leadership and has begun to raise standards within the last year. On balance, the school is effective, and shows signs of becoming more effective. The school offers satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards are improving. Attainment in all subjects, except information technology, matches or exceeds the national expectations.
- Standards in art, physical education and religious education are good throughout the school.
- Provision for under-fives is good.
- Sixty per cent of teaching is good or better.
- Provision for special educational needs is very good.
- Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.
- Activities at lunchtime and after-school are excellent.
- Staff promote good behaviour effectively and provide a warm and caring community for the pupils.
- The attitudes and behaviour of pupils are good, and relationships are good and often very good.

What could be improved

- Leadership and management to drive improvement.
- Monitoring and evaluation to identify where improvement is needed.
- Assessment to guide teaching and curriculum planning.
- Planning to ensure that teaching is properly structured.
- Attainment in reading.
- Attainment in information technology.
- Curriculum provision for personal, social and health education.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in January 1997. The previous inspection found that the following required improvement: standards in information technology, short-term planning, challenge for all levels of attainment, especially the most able, the role of subject co-ordinators, the way learning support assistants worked in classes, and monitoring by governors. In some areas, for example class assistants working with teachers, there has been considerable improvement. However, overall, improvement has been unsatisfactory. For example, teaching now has appropriate challenge and pace for all levels of attainment, but still lacks sufficiently precise planning for each age and level of attainment. The governors still do not monitor and evaluate standards in school with sufficient rigour and, consequently, the school lacks a clear plan for improvement. Improvement has been more rapid since governors gave the acting headteacher sufficient authority to lead and manage the school.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	Compared with			
	All schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	C	C	B	B
Mathematics	E	C	D	D
Science	A	C	C	C

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
Average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

These letter grades should be treated with caution since the comparisons do not take into account the very high proportion of special educational needs pupils at Avishayes. Once this is taken into account, the comparisons show a more favourable picture. Inspectors find that results in national tests and assessments in 1999 in English, mathematics and science, at least matched the performance of all schools nationally and similar schools. Over the last four years, standards in national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 have varied, but the underlying trend has been in line with the national improvement rate. Pupils join the nursery with below the national average attainment, and leave at the end of Year 6 with attainment that is at least in line with the national average. Standards overall are satisfactory, but not high enough in information technology and reading. The school has targets that are in reality

predictions rather than challenging targets to be achieved. Current targets do not drive staff to find improvements in assessment and planning that would raise attainment further.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils are keen to come to school and show positive attitudes to their learning
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils usually behave well, and are friendly and polite. The school as a whole works hard to see everyone has an equal opportunity to succeed.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships between pupils and staff and among pupils are good. Pupils become increasingly mature and responsible.
Attendance	Attendance is satisfactory and in-line with the national average.

A particular strength is the way pupils value each other and respect differences.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Satisfactory	Good

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

There is very little unsatisfactory teaching and almost 60 per cent of teaching is good or very good. Teachers manage their classes well and nurture warm and positive relationships. Along with sound subject knowledge, this gives teachers an air of respected authority. In some lessons the planning does not always match the learning needs of each level of attainment or age. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is satisfactory, although the teaching of reading requires improvement. Teachers make too little use of information technology in lessons.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant to pupils' present and future lives. It meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and for religious education. Excellent activities outside the classroom and good contacts with the community significantly enrich the pupils' learning.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision is very good and enhances the learning of all pupils.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school pays close and effective attention to the well-being of its pupils. This promotes good behaviour and personal development.

	However, support and guidance need improvement through more effective target setting, reporting and assessment practices.
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Partnership with parents is not sufficiently developed.

The curriculum requires developing in two respects. The first is information technology, and the second a scheme of work for personal, social and health education. The general care of pupils is good, but guidance for pupils requires improvement through more effective assessment.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The acting headteacher and acting deputy headteacher provide clear leadership and are improving the management of the school. Phase leaders and subject co-ordinators have a positive effect on standards, but the management structures as a whole need to be clearer and better co-ordinated.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors do not take a sufficiently rigorous role in driving improvement, and this devalues their very supportive attitude towards the school. They have not maintained a positive partnership with all parents.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Overall, monitoring and evaluation are unsatisfactory at governor, senior management, phase and subject levels.
The strategic use of resources	Governors budget prudently but do not plan sufficiently strategically. The present development plan is for one year only. The headteacher assigns staff appropriately. Satisfactory use is made of buildings and outside areas. Most subjects have sufficient resources of adequate range and quantity. A significant exception is information technology where resources are unsatisfactory.

The school does not have a long-term strategy for improvement. Monitoring and evaluation are weak and, therefore, governors and staff do not have a clear view of strengths to build upon and weaknesses to address. Planning as a whole does not challenge thinking as to 'What can we do that brings the greatest and quickest benefit to the pupils' learning?' Similarly, managers do not ask themselves sufficiently, 'What can we learn from schools that are more effective than ours?'. Balancing the satisfactory attainment and good behaviour against areas that require improvement, the school offers satisfactory value for money.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • Their children make good progress. • There are excellent after-school activities. • Teachers have high expectations of pupils. • Teaching is good. • Staff help pupils become mature and responsible. • Staff are approachable. • Pupils behave well. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework arrangements. • Information about their children's progress. • The partnership between home and school that supports pupils' learning, in particular reading. • Some parents felt behaviour should be improved. • The leadership and management of the school.

Most parents are pleased with the school, but a small but significant group feel matters should be better. Inspectors agree to a large extent with all the positive views. However, inspectors find that staff do not effectively use homework, home-school reading programmes and reports to build the learning partnership between teachers and parents. Inspectors found that unsatisfactory behaviour is very rare. Regarding the leadership and management of the school, inspectors are aware that the continuing situation concerning the absence of the headteacher has hampered necessary improvement and created uncertainty amongst parents. However, inspectors are confident that the governing body, acting headteacher and acting deputy headteacher are now driving improvement. They now have the capacity and commitment to bring about necessary improvements.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. There is a need to be cautious when comparing results in national tests and assessments at Avishayes with all schools nationally and schools deemed to be similar. These comparisons do not take into account the very high proportion of pupils with special education needs in the school, many of whom join the special education needs resource unit from further afield. Once this is taken into account, the comparisons show that the school's results overall are in line with or above all schools nationally. Results compare favourably with standards in other schools that are truly similar to Avishayes.
2. Over the last four years, standards in national tests and assessments at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 have varied, but the underlying trend has been in line with the national improvement rate. Most, but not all, of this variation relates to the proportion of special education needs pupils in each year. Attainment in English, mathematics and science has at least matched the national average for all schools and that for similar schools, and this inspection confirms this picture. This inspection shows that the high quality of provision for pupils with special educational need has a beneficial effect on the achievements of all pupils. Pupils join the school with slightly below average attainment, and leave at the end of Year 6 with attainment that is at least in line with the national average and in some cases above. This shows the pupils make at least sound progress. Standards are at least satisfactory, except for information technology. However, standards in reading are not sufficiently high, and this hinders learning in other subjects.
3. Children under-five make good progress in the nursery and reception classes, but progress becomes slower at Key Stage 1. Standards at Key Stage 2 are slightly higher, and progress tends to become more rapid as pupils become older, and as they gain more secure learning skills. In many lessons, especially at Key Stage 2, the older pupils in dual age classes make slightly better progress than the younger pupils. This is because the teaching matches the needs of older pupils better than younger pupils. There are no significant differences in the progress of girls and boys. Pupils with special educational need, whether they are part of the mainstream or resource unit provision, make good and in many cases very good progress relative to their individual education plans. Benefiting in part from this provision, lower ability pupils make good progress. Pupils of average attainment make satisfactory progress, but it is these pupils who are most disadvantaged if they are the youngest in a class. The higher attaining pupils make sound and sometimes good progress. These higher attaining pupils achieve standards above the national average, but not sufficiently consistently. Progress is good when their needs are met precisely, as in mathematics sets in Years 5 and 6, but these pupils say that at times they find the work too easy in other subjects. They comment, in particular, on literacy lessons, and this relates to the fact that inspectors find that some teachers are not yet fully skilled when implementing the literacy strategy.
4. Learning, in the main, is good. The pupils listen attentively, usually thinking about the meaning of what they hear. They speak clearly and in a well-considered way, asking probing questions and answering in convincing ways. They write clearly and correctly, often at length. These literacy skills support good learning in all subjects. The lower standards in reading do not so much hold back learning, as miss

opportunities to drive learning forward. Some pupils find it difficult to understand work sheets set for the class as a whole, and find that some resource books are beyond their reading level. In the main, pupils of all ages work hard, fast, with care, and show pride in their work.

5. The sound standards in numeracy support effective learning at both key stages. Particularly strong is pupils' ability to see where mathematics can help solve a problem. Once they spot a way of solving a problem, they use their developing computational skills well. The school's recent emphasis upon mental arithmetic helps this process.
6. The low standards in information technology and inadequate provision of hard and software, hold back pupils' progress. Although there are exceptions, the pupils have too little opportunity to use word-processing for creative and extended writing, and too little opportunity to use the technology to tabulate, analyse and present numbers. Similarly, pupils do not yet sufficiently use computers as a powerful research tool.
7. At Key Stage 1, attainment in English, mathematics and science is in line with national averages, and progress is also satisfactory. Pupils make a good start in writing and reading but then progress in reading slows. Attainment in information technology is below the national average. Attainment in design and technology, history, geography and music matches the national average. In art, physical education and religious education attainment is above the national average.
8. At Key Stage 2, attainment in English is in line with the national average but varies from lesson to lesson. Again reading progress is slower. This relates to weaknesses in the planning and teaching, but most significantly to the absence of a powerful reading partnership between home and school. Attainment in mathematics is in line with the national average, and progress increases considerably in Years 5 and 6, with the highest attainers doing particularly well. Attainment is average in science. Again, attainment in information technology is below average. Attainment is in line with national averages in design and technology and geography, and above average in art, history, music, physical education and religious education. Differences relate to the quality of planning and in some cases teaching.
9. Attainment overall has risen since the last inspection, but neither consistently nor sufficiently. It has drifted upwards rather than being driven by a challenging improvement plan informed by rigorous assessment, monitoring and evaluation. There are signs that improvement has become more rapid since the acting headteacher and acting deputy headteacher were given full authority. Key to this improvement was the review and development meetings the senior management held with staff. Since that time there has been a clearer sense of direction and purpose, and a determination to improve is part of the motivation and commitment of teachers.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. Pupils have positive attitudes to school and to lessons. They show interest and enthusiasm in most lessons, although when the pace of teaching drops, so does the pupils' concentration. However, in most lessons learning is good, and pupils try hard to complete their work and do their best. They keep at tasks for long periods and take part in clubs and sports outside the classroom in great numbers. The example set by all classroom staff and those responsible for organising extra-curricular activities generates this enthusiasm and responsiveness; the pupils become natural 'joiners', and once 'joined' keep going.

11. Behaviour in and out of classrooms is good. In early years, in Key Stage 1 and in the first half of Key Stage 2, it is very good. In the few lessons where isolated examples of poor behaviour were seen, almost always in the later years of Key Stage 2, good pupil management by teachers prevented any negative impact on the learning of others. In no lessons seen was behaviour unsatisfactory overall, whilst in four lessons out of every five it was good or better. Pupils are polite and friendly. They chat and play animatedly at break times. They take care of equipment and respect school and other pupils' property. Though, as in all schools, there are isolated outbreaks of bad feeling between pupils, bullying is very rare. There have been no exclusions in the current academic year. The majority of parents believe the school achieves high standards of behaviour and inspectors agree with this view.
12. Relationships between staff and pupils and among pupils are good. Pupils are valued as individuals and their response is to value differences in each other. For example, they show respect for those with other opinions and willingly help those pupils who have physical disadvantages. Pupils collaborate well when working in pairs or small groups. As pupils go through the school, their maturity develops well and they learn about the needs of their own and other societies. They are willing to accept responsibility although opportunities provided are not sufficiently widespread. More chances for younger pupils to take responsibilities similar to Year 6 pupils working in the school office, would help them to develop even greater maturity. Under-fives and pupils in Key Stage 1 show considerable ability to work independently, but this is less evident at Key Stage 2. In this area there has been little change since the previous inspection. Teachers' lesson planning makes too little provision for independent learning.
13. Attendance is satisfactory, though holidays taken during term time contribute to the level remaining at only the national average. There is very little unauthorised absence.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

14. Teaching is a strength of the school, and represents a good foundation for future improvement. Although some teachers are more effective than others, there are no ineffective teachers. There is no marked difference in the effectiveness of teaching between key stages, classes or subjects, but there are differences in the effectiveness of teaching for different years in the mixed age classes. Teaching of children under-five is consistently good. Almost all teaching at Key Stages 1 and 2 is at least satisfactory. There is very little unsatisfactory teaching and almost 60 per cent of teaching is good or better; some teaching is excellent. Teaching by specialised special educational needs staff is consistently good or very good.
15. Although the teaching has many strengths, the weaknesses lead to inconsistency. These weaknesses lead good teachers occasionally to teach unsatisfactorily, and teams of teachers to teach less effectively than their underlying skills would expect. This is particularly the case with the teaching of literacy. Although the teaching of these core skills is satisfactory overall, it is more often unsatisfactory than in other subjects, and does not maintain the very effective teaching these core skills require. This inconsistency relates almost entirely to unsatisfactory planning and assessment. Where attainment is too low, for example information technology, this is also caused by insufficient resources and in some cases lack of teachers' expertise. In these less effective lessons, teachers over-dominate, restricting pupils opportunities to learn for themselves.

16. The strengths of the teaching are evident in almost all lessons. The teachers' secure subject knowledge and strong leadership of the lessons earn the pupils' respect and trust. They work very hard to help each pupil forward, and pupils value this support highly. Teachers manage classes well and consequently pupils gain secure social and work routines. On a day-to-day basis, teachers know their pupils well; they keep an eye on each pupil and help when necessary. They expect the pupils to produce high quality work and work quickly and, consequently, pupils work hard, fast and show a pride and care in their work; pupils are determined to succeed. In very effective lessons, teachers use questions very perceptively to make the pupils think for themselves and this helps them to work independently. In most but not all lessons, there is very good teamwork between class teacher and special educational needs teachers and support assistants. This is an improvement since the last inspection, but there is still work to be done.
17. Teachers plan the most effective lessons very well, using a range of techniques. In these very effective lessons, they plan very carefully to meet the needs of each age and each level of attainment, and make very clear what is to be learned, and how these objectives will be met. These teachers use resources well to illuminate and deepen the pupils' learning. Relationships in these lessons are very good, with a buzz of busy and determined shared endeavour.
18. Characteristics of this good teaching are the very constructive teamwork between teachers in the same phase, and the fresh ideas brought by newly qualified teachers. A less positive feature is that teaching is less effective for the lower year in dual age classes, relative to the older year. This relates to weaknesses in the teaching outlined below.
19. An overall area for development is the use of homework. Homework arrangements are at an early stage of development. Although homework is set regularly and appropriately, it has yet to become a powerful way of learning, and misses opportunities to build the partnership between home and school, for example through better use of the 'homework book'. Another example of missed opportunities is the way teachers do not build upon the home-school reading partnership that already exists in the early years classes.
20. The first and key weakness is planning. When this is unsatisfactory, lessons lose pace and focus. Clear policy is lacking, for example for reading, and this leads to imprecision. Schemes of work, whilst there, require further development. Planning for units of work and lessons tends too often to concentrate on the topics to be covered rather than addressing the learning needs of the pupils. There are exceptions to this, for example the high attainment in religious education results from teachers thinking deeply on how pupils can learn very demanding and challenging ideas. Similarly, setting in mathematics leads teachers to a much better understanding of the learning needs of pupils at each level of attainment. However, in some English lessons, lack of pace and precision leads to lessons becoming slow and directionless. A second and similar weakness, is that some teachers do not take sufficient account of individual education plans for pupils with special educational need. Consequently, teaching misses opportunities to support these pupils' progress towards targets.
21. The third and connected weakness is assessment. Assessment procedures are not satisfactory and, therefore, teachers are not in a position to give precise feedback to pupils on how to improve. In some subjects, for example English, teachers set targets and provide relate marking that guides pupils how to achieve them; this needs

to be the case across all subjects and classes. Similarly teachers do not have a continuous and detailed record to test whether their teaching is effective or not. Marking is frequent and conscientious but rarely gives the pupils a clear idea why they succeed and what they need to learn next.

22. The fourth weakness is also connected to the first three. The teaching too often fails to meet the particular needs of each age within the class and each level of attainment. This often results in the younger pupils finding the work too difficult. Similarly, although the pupils of lower attainment are very well supported, the highest attainers are not sufficiently challenged. In discussion, pupils confirm this to be the case. The previous inspection report identified weaknesses in short-term planning and the precise challenge for each level of attainment, and there has been moderate, but still insufficient improvement since that time.

HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?

23. The school provides a broad curriculum for children under-five and at Key Stages 1 and 2. It effectively supports intellectual, creative, technological and physical aspects of learning. There is a satisfactory balance of subjects to meet the requirements of the desirable learning outcomes for the under-fives and the National Curriculum and religious education. The school provides practical approaches to learning wherever possible. For example, drama is a regular feature of the English curriculum at Key Stage 2 and teachers ensure that the mathematics curriculum is relevant to and builds upon pupils' everyday experiences.
24. The long-term planning for curriculum coverage is satisfactory in all three phases. To ensure that this is the case, given that each class has two age groups, a two-year rolling curriculum programme is in place for Key Stage 1 and a four-year rolling programme for Key Stage 2.
25. Pupils have equal access to the curriculum, although there is no up-to-date equal opportunities policy. However, inadequate assessment and analysis mean the school cannot ensure this remains the case. Pupils with complex special educational needs are well integrated and receive a curriculum tailored to their learning needs. Their carefully designed individual education plans support effective teaching, but are not sufficiently used by all teachers. There is generally satisfactory provision for higher attaining pupils. A particularly effective mathematics curriculum in Years 5 and 6 matches more closely the needs of pupils of different attainment by setting pupils in four ability groups. This arrangement provides enrichment for higher attaining pupils, whilst allowing targeted teaching for the lowest attaining pupils. The previous inspection identified short-term planning as a weakness. The way the school has thought through short-term planning issues in mathematics has improved pupils' progress, but in other areas short-term planning remains an area for development.
26. Even though the curriculum covers sex and drugs education, the school does not provide a sufficiently systematic and progressive curriculum for all pupils in personal, social, health education.
27. The school's strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy are satisfactory overall. All pupils receive a minimum of one hour per day in each of these basic skills. However, there is inconsistent implementation of the government's recommended content for these lessons and this compromises their overall impact on standards. This is particularly the case in English. Within English the key weakness is provision

for reading. The recently acquired commercial scheme has brought structure to the provision, but the lack of a dynamic home-school reading partnership leads to progress that is too slow and a breadth of reading that is too restricted.

28. An excellent variety of extra-curricular activities significantly enrich the curriculum. Staff regularly and enthusiastically run after school clubs. These cover a range of sporting activities including gymnastics, netball, rugby and football. The other activities include a Christian club called 'Megamix', drama, art and craft, computer and choir clubs. Pupils in Year 5 benefit from a residential visit to an outdoor pursuits centre.
29. Good links with the community make a significant contribution to the school's curriculum. Swimming is a regular feature of physical education for all pupils as the school has a swimming pool supported and funded by the Parents, Teachers and Friends Association. Pupils make regular visits to the local museum and church, and there are strong links with other churches in the town. Many participate in peripatetic music teaching of string, keyboard, woodwind and brass instruments. Pupils take part in combined local school choirs and folk dance groups. The school is an active participant in regional competitive physical education and sports programmes. There are a range of sport activities supported by the local sports association, Cresta, and the district council. Many members of the community regularly visit the school. These include church leaders, local councillors, a poet, and members of the Royal British Legion. These people enrich assemblies and lessons.
30. Relationships with partnership schools are satisfactory. Area headteachers, including the headteacher of the secondary school, meet regularly. They discuss local approaches to current issues. There is a variety of competitive sporting links between primary schools. There are satisfactory secondary transfer procedures that effectively prepare Year 6 pupils for a smooth transition. These procedures include liaison between teachers, a secondary school road show that visits Avishayes, and opportunities to participate in joint drama and musical events.
31. Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and the school has developed the already high values found in the previous inspection. Younger pupils say they 'love' their teachers, and throw their arms wide, crying "Oh, yes!" This one action reflects the feelings of respect, trust and friendship, which permeate the school. The spirituality is no accident; it comes from good religious education teaching, reflective class discussions, some very good assemblies, good role models and teaching styles that promote imagination and a sense of awe and wonder. The teaching constantly reinforces ideals of respect and friendship in a gentle, caring and concerned way. Such teaching, where respect for the pupils is almost tangible, not only brings pupils to know right from wrong but also builds within the pupils a similar respect for their peers. As a result, pupils listen intently to others when they share experiences in class and assemblies.
32. Assemblies challenge pupils to question their actions. *"What can I trust myself to do?"* The good assemblies, largely based on Christian values, are times of reflection as well as moments of self-searching. An example comes from the response pupils made in an assembly. *"I trust my Dad to look after things for me."* *"I trust my Mum because she always tells the truth."* *"I trust my Nan's ideas about things."* In religious education lessons, teachers help pupils relate stories about Rama and Sita to their own lives. Even in the early years, the children link the word 'trust' (the assembly theme for the week) to the story of Noah. In the main, these assemblies meet the statutory requirements for collective worship. However, some pupils are withdrawn at

these times for other work, and this situation means that, for these pupils, the school does not meet statutory requirements.

33. Staff purposively link moral education to the spirituality found in the school. There is little specific moral teaching found in the school. It is built on the very fine role model of the teachers themselves. When pupils in discussion make mistakes, other pupils make no form of ridicule and the individual is encouraged by gentle correction. Teachers make paramount building the pupils' self esteem and self-identity. When there is misbehaviour, reproof is immediate and effective but still reflects the goodness of intention. This approach causes the offenders to reflect on their own actions.
34. Spiritual and moral awareness have a great impact on the social provision. They reflect the underlying feeling of care for others, found in the pupil's social attitudes. Staff develop the pupils' skills very successfully, encouraging pupils to work co-operatively on projects and in the many team games provided by the school. From an early age, teachers in these aspects of the curriculum encourage pupils to use their initiative and work independently of the teacher, and this fosters their sense of responsibility and respect for each other. Community links help develop a sense of citizenship and staff provide pupils with varied opportunities to participate in visits and the many extra-curricular clubs.
35. The provision for cultural development is very good. The religious education curriculum helps pupils to appreciate and understand in depth both Christianity and other major faiths. At present there are good displays of Hindu culture and of the celebration of the Chinese New Year. Through drama, musical appreciation, singing, dance, history, geography, design and technology and art, pupils are led to appreciate, value and celebrate a wide range of cultures from different periods and many parts of the world. These cultures feature in dance in the school. A way staff promote cultural understanding is the manner in which they help pupils not simply to appreciate other cultures, but to celebrate them. Pupils' cultural achievements within their own communities are similarly recognised and celebrated.
36. Even though the provision is very good, an area of development remains the design and implementation of a specific scheme of work for personal, social and health education to underpin the more general provision.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

37. Avishayes is a caring school, in which staff know their pupils well. Staff give pupils very good personal attention throughout the school day; examples include, a teacher chaperoning a pupil concerned as to what another might say to her after school, and the high concern shown by teaching and non-teaching staff for pupils who are unwell. There are four staff qualified in first-aid. Pupils learn in a secure and happy environment. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported. Staff integrate them with mainstream classes, and these pupils have the same access to the curriculum as other pupils.
38. The high level of personal concern shown by staff is not always matched by sound procedures. Whilst teachers know pupils well, there has been no recent training in child protection matters and teachers do not have written guidelines in this area. Similarly, records of fire drills and the checking of fire equipment are not up-to-date, and the signs as to what to do in cases of fire are inadequate and do not conform to

current best practice. The governors have not conducted a recent risk assessment. The governing body must ensure that they address these issues.

39. Monitoring of behaviour and attendance is good and the school promotes good behaviour largely by means of good role modelling by staff and good management of pupils in lessons. Pupils understand and value the informal system for rewards and sanctions.
40. The school has not addressed the required improvements to assessment identified by the previous inspection. Teachers often keep good records of pupils' academic achievements but do not effectively nor consistently apply this knowledge to lesson planning and plans to support individual improvement. The assessment of the needs and learning of pupils with special educational need is very good, and leads to very useful individual education plans. They provide an example for others, especially since some class teachers use these plans insufficiently. Staff have effectively used assessment to determine sets in mathematics. This has meant better targeted teaching and better guidance to pupils. As a result, attainment has improved. However, in the main, staff use assessment to plan for whole-class improvement more effectively than for individual support. The school has enthusiastically embraced the idea of pupil self-assessment and has introduced this effectively as early as the reception classes. However, practice does not develop sufficiently well thereafter; in the upper years, there are too few opportunities for pupils to reflect on their performance and identify appropriate improvement plans and targets.
41. The annual progress reports for parents contain good diagnoses of areas requiring improvement but seldom follow this with useful comments on how such improvement can be achieved or with specific improvement targets. Staff and management miss opportunities to build upon the pockets of existing good practice.
42. The school meets statutory requirements for assessment tests at the end of each key stage.
43. There is little formal recording of pupils' personal development. The teachers pay close attention to the pupils in their charge, and this ensures appropriate day-to-day support. This helps pupils develop maturity and good social skills. However, there is no formal reward system for good behaviour or academic achievement although this is under discussion. Older pupils are encouraged to develop their citizenship skills by helping infant classes.
44. Overall, this is a very caring school that caters well for pupils' personal needs and safety, gives good classroom support, and successfully promotes good behaviour and attendance. However, staff do not as yet underpin this good practical work with effective assessment and recording procedures to promote individual improvement.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

45. The school is not as effective in this aspect as it was at the time of the previous inspection. It has not yet put into effect suggestions for improvement made at that time in aspects of homework and home reading and, in other ways, has slipped back a little. The home-school contract is in place, but in its present form does not represent a truly partnership document. Many parents say they do not feel it is '*theirs*'.
46. The majority of parents are satisfied with the school's provision for their children's education. Sixty-eight parents returned the pre-inspection questionnaire, which

represents approximately one quarter of all parents. Over 80 per cent of parents returning the questionnaire felt that:

- teaching was good;
- there was good extra-curricular provision;
- children liked school and made good progress;
- the school had high expectations of pupils;
- the school was approachable;
and pupils behaved well and became mature and responsible.

Inspectors agreed with these positive views held by parents about the school.

However, a significant minority felt that:

- homework arrangements were unsatisfactory;
- that the school did not work closely enough with them;
- that parents were not well informed on progress;
- that the school was not well led or managed;
- and that pupils' behaviour was not good.

There is, therefore, sufficient evidence to indicate that the school needs to improve its communication and partnership with parents. A significant minority of parents feel they need more help to be more involved in, and better acquainted with, the school's activities. Inspectors found that the school needs to build a more positive partnership with all parents. They agreed that homework arrangements require development, and that parents are not sufficiently informed as to their children's progress. However, they also found that behaviour is good. They found that overall leadership and management has weaknesses, but that the acting headteacher and acting deputy headteacher were now giving a sense of purpose and direction to the school. As a result, standards are now improving.

47. The school has strengths in this area upon which to build. Parents are very supportive in the nursery and early years classes, including very good transition arrangements when pupils start at the school, a car-pool system on trips and a rota for classroom help. At this stage, communication and partnership between home and school is very strong. The school misses opportunities to build upon this very good beginning. There are regular newsletters home, but they are insufficiently frequent and miss opportunities to celebrate the achievements of the pupils.
48. Most parents find the school approachable. There is an active and successful parent, teacher and friends association that, among other activities, manages the swimming pool. Parents of children with special educational needs are properly consulted and involved with annual reviews and individual education plans. The school holds three consultation evenings per year. General information about school activities is satisfactory; the monthly newsletter covers a wide range of topics. These newsletters could be more frequent. Teachers and administrative staff are approachable and try to be helpful. Moreover, the school does not receive many complaints from parents. The specific shortcomings are in information supplied to parents about pupils' progress, in liaison with parents and in active parental involvement.
49. Reports are well written and contain useful information on areas requiring improvement. However, they do not give data on levels of attainment, except in Years 2 and 6 after national tests. They do not show how improvement can be achieved.

This would assist parents who wish to give practical help at home, as would information about what is to be taught in ensuing terms; currently staff do not give parents this information.

50. At the moment, very few parents give regular help in the classroom beyond the earliest years. Given the size of the school, the school does not encourage sufficiently effectively this important way parents can help. Although the school has recently introduced a homework diary, this is in its infancy and is not used consistently well. It requires development so as to be a better, more systematic link with parents. Parental help, and pupils' progress in reading, are also limited by the absence of a home-school reading scheme and the fact that graded reading books are not sent home. There is no planned mechanism at present for soliciting parental views.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

51. The uncertainty connected with the long-term absence of the headteacher has significantly reduced the capacity of the school to improve. However, there has been clear improvement since the acting headteacher and acting deputy headteacher have had authority to move the school forward. The school now has a sense of purpose and direction. These senior managers are committed, determined and have the necessary skills to lead and manage the school. This determination has, as yet, not sufficiently moved on to improve planning, policies, and monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching. To balance this, both these managers have a significant impact on the growing team spirit amongst teachers, and the behaviour and attitudes of pupils.
52. The management structure of the school is a sensible one, but does not have sufficient focus and clear responsibilities and accountabilities. Staff have responsibilities that are too wide and varied, for example being responsible for leading both a phase team and subject co-ordination. This leads to staff feeling they do not have the time to do both tasks equally well, and communication between staff becomes confused. Similarly, having more than one subject co-ordinator reduces the vision for the subject within the school as a whole. Insufficient clarity as to what a phase team leader does, and how the task of a subject co-ordinator complements this role, leads to confused and inadequate planning, and to monitoring and evaluation that lack sufficient precision and rigour.
53. The governing body is very supportive of the school on a personal level, and works through sensible sub-committees. However, governors do not have a strategic improvement plan, and the current school development plan lacks sufficiently stretching targets for raising pupils' attainment. Consequently, the plan lacks clear priorities with measurable targets against which to test progress. Priorities and targets lack sufficient clarity as to specific things to do and achieve, and ways of seeing whether aims are achieved. The plans lack a clear view as to how something is to be achieved and that what is decided is really relevant. Timescales are too broad and insufficiently considered. Similarly, although governors monitor finance frequently, they do not sufficiently nor continuously monitor and evaluate the work of the school or standards of pupils' learning and attainment. They do not check the quality of planning and teaching, and its effectiveness in raising standards.
54. Recently, the governors accompanied by the acting headteacher have begun to attend training that addresses the above weaknesses. There is already evidence that

governors now see how they can and need to improve their effectiveness. They recognise areas described below as key priorities.

55. Overall, the governors and senior staff do not sufficiently challenge their leadership and management by asking rigorously, 'Are standards high enough?' and 'Can we learn from schools that are more effective than Avishayes?'. This means the management of the school does not yet effectively identify strengths to build upon and weaknesses to be addressed. As a crucial aspect of these weaknesses, the governors do not drive improvements in standards with sufficient energy or challenge.
56. Governors budget prudently, and financial control is tight. School administrators are skilled and keep both headteacher and governors well informed. A recent audit confirmed that all school accounts are properly managed and audited. Small deficiencies identified by this audit have been addressed, except for the need for a three-year strategic plan. However, the budget is not used sufficiently to drive improvement, investing money in ways that will most improve standards and most quickly.
57. The school manages the accommodation well, and governors seek ways to improve its use. The school has attractive buildings but they are very inconvenient. Even so, the governors and staff develop the accommodation as an efficient and stimulating place in which to teach and learn. Governors are wisely considering ways of improving access for disabled pupils. A redundant space adjacent to the hall is not used effectively. The school makes good use of community resources in terms of finance and people, for example the swimming pool funded and run by parents, the community pre-school and members of the public helping with a conservation debate.
58. Staffing is good, and senior management deploys staff well. Both school and the co-ordinators manage very well the funds for pupils with special education needs. This provision enriches the learning of all pupils, and supports the staff development of all teachers. The positive way class teachers work as a team with specialised special educational needs staff is a significant improvement since the last inspection. The acting headteacher and acting deputy headteacher have carried out review and development meetings with all staff and this was a very productive exercise, leading to many improvements. Staff have job descriptions, but they are insufficiently linked to the overall improvement plan. The school is hoping to be recognised as an Investor in People within the near future. Even so, the staff development plan is insufficiently focused on the requirements of the school development plan.
59. Resources for learning are satisfactory in all subjects and areas, except for information technology and religious education. These deficits are a direct result of the inadequate monitoring and evaluation, and the lack of clear priorities in the school development plan. Parents are unhappy that reading scheme books do not go home, and other books do not go home sufficiently regularly. This inspection finds that the attempts of the school to conserve books has a significantly detrimental effect on standards of reading, and restricts the building of a reading partnership between home and school.
60. Governors meet their statutory responsibilities, and additional funds available to the school are invested wisely and prudently. The governors' annual report to parents is a useful and informative document, but governors do not play a sufficient part in building the partnership between school and home week by week. Overall, the school offers satisfactory value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

61. The long and continued absence of the headteacher has restricted the school's capacity to improve standards, and improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory. The long absence of the headteacher has led to leadership and management becoming confused and details unclear. However, the acting headteacher and acting deputy headteacher have the necessary skills and commitment to move the school forward. Since they have been given full authority, there has been clear improvement and the school now has a sense of direction and purpose. Governors should ensure this improvement continues and becomes more rapid, building upon the school's many strengths and rigorously addressing weaknesses. There is much to be done and a need to do it quickly.
62. What follows addresses overall weaknesses, and links these to specific things to do. To give clarity, the things to do are many and detailed. They cannot all be addressed at the same time and, therefore, they are listed in order of priority. Although improving attainment in reading comes as number five, it should be a core priority within the first four areas to be improved.
 1. **Governors need to take a more rigorous role in driving improvement in standards. To achieve rapid improvement, the school needs clearer leadership and management. To achieve this governors and staff should:**
 - agree a strategic improvement plan for the next three years.
 - ensure when designing this plan, governors and staff ask the question 'Is this the best and quickest way to raise pupils' attainment?'.
 - design phase and subject improvement plans to support the whole school plan.
 - ensure there are clear policies and procedures for all major areas of the school's work, and that these are frequently reviewed and improved.
 - review the present management structure so that each member of staff has a focused task that can be achieved in the time and resources available.
 - review job descriptions so that they set clear responsibilities and accountabilities, with stretching targets for improvement.
 - ensure the whole school resource and time budgets are closely linked to the above measures. (Paragraphs 51-60)

2. **Monitoring and evaluation procedures are unsatisfactory. Therefore, governors and staff are not in a position to check whether improvement is fast enough and in the right areas. To improve monitoring and evaluation governors and staff should:**
- set measurable targets for improvement with agreed timescales.
 - set procedures by which governors continually check progress against targets.
 - implement procedures by which senior management continually checks quality of teaching, leading to feedback to teachers on what works and what needs improvement.
 - implement procedures by which phase team leaders continually check the attainment and progress of pupils.
 - implement procedures by which subject co-ordinators check planning and curriculum development, leading to guidance when necessary.
 - implement procedures by which teachers continually monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of their teaching. (Paragraphs 53, 55)
3. **Assessment procedures are unsatisfactory, and therefore planning, and monitoring and evaluation are ill informed. Assessment should be more continuous, up to date, accurate and comprehensive. Once in place, this information should be used to:**
- guide pupils more clearly as to where and why they have succeeded and what they need to learn next.
 - guide parents as to how they can help their children.
 - show teachers where they need to improve their teaching.
 - show phase team leaders where they need to improve teaching and curriculum planning.
 - show governors and senior management where they need to adapt the school improvement plan. (Paragraph 40)
4. **The partnership between school and parents is mutually supportive, but needs to be better focused in ways that improve pupils' learning and raise their attainment. The key weakness is communication between home and school. To improve this partnership, governors and staff should:**
- review homework processes, including the home-school book, so that homework and the 'home-school book' becomes a more secure link for communication between home and school.
 - build a home-school reading partnership.
 - improve reports to parents by making clear how and why pupils succeed, what they need to learn next, and how parents can help.
 - encourage parents more to communicate with school, and plan more ways this can be achieved.
 - communicate more frequently with parents on the achievements of the school.
 - design and implement an improvement plan to encourage parents to help in school, building on the good practice in the early years, including review of the present home-school contract. (Paragraphs 45, 46, 48, 49, 59, 60)

5. **Standards in reading are too low. To improve standards of reading, governors and staff should:**
- design and implement a policy for reading that supports an improvement plan for reading that sets targets to be achieved.
 - improve planning and assessment for reading.
 - design and implement a home-school reading partnership policy
 - review present arrangements for pupils taking books home to read. (Paragraphs 89, 90)
6. **Standards in information technology are too low. To improve standards and raise attainment, governors and staff should:**
- improve staff development so that all staff are confident and skilled in the use of this technology.
 - improve the quality, range and amount of information technology hardware and software.
 - design an improvement plan for this subject, and rigorously implement the scheme of work.
 - ensure all pupils learn the basic skills, and teachers use opportunities across the curriculum to enrich subject learning and extend the pupils' information technology skills. (Paragraphs 135, 139, 140)
7. **The programme for personal, social and health education is unsatisfactory. To improve this area of the school's curriculum, governors and staff should:**
- implement present plans for pupils' self-evaluation and target setting in full and in all classes.
 - put in place and implement a policy and scheme of work for personal, social and health education.
 - support these developments with appropriate staff development. (Paragraph 36)

When governors consider the above areas for improvement, they should also consider improving procedures for:

- child protection.
- dealing with the risk of fire.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	115
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	25

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	15	43	37	4	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	38	302
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	40

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	14
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	93

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	11
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	13

Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	5.3	School data	0
National comparative data	5.4	National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	1999	23	24	47

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	18	21	21
	Girls	21	22	21
	Total	39	43	42
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	83 (71)	91 (90)	89 (91)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	21	21	22
	Girls	21	21	22
	Total	42	42	44
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89	89	94
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	1999	18	23	41

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	9	12
	Girls	19	19	20
	Total	31	28	32
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	78 (71)	70 (56)	78 (71)
	National	70 (65)	69 (65)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	10	11
	Girls	20	18	17
	Total	29	28	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	74	72	72
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (72)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	302
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	16
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19
Average class size	26

Education support staff: N-Y6

Total number of education support staff	13
Total aggregate hours worked per week	260

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	50

Number of pupils per FTE adult	6
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1998-1999
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	£
Total income	691080
Total expenditure	691327
Expenditure per pupil	2033
Balance brought forward from previous year	30253
Balance carried forward to next year	30006

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	340
Number of questionnaires returned	68

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	47	46	4	3	0
My child is making good progress in school.	43	51	4	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	25	59	15	1	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	30	42	20	8	0
The teaching is good.	48	47	3	2	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	29	45	16	9	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	54	35	7	4	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	49	43	1	1	6
The school works closely with parents.	32	41	18	7	1
The school is well led and managed.	38	36	10	7	9
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	40	45	6	1	7
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	57	36	4	0	3

Other issues raised by parents

Many parents at the pre-inspection meeting were very concerned and anxious about the continued absence of the headteacher. They felt they should have been kept better informed. There was a division of view as to the effectiveness of the current leadership and management of the school. These issues are addressed elsewhere in this report.

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

63. The children enter full-time schooling with levels of attainment that are a little below the average expected nationally. However, there is a wide range of ability within the year group; some children are able to achieve at higher levels and others have difficulty. In the reception year the children make good progress and achieve appropriate levels of attainment by the time they are five years of age. Their skills in social development, sharing, showing consideration and care for others are well catered for and they are learning to listen carefully and pay attention.
64. The programme for personal and social development is good. The children develop confidence and self-respect; they take turns to be helpful, for example as 'Happy Helpers' in the nursery. In Reception the children take the register back to the office, as part of the daily routines. In the reception year there is firm, but fair, discipline and the staff expect good behaviour. As a result the children behave well and are aware of right and wrong; younger children, in the nursery, are learning to negotiate with each other in their play. Teachers effectively encourage children to share, take turns and show care for their environment. Children look after living things and equipment. Staff and children celebrate various festivals in the nursery and reception year, for example Chinese New Year. Children develop a good awareness and a great interest in these traditions and respond enthusiastically. They show a variety of emotions, especially when interested in stories. For example, during assembly, children from Reception responded well, giggling appropriately when a child with an umbrella stood under a 'shower of rain' from a watering can. The children learn to respect others of different backgrounds and faiths.
65. Children persevere and concentrate at their tasks for reasonable lengths of time. They have good opportunities to use their initiative and develop their independence, for example using a shopping basket as a 'boat' and when using computers to support their learning. Staff ensure that resources in both the nursery and reception areas are accessible. Children select them sensibly for chosen tasks, for example for creative work. Staff nurture personal independence; for example the younger children put cups back after snack time and the older children look after their own belongings. They put on their coats independently.
66. The programme for language and literacy is effective. The children are learning to listen well and pay attention. They are given good opportunities to do this from the moment they join the nursery. They share their experiences readily. The staff effectively encourage children to develop their vocabulary and language; for example, children describe the different textures when tasting food. The role-play areas in the nursery and reception years are inviting and the children use them well to develop their own ideas and stories. The younger children in the nursery observe the older children developing their ideas and imitate what they are doing.
67. Teachers make good use of books and stories to promote early skills in reading, for example turning pages and reading from left to right. The school has a commercial scheme for reading in the reception years. This helps children develop a good awareness of vowels, consonants and punctuation marks. Stories, such as 'Mr

Gumpy's Outing' in the nursery are particularly effective, and promote good skills in using books and encouraging enjoyment of reading. There is good use of labels and other media to reinforce the recognition of simple words. For example, in the reception classes, children regularly practise these as part of the daily routines. Staff make children aware of the sounds letters make within words. For example, in the reception year, children look at the letter 'c', as the initial sound to 'cat', 'custard' and 'cassette'.

68. The older children bring objects from home to enrich the work. The children are familiar with a good variety of rhymes, which develop their increasing knowledge of sounds that rhyme and syllables within words. There are good opportunities for children to develop their skills in writing. For example, in the nursery, they note the variety of objects found in a 'Chinese restaurant'. The children learn to write their own names properly, using upper and lower-case letters correctly. In the nursery, the children make good attempts to write their names independently.
69. The programme for mathematics effectively promotes the children's learning. A commercial scheme for mathematics is used in the reception year. The children are given good opportunities to use appropriate mathematical vocabulary, for example when cooking fairy cakes and sausage rolls. They make mathematical patterns using different colours and sort, match and classify objects correctly. They order numbers accurately. They sing and listen to a good range of number songs and stories. These develop their mathematical understanding, for example through 'Five Currant Buns' and 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears'. The children develop a good knowledge of numbers. For instance, in the nursery they look at Chinese calligraphy and see how it relates to other number systems. The children use numbers correctly and recognise them quickly. There are good opportunities to solve simple problems. For example, they fold a tablecloth and think of ways to halve ingredients when cooking. The children have good practice in recording numbers and using number operations, such as addition and subtraction.
70. The programme for knowledge and understanding of the world is good. The children have some very good experiences in talking about and looking at things from the past. Staff effectively encourage them to discuss their families and events in their lives. For example, in Reception the children express much interest in visitors' descriptions of their experiences as children and also during the Second World War. Staff make good use of the immediate environment, for example on 'Wellie Walks'. Staff use the local area imaginatively so that children discover features and their functions within the environment. The nursery children also visit the post office, library and Ferne Animal Sanctuary. The younger children in the nursery are aware of routines and confidently find their way about the indoor space. Staff give children good experiences in looking at substances and making comparisons. The children enjoy cooking, as part of the Chinese New Year study. The outdoor area provides good opportunities to observe natural materials. There are good occasions when children look closely at manufactured objects, for example through the topic on 'Old Toys'. In the nursery, children use the Discovery Room sensibly to explore and use a variety of tools when playing with sand and water. Staff perceptively use cooking to show children the differences and changes in substances. The younger children discuss pasta and rice noodles and the older children compare the effectiveness of different methods of mixing ingredients. Examining ice and snow, they develop more challenging ideas about patterns and changes in nature. On a trip to the local supermarket, children learn how bread is made. Staff help children discuss what they see, such as what they like most or least in Chinese cuisine. There are good resources for the children to discover how things work and why they happen. They make models for different

purposes from a variety of materials and equipment, such as folding paper to create fans and making designs from recycled materials. The children use technology appropriately to promote their learning in other areas of the curriculum. They make mathematical patterns, recognise simple words, look at weather charts and use the computer keyboard and mouse to develop skills in hand control.

71. Physical development is good. The children have good opportunities to develop a sense of space and use their bodies imaginatively. For example, they involve themselves enthusiastically in action songs and have regular time in the summer months in the on-site swimming pool. There is a designated area outdoors for the children who are under five to play together and use the equipment provided. These games develop their confidence. A reasonable range of equipment, both large and small, helps the children to develop their skills, for example in pushing, pulling and propelling themselves along, using buggies and bikes. Large apparatus, both indoors and outside, helps the children to develop their skills in climbing, balancing and jumping. A good range of materials, tools and activities allows children to practise their skills using their hands. For example, in the reception year the children have many opportunities to develop their hand control. They use pencils and crayons properly. In the nursery lessons, the children use appropriate tools to scoop, dig, fill and pour. There is a good range of other equipment, for example for gardening and woodwork. Consequently, children develop good skills with simple tools such as trowels and scissors.
72. The programme for creative development is effective. Good opportunities allow the children to explore sound, for example responding to the number of beats on a tambourine and moving in time to music. During infant assemblies, children sing various songs, such as 'Who Built the Ark?' and listen to taped animal sounds, which are useful ways to explore sound and compare different noises. The children try out a good range of materials and media. Staff make these very accessible so that children can choose what they need. For example, in the nursery, recycled materials are displayed in transparent dispensers for the children to see exactly which they need for their task. In reception classes, staff provide a good selection of media for the children to choose. Various opportunities for the children to respond imaginatively encourage them to use their senses of smell, taste, touch and feel. The role-play areas are made welcoming and the children use them well to develop their imaginative ideas. Staff use stories skilfully to help children respond to characters and plots. Adults help children enjoy music by playing tapes when the children are tidying up. A good range of equipment tools and implements, including musical instruments, help the children with their creative work. A good variety of media such as glitter, chalk, crayons, paint and sequins is readily accessible.
73. The provision for under-fives was judged to be a strength of the school at the last inspection and the present inspection finds that this is still very much the case.
74. The quality of teaching is generally good. The staff have secure knowledge of the curriculum for early years and use this knowledge effectively to provide an appropriate range of activities for early years learning. They are deployed effectively. In the nursery, the staff work very well as a team, offering each other support. They give careful thought to the relevance of learning opportunities and provide a well-organised and effective learning environment. They have a relaxed style and use appropriate language with the young children. Planning is clear and covers the six areas of learning and the desirable learning outcomes effectively. Weekly plans and schedules provide a good range of activities, with an effective balance of adult-directed and child-initiated work. Support nursery staff participate well with the children in their play and

engage them in conversation, frequently reminding children to share and be fair. Generally in the nursery there is good interaction and questioning between the staff and children that enables the children to make progress.

75. In reception classes staff provide an appropriate balance between teacher-directed and child-initiated work and activities that are suitable for the children's wide range of abilities and needs. They make good use of the indoor space, given the awkward layout on two levels. Good organisation and an extensive range of equipment creates a calm and purposeful atmosphere, which is conducive to learning. The staff question the children effectively encouraging them to think. Plans are clear with some learning objectives, but these are not particularly detailed. Staff are very aware of their roles and responsibilities.
76. Although staff are perceptive and aware of the children's needs and abilities, at present in the reception year, assessment is not sufficiently detailed, nor are there recording procedures for setting down what the children can do and what they should learn next. In the nursery, records are being developed and include team observations. Staff use these productively to inform assessments of the children's learning and the future planning and teaching. These records are being quite well maintained, but are not always dated to indicate the progress the children make. There is monitoring of the planning of the early years, but actual observations of teaching have not been developed sufficiently. There are plans to develop assessment in the future. The children identified as having special educational needs are given very good support and make good progress in both the nursery and the reception years.
77. The partnership with the parents and carers effectively promotes the children's learning in each of the six areas. The parents and carers are encouraged to attend the nursery and generally to become involved in their children's learning. For example, they take part in visits to the library and become involved in the 'Buddies' scheme, collecting the children when on their trips. The children in both reception and nursery take books home regularly to share with their parents and carers, and this builds a very positive partnership between home and school.
78. Various induction procedures help children 'settle'. For example, the children from the nursery attend five sessions prior to starting school and both age groups share their playtimes, both in the morning and afternoon. The 'Play to Learn' project has proved successful and is beneficial in helping the children feel secure in the school environment. Parents and carers receive a practical booklet about how the children learn through play.
79. The parents and carers help compile an 'All about Me' booklet before the children start in the nursery. This information identifies starting points for the children's learning. Staff in reception and nursery make home visits before the children join the school. These provide a good understanding of the children's development and needs. Staff discuss the provision with parents and carers, and help them see the work of the classes first hand. However, information about the curriculum, for example the desirable learning outcomes in the six areas of learning, is not presented in a formal way. There are very good links between Avishayes Pre-School and the school's community nursery and reception classes.

ENGLISH

80. Throughout the school, pupils attain standards overall in English that are in line with the national average. However, although pupils are particularly good at writing, standards in reading are not good enough. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection, but have not improved. This lack of improvement relates to weaknesses in leadership and management, and consequent weaknesses in planning, assessment, monitoring and evaluation.
81. In national tests for 1999 at the end of Key Stage 1, results were broadly in line with the average for all schools, but slightly below similar schools. These comparisons do not take into account the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs at Avishayes. Once this is taken into account, attainment was slightly above the national average, and in line with similar schools. Pupils did better in writing than in reading. There is an improving trend in line with the national rate.
82. At Key Stage 1, this inspection confirms the strength of attainment in writing. Pupils' confident approach to written tasks is well supported by established routines, for example using the magic line if they are not sure of a spelling. Reading skills do not develop sufficiently smoothly and systematically for all pupils. Pupils with special educational needs in literacy are quickly identified, effective diagnostic testing takes place and well-targeted support is provided. This is not the case for pupils above this attainment level. Assessment and recording systems for these more able pupils are unsatisfactory. Therefore teaching is unfocused and does not systematically support the pupils' reading development.
83. In national tests for 1999 at the end of Key Stage 2, results were above average both when compared to all schools and to similar schools, a considerable achievement when the numbers of pupils with special educational needs is taken into account. Over the last four years, the improvement in pupils' results is in line with rising national trends. However, present attainment is only average overall.
84. At Key Stage 2, writing skills are above average and are a strength of the subject. By the time they are eleven, pupils know how to plan, write and edit their work. The school is forward looking and innovative in its use of staff and resources to improve writing standards even further. In Years 5 and 6, very well supported extended writing lessons have had a noticeable impact on pupils' progress. Pupils' reading skills do not progress so smoothly. Pupils with individual education plans, and those just above this level in Years 3 and 4, receive well-focused support. For the majority of pupils in Key Stage 2, reading assessments are infrequent. Consequently, most pupils do not have clear targets to guide their progress in reading.
85. The quality of teaching is sound overall. Approximately one third of lessons are good or very good. Inadequate assessment of reading skills, leading to a poor match of written tasks, results in unsatisfactory teaching and learning in a small proportion of lessons. Teachers establish very good relationships with pupils and with learning support assistants. Teachers manage classes well using clearly structured work routines that have a positive impact on pupils' learning.
86. Teachers mark work conscientiously, but only rarely do they add comment that tell pupils why they succeed and what they need to learn next. In some classes, teachers have begun to use progressive targets stuck in the front of books. They then link their marking to guidance to pupils as to how they can achieve their targets. However, this good practice is not fully developed, nor is it sufficiently in place across all years.

87. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. They respect their teachers and enjoy language work. They value books and use them effectively. They work hard and try to do their best. Alone, in groups, and as a full class they are naturally co-operative and collaborative.
88. The key weakness is that the leadership and management of the subject results in weaknesses in planning. What follows are all symptoms of this core weakness. Teachers' planning does not make it clear how they will deliver the National Curriculum Programme of Study for speaking and listening. Consequently, teachers' expectations of pupils' oral contributions to lessons vary. In the best lessons, teachers have high expectations of oral skills, for example expecting pupils to refer to the text under discussion when answering. However, too many teachers provide inadequate opportunities for pupils to speak at length. Drama and poetry support pupils' development soundly but it is not clear how lessons fit into a planned programme for skills development. However, speaking and listening skills are better developed in other curriculum areas, such as religious education.
89. Basic reading skills are well taught in reception classes. At this level, the school spends a lot of time, money and effort to ensure that pupils have good reading resources to support their learning. However, the teaching from Years 1 to 6 is insufficiently systematic. The literacy hour format, including regular guided reading sessions for all pupils, has not been fully implemented. Teachers plan two types of lesson, one a form of the literacy hour and the other based on a published reading scheme. It is not always clear what teachers expect pupils to learn with regard to reading skills. Consequently, the average and above average pupils make erratic progress. This is because planning lacks a clear focus and sequence. In the best lessons teachers explain reading conventions, for example, that changes in text format are linked to expression. Time is given for whole class rehearsal of this learning. However, too many teachers miss opportunities to involve pupils in shared reading during the literacy hour, and text is too often read to pupils rather than with pupils. Support systems for well below average readers are clear and well organised and these pupils make good progress.
90. Parents are not sufficiently involved in supporting reading development. Home/ school reading diaries contain little guidance for parents about how they can help improve their children's reading skills. Parents at the pre-inspection meeting were concerned that reading scheme books do not go home. The problem is wider than this. The school has not built the essential reading partnership between home and school, even though it is secure in early years classes.
91. The teaching of writing is well organised and pupils make good progress. Teachers are very clear about the stages of learning in handwriting, spelling and grammatical development. They plan concisely, linking activities to assessments of previous work. Teachers identify areas of whole phase weakness, for example extended writing in Years 5 and 6, and plan purposefully to address this need. This confident approach has a very positive impact on pupils' learning throughout the school, and leads to a Year 6 pupil writing, *'I would like to argue that fiction books are action packed and an electrifying way to find out about history.'* The teaching of writing provides an exemplar for improvements in the planned development of the other literacy skills.
92. The weaknesses in management and subsequent planning cause the effectiveness of the implementation of the literacy hour to vary from class to class. All classes receive literacy hour provision, but not all teachers plan to the recommended format, with consequent reduction in the impact on pupils' learning.

93. Homework expectations do not increase progressively as pupils move through the school. A system is in place but does not always guide practice sufficiently.
94. The inconsistency and variability in the quality of provision are both symptoms of the unsatisfactory management. Three teachers share responsibility but each is mainly concerned with her own phase. There is no whole school monitoring by co-ordinators of any aspect of the subject. As a result, variations in planning and provision for the literacy hour have not been identified or weaknesses addressed. Similarly, strengths are not identified and shared with others so that they become full school practice.
95. The quality and range of library books, especially non-fiction books, is inadequate. The school library does not provide easy access, and the stock of reading material in most classes is of insufficient range, quality and quantity. The school has invested in a reading scheme, but unsatisfactory planning restricts its effective use.
96. Even though attainment has improved at the national rate, given the positive factors available to the school, improvement since the last inspection has been too slow.

MATHEMATICS

97. At the end of Key Stages 1 and 2, attainment overall and in all areas of mathematics is broadly in line with national expectations. A few pupils in Key Stage 1 are attaining above this standard. At the end of Key Stage 2 an above average proportion of pupils achieve the higher than expected Level 5. This high attainment results from arrangements that allow pupils of similar attainment to work together. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in line with their individual education plans. Whilst most aspects of attainment at both key stages are similar to those found during the previous inspection, there has been a significant improvement in attainment for more able pupils at the end of Key Stage 2.
98. At both key stages, results in national assessment tests have varied year-by-year since the previous report in 1997. However, the trend shows improvement in line with national improvement. Results in 1999, once allowance is made for the school's very high number of special educational needs pupils, were in line with the average for all schools, and those schools that are broadly similar to Avishayes. Attainment of present pupils matches this picture at both key stages.
99. At Key Stage 1, teachers give pupils valuable, relevant practical experiences in all three strands of the required mathematics curriculum. They make good use of learning support assistants, particularly to enhance mathematical language learning in group activities using and applying skills. Teachers make learning activities enjoyable. Consequently, pupils look forward to these lessons and make particularly good progress in their understanding of mental mathematics. They manipulate numbers confidently and make increasingly difficult addition and subtraction calculations in their heads. Pupils in Year 1 are delighted to discover number bond relationships such as $10 = 5+5$ by using a number balance. By Year 2, many correctly order numbers to 100 and identify, for example, those numbers that are greater than 80 but less than 90. They count accurately in patterns of twos, fives and tens and begin to understand the processes of multiplication and division. However, the structured teaching of multiplication and division for more able pupils starts too late in the school year. In their study of space, shape and measures, pupils use effective investigative mathematical applications to weigh objects using non-standard measures. They begin to see the limitations of arbitrary measures.

100. In Key Stage 2, the teaching is more effective. Pupils learn more quickly and gain more secure understanding. These pupils learn quickly to calculate in their heads, and gain more confidence when dealing with increasingly complex problems. Pupils add or subtract 10 from a number with ease and do the same with 100. They show a growing knowledge and understanding of place value. They enjoy experimenting with 'Countdown' techniques to see how they can manipulate a series of smaller numbers to make a larger one. Pupils continue to use and apply increasingly challenging mathematical skills. They explore the idea of area using exercise books, multi-link cubes and rubbers. Many confidently compare and explain data and draw pertinent conclusions. Pupils progressively learn the language of turning and angles. By Year 6, they skilfully use a protractor to draw or measure angles accurately. Many know that the angles of a triangle add up to 180 degrees and, with encouragement from their teacher, gauge the accuracy of their own estimates.
101. Most teachers make mathematics lessons challenging and interesting and, consequently, pupils enjoy mathematics. Many pupils say that mathematics is their favourite subject. They concentrate well during whole class sessions and co-operate and collaborate productively during group and individual activities. Teachers' high expectations show in the quality pupils' work. Pupils present their work neatly, showing pride and interest. Pupils usually complete tasks and do so to the limits of their ability.
102. The quality of teaching is good in just over half of all mathematics lessons and very good in about a quarter. There is no unsatisfactory teaching but teaching quality is higher overall in Key Stage 2 than Key Stage 1. This more effective teaching relates to the more effective on-going assessment that teachers use to target their teaching to each level of learning need. Challenge for the more able is more precise and challenging. In the best lessons, good pace and expectations lift pupil's interest and eagerness to do well. Teachers share the lesson objectives with pupils. Plenary sessions check and consolidate learning. Pupils value these sessions and see them as a planned and important part of each lesson. They are times when work is shared and achievements celebrated. Teachers challenge pupils to measure their own learning achievement against lessons objectives. All teachers provide relevant practical activities for their pupils. They work closely with their learning support assistants who make a significant contribution to the success of lessons.
103. The leadership and management of mathematics are good. The co-ordinator, who is also the acting deputy headteacher, and the phase co-ordinators have successfully steered the school into the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. This is improving pupils' mental agility in number calculations across the school. Teachers are successfully adapting the school's well-designed, published scheme of work to meet both the pupils' needs and also the numeracy strategy. However, there is still room for even greater challenge in pace and work for more able pupils in Key Stage 1. The acting headteacher, the acting deputy headteacher and a local authority advisor monitor the work, and this monitoring informs development. Practical resources for the teaching of mathematics are of a satisfactory range and quality. Teachers use them effectively to foster secure learning skills.
104. Pupils make sound use of their mathematical skills in other areas of the curriculum. They use measurement in planning work for design and technology, and monitoring weather in geography. At Key Stage 1 sorting activities are an effective preliminary to

the input of data to spread sheets. However, the use of information technology to support mathematics remains an area for development.

SCIENCE

105. At both key stages, standards of attainment in science are in line with the national average. Results in national tests and assessments at the end of each key stage show an improving trend, and in 1999 were in line with the average both for all schools and for similar schools. Considering the school's higher than average proportion of pupils with special educational needs, this shows a positive picture. Standards have improved slightly since the previous inspection.
106. The quality of learning is satisfactory and, by the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils make accurate observations and record the results of their experiments both in words and pictures. They have a clear understanding of how sound is made and are able to explain the meaning of vibration. They also know that different materials make different sounds and they are learning that distance affects the reception of sound. They make musical instruments and are aware that sound can be made in various ways such as plucking, strumming, drumming and blowing. They learn about some of the systems of the human body. Pupils make satisfactory progress, gaining in knowledge and understanding.
107. The quality of learning is also satisfactory at Key Stage 2, and there are some good elements of deeper insights and questioning in higher attainers. Pupils have a sound understanding of how to plan and conduct an experiment with due regard for fairness in testing. In Years 3 and 4, they are satisfactorily discovering the process of filtration and which materials dissolve in water. Year 6 pupils are making good progress in their investigations on electrical circuits, showing very clearly that they know how to conduct an experiment and record it suitably. There is steady progress over time and the pupils cover a wide variety of topics, gaining a wide scientific knowledge. Among many of these topics they gain a detailed understanding of the water cycle, evaporation, properties of liquids, solids, and gases and reversible and non-reversible changes. The quality of work denotes a high interest and commitment. Pupils with special educational needs in both key stages are well supported and make very good progress, showing a real understanding of the processes involved.
108. The quality of teaching is good overall. It is always satisfactory and often good or better. Teachers are secure in their knowledge and understanding of the subject and lessons are planned in detail. Teachers have clear objectives and match the tasks to the needs of the pupils. Good pace in demonstration and explanation gives pupils plenty of time for experiment and investigation and, consequently, in Years 1 and 2 pupils were able to develop their understanding of sound in some depth by experimenting with elastic bands and sound boxes. Likewise, pupils in Key Stage 2 were given ample time to, for example, carry out investigations in filtration and problem-solve when using electrical circuits.
109. Pupils at both key stages have a good attitude to their work. They find science interesting and exciting. They respond to the wonders of nature with expressive joy. Together and alone they work hard and try to do their best. Relationships are caring and perceptive.
110. Three teachers share the leadership and management of the subject. This is a recent innovation and has yet to be fully effective. However, there is evidence that this pattern leads to sharing of good ideas. Careful planning allows for maximum

coverage. Monitoring of work is good and informal assessment leads to future long and short-term planning. But formal assessment procedures for all attainment targets are not yet in place, though a good start has been made in this direction. Science resources are good and readily available.

ART

111. Standards in art are good at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Standards have improved since the last inspection.
112. Pupils throughout the school approach tasks confidently. They are willing to take a chance when experimenting with various media. The outward looking, positive ethos in which the subject is delivered owes much to the good relationships which exist within the school. By the time pupils are eleven, they develop good skills in observational drawing, using pastels, pencil and watercolours. Teachers are skilled at planning series of lessons linked to topic themes, but also focus most successfully on developing knowledge and skills from the programmes of study.
113. Pupils' progress is good, guided by a series of well-planned steps that very effectively build skills, knowledge and confidence. For example, Years 5 and 6 draw and design pottery linked to their Greek topic, working to a high standard. They choose drawing materials independently from a range of media, and make a final choice of pattern from their own previous designs. They work with surprising speed and confidence, yet complete lovely work of high quality. Work seen ranges from good to excellent. This same confident approach to art is evident in portraits done by Years 3 and 4. Pupils enjoy comparing what they can do now with achievements at the start of the year. They are encouraged by what they learn from this comparison but realize that is because they have experienced a well-planned series of lessons about drawing facial features; *'I used to put eyes under their hair, but I don't now,'* as one boy said.
114. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 is good. No lessons were seen in Key Stage 1, but the quality of work in displays is evidence of good teaching. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have used computer programs successfully to produce animal interpretations. Paintings based on Van Gogh's 'Sunflowers' show above average standards in both teaching and learning. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and take a full part in all activities at both key stages.
115. Cross-phase planning and shared use of resources and, in Years 5 and 6, of accommodation, does much to enhance pupils' learning and progress. The school has a wide ranging and very popular art club, which not only supports artistic learning but also provides a positive spiritual, social and cultural experience for pupils.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

116. Standards of attainment are sound at both key stages. Little teaching could be observed during the inspection; the judgement of standards is based upon scrutiny of planning, previous work, and discussions with teachers and pupils. Pupils develop satisfactory making skills and gain an understanding of the design process. They evaluate their products, and use evaluation to improve their designs. The last inspection found that the subject did not have a high profile in the school. This remains the case, and standards have not improved.
117. Teaching is at least satisfactory. A volunteer parent takes cooking lessons in infant classes. Pupils learn how sausage rolls and fairy cakes are made and how you work

from a recipe. They learn measuring skills and how you beat, mix, roll, cut and seal. They discuss how the appearance of the food can be improved, and how materials change when cooked. In Year 2, in part of a lesson developed from science, pupils wrote up their design notes successfully. The work displayed around the school is of satisfactory quality and well related to other topic learning. In Years 1 and 2, pupils produce well designed and made instruments to enrich their understanding of sound, and link their art work to making attractive and well-finished puppets. With religious education they make imaginative animal masks ready for an assembly on Noah. Years 3 and 4 make elaborate structures using straws, and Years 5 and 6 pupils make accurate Viking ships, homes and various artefacts to embellish a display in history.

118. Pupils show they are curious and careful, fully aware of the need to work safely. They work collaboratively with others, and many take part in the after school art and craft club.
119. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory, but have yet to drive improvement in the subject. There are several co-ordinators, some of whom have only recently been appointed. Rigorous planning for improvement and full school continuity is still at an early stage. Teachers develop planning from informal assessment but there are no formal assessment procedures in place. Resources are adequate and easily available.

GEOGRAPHY

120. At the time of the last inspection, standards in geography were above national expectations throughout the school. The limited evidence available during this inspection indicates that present standards at both key stages are at least satisfactory, with some evidence of higher attainment. Judgements are based on the planning for and scrutiny of pupils' work on display at Key Stage 1, discussions with pupils and staff, plus evidence from long and medium-term plans for the key stages.
121. From the little evidence available, the quality of teaching is sound with some good features. Pupils say that teachers' skilled questioning and high expectations help them learn, and this effective teaching is evident from pupils' work on display. Together this evidence indicates that the knowledgeable and enthusiastic teachers provide good role models for geographical enquiry and capture the pupils' interest.
122. The curriculum is broad and meets statutory requirements. Teachers teach geography through topics in Key Stages 1 and 2. A recent overview provides an appropriate two-year rolling plan of topics for Key Stage 1 and a well-considered four-year plan for Key Stage 2. This planning avoids repetition of topics in the mixed age classes, but may mean that some pupils study areas in the wrong sequence, or may study areas too difficult for their age. The teachers take too little account of the need to build skills a step at a time, throughout a key stage. When geography is not the current topic, teachers maintain a useful focus on geography in Key Stage 2 by a weekly 'In the News' lesson. The policy and schemes of work are to be reviewed this year when the new curriculum orders are published.
123. On the evidence available, the teaching and curriculum leads to good learning. Pupils work hard and cover work in depth and with care. They take pride in their work, and are curious and interested. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are well aware of their locality through using street maps and aerial photographs of Chard, identifying where they live and planning a good route to school. Using appropriate vocabulary, they can

answer questions such as, 'Where are we now and what can we see on the way to school?'. In their study of the school, they make accurate plans and models of the classroom, showing the position of objects and people. They use simple grid lines and referencing to locate treasure on their own imaginary island maps. They develop effective geographical language on 'Wellie Walks', becoming more aware of sounds in the environment such as '*Splish! Splash!*' through water as they '*stumble and trip*'. They begin to understand that such observations tell them something about the geography of the area. Study of the Chinese New Year gives further positive opportunities to look at maps and globes to locate China in relation to the United Kingdom.

124. At Key Stage 2, the younger pupils visit the Somerset Levels, comparing and contrasting its features with those in the school's locality. They can quickly locate many countries on maps of Europe and the world naming their capitals and discussing general facts about these places during 'In the News' lessons. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 2, talk confidently about grid references, rivers and settlements, which they remember from previous years. They know the main geographical features of modern Greece, talking sensibly about its many islands, mountains and the type of climate, in preparation for their historical study of Ancient Greece.
125. Pupils' progress is sound with a steady acquisition of knowledge over the key stages. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress for their capabilities. The pupils' sound literacy and numeracy skills support learning in geography, although more use could be made of information technology.
126. Pupils' attitudes to learning geography are good. In Key Stage 2, they show enthusiasm and are well motivated to research information from materials and books provided, including CD ROMs. This research contributes to their learning. For homework they search newspapers for articles relating to worldwide countries. In lessons they behave well, listen attentively and respond eagerly to questions.
127. Within the school, there is sound curriculum planning for knowledge to be developed over both key stages. However, there are no plans for the specific geographical skills that are to be developed for pupils of different ages in the same class. Published materials and input from the co-ordinator to help staff deliver the curriculum supplement medium-term plans. The co-ordinator monitors teachers' planning but as yet there is no systematic monitoring or sampling of pupil's work in geography. Assessment strategies have not been developed since the last inspection although teachers use a checklist for reporting pupils' levels of attainment in geography to parents at the end of the year.
128. A limited range of resources and some textbooks, supplemented by study visits, support and enrich the curriculum. Good use is made of the school grounds and local environment for geography studies, for example planning a route-way around Chard and discussing the impact of a super-market. Auditing of resources leading to planned improvement is insufficiently developed. A more systematic arrangement for storage and retrieval of resources is being considered by the co-ordinator to facilitate easier access and availability of equipment.

HISTORY

129. The standards in history are sound in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2. The pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1 and good progress in Key Stage 2. There has been improvement since the last inspection, especially at Key Stage 2.

130. In Years 1 and 2, pupils' work includes a topic on 'School Days', comparing lifestyles in the past with today. In Years 3 and 4, the pupils study different aspects of life in Tudor times, for example life at home, schools, education and health and hygiene. In Years 5 and 6, work includes the study of 'The Greek Legacy' and its contribution to modern day living, through architecture, philosophy, medicine and science. Through well-structured units of work and perceptive teaching, pupils become young historians. They gain first an understanding of past and present, and then begin to link historical events to changes in the way people live, for example the way schools used to be. As they get older, they realise that evidence may be biased. A strength of the learning is the way older pupils become aware that the past has relevance for the present.
131. Teaching of history is sound at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. Teachers have at least sound subject knowledge and show enthusiasm for the subject. Lessons have a richness that goes beyond simple learning of facts. Classes are well managed and pupils learn an historical approach to the topic. The most effective teachers force pupils to think for themselves, using all the information they have gathered.
132. Behaviour is generally good and the pupils are keen to share their ideas and generally have positive attitudes to the subject.
133. The co-ordinators are skilled in teaching history and are enthusiastic about the subject. This enthusiasm both benefits fellow teachers and also transmits to the pupils. There is little formal assessment of the pupils' attainment and progress at present, although some classes use 'reflection sheets' effectively. They help the pupils assess their own learning and the staff to give feedback for future improvement. The co-ordinators monitor planning effectively, but there is little observation of actual teaching in lessons to inform training needs. Resources for learning are satisfactory.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

134. The school has provided for connection to the National Grid for Learning and purchased two computers capable of Internet access. The school has recently adopted a well-designed scheme of work for the teaching of information and communication technology. Provision for the under fives is satisfactory. A popular after-school computer club has a rolling membership programme because it is heavily oversubscribed.
135. Whilst these are positive aspects of provision for the subject, overall, attainment is below the national average for pupils at the ends of Key Stages 1 and 2. Since the last inspection, there has been no improvement in attainment and only minor improvements in provision for information and communication technology. The key issues for action have not been fully addressed.
136. Even so, good learning takes place in some lessons. In Key Stage 1, pupils use with skill an artistic software program to design wallpaper. They confidently access a colour palette by dragging an arrow over an icon and clicking onto a paintbrush. When their design is completed, they independently save and store their file for future access. In another Key Stage 1, class pupils effectively practise the collection of data suitable for input to a spreadsheet. With help, they accurately use the language of sets on the basis of four variables, hair colour, eye colour, both 'combined' and 'neither combined'.

137. In Key Stage 2, pupils show progress. They develop their sound keyboard skills for word-processing by actively learning about letter and function keys, gaining manual dexterity as they practice typing on an artificial 'qwerty' keyboard. These older pupils learn to access an information resource on a CD ROM, finding out about the Tudor dynasty. Pupils successfully access a user-friendly software program to practise highlighting, cutting and pasting text. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 use the technology perceptively to create textile designs. Pupils with special educational need are helped to think about the measurement of angles as they program a floor robot, successfully making a square. Year 6 pupils confidently access the Internet to gather information on general topics.
138. Pupils are usually very responsive to opportunities to use computers, preparing and working thoughtfully. They eagerly volunteer their services as demonstrators for the class. Most use the equipment confidently and support each other well when working in pairs or as a group.
139. The quality of teaching in lessons observed is good. Teachers have identified objectives and give clear expositions. The pace of presentation is good and teachers effectively use pupils to help in the demonstration of learning goals for the whole class. Some teachers provide systematic opportunities for pupils to register their time at the computer but this monitoring is too inconsistent across classes. The computers are in use for insufficient time in some classrooms for all pupils to receive their curriculum entitlement. In many classes, computer hardware is out of date and simply no longer up to the tasks required of it.
140. The profile of information and communication technology has been particularly affected by the school's leadership predicament. Governors have delayed making expensive decisions to replace redundant computers on a rolling programme. As a result, resources are unsatisfactory both in terms of hardware and software. Many machines are seriously outdated. Few have CD ROM facilities and only two are capable of accessing the National Grid for Learning. Only limited software is available to meet current curriculum needs. In a recent survey, a significant number of staff felt a lack of confidence and competence in their teaching skills for the subject. A knowledgeable school governor is helping to provide additional training for staff wishing to raise their ability levels. However, leadership and management at all levels are not effectively driving improvement in standards.

MUSIC

141. The standards in music are sound in Key Stage 1 with many good features, and good in Key Stage 2. This shows improvement since the last inspection.
142. The pupils make satisfactory progress at Key Stage 1 and good progress at Key Stage 2. Overall, the learning is at least sound and usually good. Music has a high profile in the school, and pupils gain a deep appreciation of music, for example sensing the phrasing and expressive elements in music, singing as an ensemble rather than as individuals and enjoying music as a shared experience. They change the beat in music easily and 'feel' rhythm and follow tunes such as 'Tuxedo Junction' and 'Return to Sender'. In Years 1 and 2, the pupils generally keep time in singing, although some lose the beat, due to lack of attention. They develop awareness of pitch, and learn musical vocabulary including work on notes and dynamics. By the end of Key Stage 1 as they progress into Year 3, they develop good skills in notation. In Years 3 and 4, the pupils clap in time to music, sometimes using quite complicated rhythms involving quavers and crotchets. They decipher quite difficult notation and

sing tunefully. They carry out work on the pentatonic scale and use a variety of tuned percussion to create their own compositions. In Years 5 and 6, the pupils sing tunefully and keep time; they use vocabulary appropriately to describe expression in music. They enjoy singing, for instance giving a good interpretation of 'Moon River' and singing 'Summer Holiday' with enthusiasm. They follow musical notation correctly and remember musical terms accurately. They greatly enjoy sessions on popular music.

143. The teaching of music is good. It is at least sound at Key Stage 1 and invariably good at Key Stage 2. In Key Stage 1, singing in religious education is one example of the way teachers help pupils listen to, enjoy and create music. Teachers use taped music, for example from the 'Song Tree', to introduce pupils to pitch and the use of high and low, and dynamics, loud and soft. In Key Stage 2, they also make good use of taped music, giving pupils reminders to keep time. Teachers use questions effectively, for instance about the number of beats in a bar. They use unpitched percussion to help pupils keep time and draw attention to aspects of musical notation, such as time signatures. Teachers effectively use television programmes as an introduction to musical notation, for example using time signatures to identify four crotchets within a bar. They plan subsequent lessons so that pupils gain good practice in using tuned percussion instruments.
144. The pupils' behaviour is generally good in most lessons, and relationships are warm and positive. Pupils respond very well, participating eagerly and singing both enthusiastically and musically. They enjoy their lessons in music and are well motivated. In Key Stage 2, they pay very good attention and concentrate and persevere very well. Pupils in Key Stage 1 sometimes chat and do not pay sufficient attention, and this slightly holds back their progress.
145. The three co-ordinators for music have a clear picture of the areas for development in teaching music, and realise what still needs to be done. They are aware of the need to introduce some form of assessment of the pupils' achievements in the subject. They monitor planning effectively but at present informally rather than with systematic rigour. There is little observation of actual teaching in lessons to inform staff development. There is a music policy, but it is due for development as it is not specific and of a general nature. However, resources have been improved of late and many now reflect other cultures. Music is regarded as an enjoyable pursuit within the school and pupils are involved in the choirs, for example the younger pupils in 'The Larks', and the school choir is preparing for a public performance. The school provides many and varied opportunities to enjoy and make music. There is a recorder group, an orchestra with a peripatetic music teacher, a teacher of guitar and keyboard and a good emphasis on singing throughout the school. Hymn practices are held regularly and instrumental work includes the violin and trumpet. The school involves itself in community work, for example singing at local churches, the hospital, and at the Octagon Theatre in Yeovil. Productions feature strongly in the life of the school and well-supported music workshops are held for pupils.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

146. Standards in physical education at the ends of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 are above national expectations. It is strength of the school. The school has improved on the high standards found by the last inspection.
147. The quality of learning is good. Pupils in Year 2 move with poise and good body control. They select an imaginative range of movements when dancing to Chinese

music and end with stylish tableaux representing mountains and valleys. Throughout the key stage, the pupils show a good awareness of space and safety. Most pupils are able to improve their performance through sharing ideas with others and watching demonstrations given by other pupils. Pupils develop good spatial awareness and use the hall to good effect. At Key Stage 2 pupils in Years 3 to 6 are also following dance. The younger pupils' dance involves thoughtful moves in athletic form to the music of 'Chariots of Fire' concentrating on low, medium and high levels of activity. In Years 5 and 6, pupils are learning a more complex routine of steps and floor patterns related to Hindu dance. Most pupils concentrate well and are beginning to appreciate the graceful and controlled movement required in Indian dance. The work rate of some higher attaining pupils was good but for a minority group it was only satisfactory. Most pupils produce thoughtful and well-presented dance sequences with good regard for the mood and tempo of the music. It was not possible to observe any gymnastics lessons but this element is well covered in the scheme. There are many good opportunities to play team sports, and pupils learn the importance of rules, and to balance competition with team spirit and fair-play.

148. Progress is generally good. Pupils respond well and their good attitude leads to very good learning. Pupils with special educational need, including those with physical disabilities, are fully integrated into lessons. They are effectively supported and make especially good progress. The school has particular strengths in games where a wide variety are taught, including football, rugby, netball, hockey and basketball in the Spring term.
149. The pattern of achievement is similar to that reported during the last inspection but there is improvement in dance at Key Stage 1. Also there is an extension of extra-curricular clubs and activities.
150. The quality of teaching is good or better across all aspects of physical education. Planning is clear and designed to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. The plans contain a good balance of activities to develop and consolidate skills and offer good opportunities for pupils to reflect on their work. Lessons have good pace, which leads to a good response by the pupils. There are precise objectives for each lesson. A social objective leads to working co-operatively; an emotional objective leads to enabling pupils to value their own ideas; a knowledge-based objective leads to learning and remembering to warm up; and, finally, a physical objective leads to performing and linking body actions. This effective planning supports good progress, and the clear goals for pupils to have reached by the end of the lesson help both teachers and pupils gain satisfaction from the lessons.
151. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall with good aspects. Leadership is very enthusiastic. There is a very good enrichment through the school's involvement in sport within the community. The successful 'Topsport' initiative has been extended and the school now co-ordinates the scheme in the area. Avishayes is the cluster centre for the development of sport in Chard. It is also the venue for many of the schools' community sporting events. At present there are no formal procedures for assessing pupils' progress, though this is in a developmental stage. Resources are very good and the school has very well kept playing fields. The school's indoor swimming pool is owned and funded by parents; this is well used by pupils and the community.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

152. Attainment is good at both key stages. Pupils gain not only knowledge of Christianity and other major faiths, but also a deep understanding of the part belief and religious practices play in human lives. There has been significant improvement in standards found by the last inspection.
153. In Key Stage 1, pupils learn of the pattern and purpose of human lives through the story of Noah. From this initial interest, they deepen their awareness of the celebration of religious festivals through a rich unit of work on the Chinese New Year. This celebration helps them respond individually and as a class to what they learn, and express their developing beliefs through words and singing. Learning further up the school is more structured, and pupils gain a clear and comprehensive knowledge of Christianity and other religions such as Hinduism. In Years 3 and 4 they learn this through story, and in Years 5 and 6 through work of great depth on Puja. The skilled teaching at this level helps pupils to 'feel' as well as 'know', and consequently they become truly aware of the importance of Puja in Hindu lives, and appreciate how such rituals are relevant to their own lives. A strength of the learning is the way older pupils become able to experience and not simply know what they learn and, therefore, their expression becomes deeply spiritual. Their work is thoughtful and of high quality, especially when considering why places are special and the way words and objects become symbols.
154. Teaching is always at least satisfactory, and usually good or very good. Teachers communicate their own commitment to the subject, and support this with good subject knowledge. They plan lessons with care, thinking through how they can help pupils grapple with difficult ideas. They use a variety of effective techniques, giving pupils many ways to learn. In some lessons that are slightly less effective, teachers miss the opportunity to provide times of silence that can help pupils reflect deeply and on their own.
155. The two subject co-ordinators provide strong leadership for the subject, but management tends to be informal. As a result there is not a clear policy or improvement plan. The school works closely to the locally Agreed Syllabus and find this useful. However, staff have not moved on to create their own scheme of work for the whole school. They monitor and evaluate standards informally but not sufficiently systematically. Although teachers search out resources from elsewhere with considerable energy, the core resources, particularly as to artefacts, are too limited. This leads to inconvenience and missed opportunities when teachers are covering the same topic at the same time. Assessment and the collection of work that would help teachers understand what is possible at each age, is at a very early stage of development. Staff development through sharing of ideas is good, but they have too few opportunities to learn from outside specialists. Assemblies provide good opportunities to extend the pupils' religious awareness. Members of the community make positive contributions to lessons and two such people run a dynamic after-school club. Effective links with local churches lead to very good visits.

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS – RESOURCE CENTRE

156. Avishayes receives additional funds to provide support for pupils with special educational needs from outside the immediate locality of the school. Staff integrate these pupils with the mainstream classes of the school and, day-by-day, the specialised provision works in tandem with mainstream provision for special educational needs. Pupils supported through this resource have varied and complex learning problems.

157. The provision for all pupils with special educational needs is very good. The pupils are very well supported; they are valued by staff and pupils alike. For this reason, this additional provision is not only a strength of the school, but adds to quality of learning for all pupils. At the last inspection this provision was also very good, and since that time there has been improvement.
158. The school has two specialised teachers for special educational needs. Both are very effective teachers. Whether working within a class, with small groups or with individuals, their teaching shows high and specialised expertise, using a wide range of effective techniques and resources. They teach with high challenge and great pace. They base their teaching on very accurate and continuous assessment. They use this assessment to produce individual education plans that provide a good basis both for specialised and for class teaching. However, some class teachers do not use these individual education plans sufficiently. Consequently, the plans and targets do not effectively inform the class planning and teaching. Both the specialised teachers work extremely quickly, moving from group to group. This is made possible by very effective and efficient management.
159. A team of skilled and well trained learning support assistants work with class teachers. The last inspection found that this teamwork required improvement, and improvement has occurred. In most lessons, class teachers, specialised teachers and support assistants work as a productive and well integrated team. In the few lessons when this is not the case, either the class teacher has not planned sufficiently to use the other adults, staff have not seen ways of using additional help during class aspects of the literacy and numeracy hours, or the specialised teachers have not sufficiently built a successful partnership with the class teacher. Although there has been significant improvement, the teamwork between specialist and class teachers remains an area for further development.
160. These pupils make good progress in line with their individual education plans, and some make very good progress. They learn with real satisfaction in their achievements, and are proud to show others their target books. The specialised support helps them take a full part in lessons, and they have equal access to the general learning with other pupils. In class and in small groups they work with enthusiasm, confidence and determination to do their best. In small groups, learning tends to be better than in full classes, especially when the teamwork between class teacher and specialised staff is not secure.
161. The provision benefits from good staffing, very good resources and very adequate accommodation. The governor with responsibility for special educational needs meets regularly with the staff, and makes detailed reports back to the governing body. These reports show that this governor monitors and evaluates standards, and makes suggestions for improvement. However, governors do not have clear plans for the gifted and able pupil. Governors ensure they invest the additional funds efficiently and effectively. At present they are working to improve access for pupils with physical disabilities, but in this school such improvements are difficult and expensive. The senior management plan carefully so that the present pupils access the areas they need.
162. Although the two teachers work closely, for example going on training together, the overall management structure is confused. The specialised and mainstream provision work in tandem, and form day-to-day an integrated provision. The organisation structure of the school does not reflect this way of working.

163. Staff have reviews with parents, and add to them by day-to-day telephone calls and informal contacts. Some parents at the parents' meeting felt this partnership needed improving. Inspectors agree that, although this partnership is usually warm and productive, this is not always the case. Parents are naturally concerned about their children and, at times, teachers need to find better ways to maintain the partnership and make review meetings consistently successful.
164. This overall provision provides a high quality resource for the school. Areas for development are to find more ways of these specialised teachers sharing their good practice with others, learning support assistants working even more closely with class teachers, and rationalising the way the provision is managed.