

INSPECTION REPORT

NETHER STOWEY C of E PRIMARY SCHOOL

Bridgwater

LEA area: Somerset

Unique reference number: 123789

Headteacher: Mr G Thompson

Reporting inspector: Mr D P Cosway
OIN: 2734

Dates of inspection: 8 – 11 July 2002

Inspection number: 194856

Full inspection carried out under Section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior school

School category: Voluntary controlled

Age range of pupils: 4 to 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Mill Close
Bridgwater
Somerset

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr S Barton

Date of previous inspection: June 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2734	Paul Cosway	<i>Registered inspector</i>	Mathematics; Music; Physical education; Special educational needs; English as an additional language.	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? The school's results and achievements; How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What the school should do to improve further?
1311	Dr Barry Ward	<i>Lay inspector</i>		How high are standards? Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development; How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
7336	Lindsay Howard	<i>Team inspector</i>	The foundation stage; Science; Information and communication technology; Design and technology; Geography; Religious education.	
13122	Stephanie Matthews	<i>Team inspector</i>	English; Art; History.	The curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school educates boys and girls from the age of four to eleven. It is smaller than average, with 157 pupils. The pupils' attainment on entry is close to average. The school serves the small villages of Nether Stowey and Over Stowey, as well as the surrounding hamlets and farms, including socially advantaged and socially disadvantaged areas.

Around 97 per cent of pupils are white and the rest are children from families of Afro-Caribbean origin. For one pupil, a refugee, English is an additional language. These figures are below the national average. The proportion of pupils on the register of special educational need is below average. Most of these are at the stage where they receive extra help from school staff.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a satisfactory school with some good features. The evidence from the inspection suggests that standards are rising. Standards in music are particularly high. The provision for teaching literacy and numeracy is good, but some other subjects receive insufficient attention. This is a caring school, and pupils are respected and valued. The attitudes and behaviour of the pupils are good overall, although small numbers are inattentive at times. The teaching is good. The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory overall, but there are areas that need further development. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- Attainment is above average in mathematics and science, and standards are high in music.
- Personal and social development is very good, and this leads to very good relationships between adults and children and between the children themselves. Pupils like school and their attendance is good.
- Teaching is good overall.
- The provision for Reception age children is very good.
- There is very good provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- The partnership with the community is very good. Parents support their children's learning very well.
- There is a good range of after-school activities for a school with this age-range.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- The management structure.
- The breadth and balance of the curriculum.
- The systems for assessing pupils' progress.

The area 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 June 1997. Since then there has been satisfactory improvement. The quality of teaching has improved significantly. The school has sustained the good relationships that it was reported to be fostering. Attainment in the national tests for seven year olds dropped after the last inspection but has recovered over the last two years, and it is now above the 1997 levels. Attainment also dropped in the tests for 11 year olds but has risen in the current year to be, overall, above last year's national average and above the 1997 percentages.

Most of the key issues are no longer areas for concern. The need to improve the attainment of more able pupils has received attention, though it could still be developed further. Financial planning is now good, as are teaching resources and staff development procedures. There is a need to improve assessment systems still further. Statutory requirements are met for health and safety, collective worship and attendance records.

STANDARDS

The table below shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	B	B	C	C
Mathematics	A	B	C	C
Science	C	B	C	C

Key	
<i>well above average</i>	A
<i>above average</i>	B
<i>average</i>	C
<i>below average</i>	D
<i>well below average</i>	E

Overall, pupils' attainment on entry is average. At the end of the current Reception Year, pupils are average in most aspects of their work, including literacy and numeracy.

In 2001, attainment in the national tests for seven year olds + was below average in writing, well below average in reading, and average in mathematics. Compared with that of similar schools, attainment was well below average in reading and writing, and average in mathematics. The attainment of this particular cohort was below average when the pupils entered the school.

The provisional results for 2002 indicate that performance in writing and mathematics is at a similar level to that in 2001, but attainment in reading has significantly improved. By the age of 11, in the 2001 tests, pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science was in line both with the national average and with that of similar schools. The school was close to meeting its target for mathematics for 2001, but slightly below it. The target for English was exceeded. The provisional results for 2002 indicate that attainment has risen in mathematics and science.

The finding of the inspection is that current levels of attainment in mathematics and science are above average and that attainment in English is average. Numeracy skills are good in mathematics. Reading is a strength in English. Pupils achieve satisfactorily overall, and well in some areas of the curriculum. Achievement in all aspects of music is high. Across

the whole curriculum, attainment is average overall, because the coverage of some subjects is too narrow for pupils to develop their skills to the full. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language achieve well throughout the school.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	The pupils' attitudes are very good. Most are interested and try hard.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good around the school. In class, most pupils behave well but some are inattentive if not taken to task by the teacher. Most are willing to listen and learn.
Personal development and relationships	The personal development of pupils is very good. They are taught to be considerate and co-operative. Relationships are very good throughout the school.
Attendance	Attendance levels are good and are above the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Reception	Years 1 to 2	Years 3 to 6
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.

Teaching is good overall, with some very good or excellent teaching. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed and the teaching meets the needs of all pupils well. Teaching is good across the school in English and mathematics. Literacy and numeracy are taught well. Teaching is very good in music. Teaching is almost always good or very good in the Reception class and Year 1.

Strengths of the teaching are good daily planning and preparation, and good relationships with the pupils. Most pupils develop good learning skills because of such teaching, and make sound progress. They learn to concentrate, co-operate with others, and find things out for themselves. In some lessons, though satisfactory overall, the control of pupils is not always firm enough. The setting of homework is inconsistent from class to class.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory, because of the good provision for literacy and numeracy, and for pupils up to age seven. However, the curriculum for older pupils is unsatisfactory, lacking balance. Subjects such as design and technology and geography are given too little time. The provision for these subjects, and religious education, does not meet statutory requirements. There is good provision for after-school clubs and educational journeys.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good; their needs are diagnosed carefully and met well, through a good range of provision, including one-to-one support.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good; the school responds sensitively and well to her needs and provides additional support where necessary.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The provision for spiritual and moral development is very good. There is very good provision for social development, which leads to most pupils becoming responsible and co-operative. The provision for cultural development is good, especially in music and history.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. This is a caring school.

The school has very good links with parents. The quality of information it provides for them is good. The school plays an important role in the life of the local community, and parents and local people, in turn, give generously of their time, to the benefit of the children's education and the community. Systems for assessing and recording pupils' attainment and progress are unsatisfactory, except in English and mathematics.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher's leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. Systems for running the school are generally effective, although there are aspects which need be developed further, especially those relating to the curriculum and assessment. Roles and responsibilities, including those of the subject co-ordinators, need to be reviewed to make management more effective.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors fulfil their responsibilities well. Although many are fairly new to the role, they monitor the work of the school effectively and have a good understanding of its strengths and the areas for development.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory; the school uses data to monitor and evaluate its performance and help it to decide what action to take next.
The strategic use of resources	The school uses its resources satisfactorily. The principles of best value are used well in all purchasing decisions.

The school is staffed with well-qualified and experienced teachers. The levels of resourcing are satisfactory. There are some strengths in the accommodation, especially the school grounds and the classrooms for younger pupils, but the older pupils are taught in temporary classrooms and the play area for Reception children is too small and under-equipped.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<p>Almost all parents who responded stated that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • their children like school; • the teaching is good; • children are helped to become mature and responsible; • there is an interesting range of activities outside lessons. <p>More than 80 per cent believe that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • they would feel comfortable approaching the school with problems; • the children are making good progress; • behaviour is good; • children are expected to work hard and do their best. 	<p>Slightly more than 30 per cent of parents who responded would like improvements in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the leadership and management of the school; • the extent to which it works closely with parents; • the quality of information they receive about how their children are getting on; • the amount of homework that is set.

The inspectors agreed with the positive views of parents. The school is welcoming and open to parents. Standards of behaviour are generally good, as is the teaching. Pupils enjoy their time in this caring school. The inspection found that the management of the school is satisfactory, with strengths but also some aspects for development. Homework is not set consistently in all classes. However, the amount of information that parents get about their children is satisfactory and the closeness of the relationship between the school and most parents is very good.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

Strengths:

- Pupils achieve well in mathematics, science and music during their time in the school.
- Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language achieve well.

Areas for development:

- Raise attainment in writing.
- Raise attainment at the end of Year 6 in geography, religious education and design and technology.

Attainment on entry

1. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school is similar to that found nationally. They make good progress through the 'stepping stones' of the Foundation Stage curriculum during the time they spend in the Reception class. A few children begin the Reception class with good speaking and listening skills, and above average social skills and knowledge and understanding of the world. The current Reception Year has a higher proportion of higher attaining children than in previous years. In the present Year 2, for example, almost half the pupils have some form of special educational need (SEN).

Attainment at the end of the Foundation Stage

2. Overall, children reach average standards by the end of the Reception Year. They reach the expected level for their age in personal, social and emotional development. The children make good progress and soon gain confidence to relate to adults and to co-operate with one another. Similarly, they attain the early learning goals in communication, language and literacy skills, and when interacting with adults and other children they use appropriate language. Many can read simple books and are keen to learn more. Some are able to write captions for pictures to illustrate their own experiences. The children's mathematical development reaches the expected level. About half count accurately to 20. In their knowledge and understanding of the world, they also meet the early learning goals. They show an interest in their environment and in the visitors to the classroom, and begin to develop their sense of place. Their physical development varies. Some have good skills, while others are clumsy in their play, for example with bats and balls. Overall, they reach the expected levels. They use scissors, pencils and brushes well. Most exceed the expected levels in some aspects of creative development, especially in singing. Some children show increasing skills when painting recognisable pictures. They can use collage materials well and with confidence. Their achievement is good through the Reception Year. All make good progress, boys and girls alike, including those with SEN.

Current levels of attainment at the end of Year 2

3. The finding of the inspection is that attainment in English at the end of Year 2, at the age of seven, is below the national average. Attainment in reading, however, is above average and better than that in writing. Almost all pupils are competent readers. Higher

attainers read with expression and pay due regard to punctuation. Almost all the pupils in Year 2 speak clearly, fluently and articulately. Listening skills have been developed well throughout the school. Teachers provide many opportunities for good listening and speaking activities, and the pupils respond well. Almost all pupils write at the expected level for their age, Level 2. However, the school's overall performance in writing at the end of Year 2 is below average. This is because a smaller proportion of pupils attains the higher grade, Level 3, than is the case nationally. The higher attainers do not write accurately and expressively enough to reach the higher levels. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in English. They achieve well in reading, speaking and listening, but less well in the development of their writing skills. Overall, literacy skills are close to average and they are developed through all subjects of the curriculum.

4. Attainment in mathematics is average. Most pupils are at least at the expected level, A third of pupils are above the expected level for their age. Many have a good command of mental mathematics. Almost all have a good knowledge of shapes. Over time, pupils have achieved well. Numeracy skills are above average. The school's numeracy policy ensures that all teachers pay good attention to the development of numeracy skills in every subject they teach.

5. In science, pupils are developing an understanding of scientific method. They can make predictions, carry out tests, and record their results. Overall, their attainment is average.

6. Across the rest of the curriculum, attainment varies from subject to subject. Attainment is average in information and communication technology (ICT). The Year 6 pupils have developed an adequate range of skills and use the mouse and keyboard confidently. In design and technology, they are reaching average standards. They can make simple moving models and are learning some principles of design. Pupils are also reaching average standards in geography, history, physical education, art and religious education. They achieve satisfactorily in all these subjects. In physical education, although attainment overall is average, the skills of some pupils are extended beyond the expected levels for pupils of their age. They are confident at striking a ball, catching, and throwing, for example. Overall, however, attainment is average because some other pupils have poor co-ordination and find it difficult to catch or strike a ball accurately. In music, because of the quality of experiences they are given, and the teachers' high expectations of them, all pupils achieve well and their work is above average.

7. The needs of the higher attaining pupils are recognised, and they achieve satisfactorily. Pupils with SEN are achieving well, especially where there is special provision, such as a learning support assistant working alongside them. Some pupils with SEN are attaining standards in English, mathematics and science that are close to the national average, and they attain well in art and music. There are no pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL) in Years 1 and 2.

Attainment at the end of Year 6 in national tests

8. In the 2001 tests, pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science by the age of 11 was in line both with the national average and with that of similar schools. The school was close to meeting its target for mathematics for 2001, but slightly below it. The target for English was exceeded. Girls attained better than boys in English and science, but boys outperformed girls in mathematics. The differences in performance between girls and boys in the school were not significantly greater than the differences nationally. The results were

below those gained in 2000, when performance in the tests in all three subjects was above the national average, and above the average for similar schools. The number of pupils who enter the school each year is small, at about 20. A decrease in the number of high attaining pupils in the year group explains the apparent drop in overall performance.

9. The proportion of pupils who attained the expected level for their age in English, mathematics and science in the 2001 tests was above the national average. In English, only 8 per cent failed to reach this target, compared with 25 per cent across the country as a whole. In mathematics, 21 per cent did not attain Level 4, compared with 28 per cent nationally. In science, the proportion was 8 per cent, compared with 12 per cent for the rest of the country. However, the proportion reaching above expected levels, Level 5, was slightly below the national average in all three subjects.

10. The provisional results for 2002 indicate that attainment has risen in both mathematics and science. The proportions of pupils gaining Level 5 have risen slightly in English and mathematics. In science, the rise is significant – from 29 to 41 per cent.

Current levels of attainment at the end of Year 6

11. The finding of the inspection is that attainment at the end of Year 6, at the age of 11, is in line with the national average in English and above average in mathematics and science, but there are still weaknesses in writing. Overall, pupils achieve well, making good progress from the levels of attainment they showed on entry to the school. Attainment varies, however, from subject to subject.

12. In English, there are strengths in reading, speaking and listening. Many pupils have above average skills in all three. Most pupils can read well, with good understanding. Listening skills have been developed well throughout the school. Teachers provide many opportunities for good listening and speaking activities and the pupils respond well, particularly in class discussions. Writing skills are close to average. The skills of the higher attainers are not sufficiently extended. The technical aspects of writing, notably punctuation and spelling, are weaknesses in the writing of the lower attainers. Overall, literacy skills are average, and they are developed well in all subjects of the curriculum.

13. Attainment in mathematics is above average. Most pupils are at least at the expected level, and almost a third of pupils are reaching Level 5 – above the expected level for their age. They are numerate, and many have good mental skills. Over time, pupils have achieved well, and numeracy skills are above average. The school's numeracy policy ensures that all teachers pay good attention to the development of these skills in every subject they teach.

14. Attainment in science is above average and pupils are achieving well. It has improved since the last inspection. The pupils have good knowledge, especially of the natural world, and two fifths are at Level 5, above the expected standard for their age. This is a higher proportion than is found nationally.

15. In physical education, attainment is above average. Pupils' skills in swimming are above average. The school makes good use of the local pool, with its qualified instructors, and a significant amount of time is given in two terms of the year to developing swimming skills. Pupils are exceeding the national expectation for Year 6 pupils by the time they are in Year 4. In games, pupils learn to play as part of a team and to co-operate with others, and they follow rules well. Some pupils are confident soccer players, with good ball control and kicking abilities. The school does well in sporting competitions against neighbouring schools.

16. Attainment is well above average in music and pupils achieve well in all aspects of the subject. They listen carefully and appreciatively to music. They compose and perform well and sing very tunefully.

17. Attainment is average in history, although pupils' knowledge of local history is good. Pupils have good word processing skills and are adept at importing diagrams and illustrations into their work, using computer technology. Overall, attainment in ICT is average. In art, their observational drawing is good and they reach an average standard overall, though their knowledge of the work of great artists is relatively weak. There is a number of subjects in which attainment is below average by the end of Year 6 because the pupils have not covered all of the National Curriculum requirements. This is because there is not enough time allocated to these subjects in the planned curriculum. Attainment is below average in religious education, geography and design and technology.

18. The higher attaining pupils achieve satisfactorily, reaching above average levels in the core subjects by the end of Year 6. Pupils with SEN are achieving well.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES, VALUES AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Strengths:

- The personal development of pupils is very good.
- Attitudes to learning are very good.
- Behaviour is good.
- Relationships are very good.

Areas for development:

- The behaviour of a small minority of children.

19. The very good relationships that were praised in the last report are still a strong feature, whilst pupils' attitudes and personal development have improved from good to very good. The school's expectations for the behaviour of all pupils have produced a very favourable outcome for most pupils, but some parents have shown concern at aspects of the behaviour of some pupils. Inspectors agree that this can be a problem in a few lessons. Although pupils' behaviour overall is good, it has shown a slight deterioration since the last inspection.

20. Children in the Reception Year make a good start to their school lives. They have very good attitudes and are enthusiastic 'to have a go' at the day's 'menu', the list of activities for the day. The children quickly gain confidence in their surroundings and work together with new friends. They can sit quietly, listen well, and are responsive to good teaching and learning. Their very good behaviour allows them to enjoy the school day to the full.

21. Most pupils are accompanied to school by their parents, and arrive in a happy and lively mood. As pupils progress through the school, they develop very good attitudes, with a realisation that trying and working hard should produce good results. Only in Class 6 were some poorer attitudes seen, partly because the pupils were at the end of the time in the school and looking forward to the next stage in their education. Generally, pupils want to be involved in lessons and are responsive to their teachers, particularly when expectations are high and the pace brisk, and pupils understand the work set. They settle to tasks and can listen and concentrate well. Their co-operative attitudes allow the classrooms and school to

operate smoothly, in surroundings that are sometimes cramped. The attitudes of pupils with special education needs (SEN) are good, and with close adult support they maintain concentration and their contribution to lessons, taking advantage of the support they are offered.

22. Overall, the behaviour of the pupils in classes is good. Some examples of restlessness or immature behaviour are occasionally observed, more often from older boys than from girls. Generally, pupils respond well to the school's expectations for self-discipline, and they will correct each other in an environment where rules are few but boundaries are recognised and accepted. This produces a calm and happy work atmosphere, and a productive pace. Teachers do not need to exert an obvious control, and pupils are easily corrected with a quiet word. Behaviour around the school is good, and allows the dining hall to operate efficiently without fuss.

23. The close integration of older pupils and younger pupils has a calming and regulating effect. Although there have been occasional incidents of swearing and inter-personal problems, these were not observed during the inspection and are not defining characteristics of either individual pupils or the school. There have not been any incidences of theft, sexism or racism, and the headteacher has a strong belief that he can produce an orderly environment without resorting to exclusions.

24. Relationships are very good and are a fundamental strength of the school. All members of staff represent strong role models, and pupils and adults have real mutual respect for each other in a caring and friendly community. Pupils totally trust the staff. Together, they promote a very effective teaching and learning environment, where pupils are encouraged to admit their limited understanding in lessons, and not be afraid of making mistakes.

25. The quality of relationships is reinforced through assemblies. In classroom conversations, pupils listen to each other with respect, and value each other's opinions and qualities, so that pupils' speaking and listening abilities are developing well. Boys and girls eat amicably together at the very sociable lunchtimes within the dining hall, and engage in harmonious play and games in the playground. Pupils are courteous to visitors.

26. The personal development of the pupils is very good throughout their time in school. All pupils, from the Reception class onwards, are encouraged to try activities without fear of failure. This is a very inclusive and caring society, where pupils are encouraged to look after each other, as well as gain an awareness of others less fortunate than themselves through charity work. There is an effective personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum, which develops an awareness of healthy living and of life in the outside world, with a due regard to health and safety considerations. Pupils respond to targets for their education. Opportunities for them to take initiatives for their own learning are being well developed, for example through research on the Internet in science. The school makes every effort to raise pupils' self esteem, and make them proud of their classroom environment. They keep cloakrooms tidy and respect the external environment. There is no graffiti or litter. Pupils have a good range of classroom duties, which are extended into whole-school duties for older pupils. The school has just undertaken a residential visit for Year 6 pupils, which has challenged their sense of adventure. Pupils make regular visits within the local community, or to places of interest further afield, to support their learning. In their everyday life in the school, pupils show a well-developed sense of moral and social awareness. The school has a good range of sporting and non-sporting extra-curricular activities, and pupils are very competitive in inter-school competitions. As a result of their rich and varied personal development, they are well equipped for their next stage of education, and recall the school with pride and affection.

27. During the last four years, the school has maintained a good attendance performance, consistent with the conclusions of the previous report. All classes have attendance rates above the national average, and many pupils have exemplary attendance throughout their time in school. Unauthorised absence has risen slightly in the present year, but is below average. Family holidays taken during term time make up a significant part of the authorised absences. Most pupils arrive at school on time, and lessons are not affected by any lack of punctuality. There are no indications of any truancy during the present year.

28. The teachers take registers efficiently at the beginning of each session and pupils politely respond, often in a foreign language. Registers are now completed in a statutory manner, and they are routinely summarised at the end of each school term. The school has not required the services of an educational welfare officer during the last few years.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

Strengths:

- Teaching is good overall, and it has improved since the last inspection report.
- Teachers have good relationships with their pupils and seek ways to involve them. Most pupils learn well, because the teachers plan interesting work for them.
- Most classes are well managed and controlled, so that pupils are able to listen, concentrate and work hard.

Areas for development:

- The control of pupils in some instances.

29. Teaching is good, overall. This leads to most pupils achieving well, because they make good progress, are interested in their studies, and develop good learning skills. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed. More than a quarter of the teaching observed in the school was very good or excellent, with good teaching in almost two fifths of lessons. Teaching was satisfactory in the remaining third of the lessons observed.

The teaching of pupils in the Foundation Stage (Reception)

30. Teaching is good overall. It was good or very good in almost all the lessons observed. The teacher's good management of lessons and her very good relationships with the children are key strengths. She provides a range of activities that help the children learn the skills they need. All adults have high expectations of the children's behaviour and learning, and planning and preparation are very good. Pupils develop good learning skills because of such teaching and make good progress. They learn to concentrate, co-operate with others and find things out for themselves. The teacher finds exciting ways to present the lessons. For example, in a good lesson on personal development, she passed a special box around the class. Each child was told that there was a special person inside, but it was a secret. They must not tell anyone what they saw. The children took the task very seriously. They passed the box from hand to hand, not saying a word about what the secret was. The lesson was a clever continuation of the theme of that morning's assembly, on special and precious things. There was a small mirror in the box. The special thing each had seen inside was his or her own face peeping in. The teacher developed this very well, and it led to an excellent discussion on what makes things precious. The teacher's high expectations and skilful questioning extended their thinking to more abstract concepts. They rose to the challenge well, offering more advanced ideas, such as the environment and peace. The teacher's good control and management of the class meant that

they all took turns in answering, did not interrupt each other, listened carefully and valued the opinions of their classmates. Their attitudes and behaviour were excellent. Her good teaching ensured that they all achieved well and made good progress, exceeding the Early Learning Goals in personal and social development.

31. Assessment is used well to monitor the progress of individuals and to ensure that the tasks set are at an appropriate and challenging level.

32. The teacher shows a good awareness of the need to reinforce and develop literacy skills, including the teaching of subject-specific vocabulary. Key words are emphasised. All adults take every opportunity to develop children's numeracy skills, by getting them to add or take away numbers.

Teaching of classes in Year 1 and Year 2

33. The teaching of pupils in these year groups is satisfactory overall. Of the lessons observed, the teaching was good in almost a half. The planning is detailed and provides for continuity and development in the teaching of skills and knowledge, so that the pupils make good, steady progress. The teachers all enjoy good relationships with their classes, which leads to pupils enjoying the lessons and working hard. The teachers use praise well to motivate and encourage their pupils. Subject expertise is generally good, so that teachers are confident and can explain clearly. They are able to show pupils what to do to reach high standards. In the best lessons they have high expectations, and the pupils respond by working hard to try to meet them. In a Year 1 literacy lesson, for example, the pupils' learning was very good as a result of the very good teaching. They enjoyed singing the 'Song of the Train' from their 'big book', and the teacher used the sounds from the song to teach them how to read and write a number of words featuring the sound 'oo'. They went on to work in small groups on related activities, supported very well by adults, so that each task was developing and supporting the next. The pupils were engrossed because they enjoyed the activities, which had been planned and prepared in such a way as to be relevant to them and to meet their needs. The teacher had a lovely relationship with them, to which they responded well.

34. Examples of good teaching were observed in many subject areas, but especially in literacy, numeracy and music. As described above, such lessons are very well prepared and offer an interesting range of activities to interest and motivate pupils. A good beginning to the lesson introduces the work in an exciting way and makes expectations clear. The result is that pupils know what is expected of them and are enthusiastic. The good relationships, and the teachers' high expectations and good management mean that no time is wasted, and pupils respond very well. The work is reviewed towards the end of the lesson to consolidate learning. Another strength is the excellent use of support staff. Learning support assistants give good individual help to pupils who are working on computers, to develop their information and communication technology (ICT) skills, whilst the rest of the class is working with the teacher.

35. Around a third of lessons are satisfactory, in that the objectives have been met by the large majority of the class, but there are some pupils who have not achieved well.

36. This is usually because they have not listened to the teacher or have distracted one another. In some cases, there is a need for firmer control of small groups of boys, whose motivation levels are low. In some lessons, the pace of work is too slow. This too can lead to inattention because some pupils are bored.

Teaching of classes in Years 3 to 6

37. Some of the classes for these year groups, for pupils aged from seven to eleven, are mixed-age classes. This has been forced on the school by reduced numbers in some year groups and by financial constraints. There are parents who are very concerned about the effect of this grouping system on the education of their children, especially if they have been in mixed-age classes for a number of years. In the core subjects of English and mathematics, teachers plan the work carefully to take account of the pupils of different ages, and the inspectors were satisfied that no pupils are seriously disadvantaged by the arrangements. The situation is less satisfactory in geography, history and design and technology, in which the curriculum planning is unsatisfactory.

38. Overall, the teaching is good. About a quarter of the lessons observed were very good or excellent. A third were good and the rest were satisfactory. In the best lessons, relationships are very good. The teachers control and manage the children very well. Pupils are concentrating and showing interest in their work. In an excellent music lesson with Year 5 pupils, for example, the teacher's drive, energy, enthusiasm and excellent knowledge of the subject led to the pupils being inspired to very high standards. They prepared and played a complex accompaniment to an African song, using tuned and untuned percussion and the piano. They then performed it to a standard that would not normally be found other than in secondary school. All the pupils were highly involved and motivated, working together as musical ensembles or sections of the choir. The pace of the lesson was a particular feature. The teacher had high expectations, and was determined that the pupils would succeed in presenting a very good performance of the song by the end of the lesson. Accordingly, she drove them hard and they responded very well indeed, working hard and concentrating very well to make as much progress as they could. They achieved a great deal in the lesson. The lessons that were satisfactory fell short of this standard.

39. The differences were that the level of involvement was slightly lower, because the level of enthusiasm and expertise that the teachers bring to the lesson are not always as high as they were in the music lesson described above. Also, some teaching and learning opportunities were missed. In these lessons, the pace is rarely adequate to ensure that pupils make as much progress in their learning as they are capable of. In literacy and numeracy lessons, the work is set in such a way that different groups of pupils are given tasks that are appropriate for their learning needs. In some other subjects, the tasks set are very similar for all and do not challenge the higher attainers sufficiently. Nevertheless, the quality of teaching is good, overall, and the teachers work hard to involve and interest the pupils. The amount of homework that is set is inconsistent in quantity and type. It ranges from spelling tasks, which are not always related to the words the pupils use, to long-term project work where pupils are able to develop their skills at home, especially reading and numeracy skills, with the support of their parents or older children.

40. The teaching of mathematics is good, with thorough coverage of the subject. Teachers' sound subject knowledge leads to good teaching in English. In science, teaching is satisfactory. Teachers have good subject knowledge, but in some classes the coverage of the skills and knowledge is uneven. In ICT, teaching is satisfactory. Art is taught well by visitors with particular skills and expertise, but is satisfactory overall. In three subjects, history, design and technology and religious education, it was not possible to see any teaching, so judgements cannot be made. Teachers' good subject knowledge and enthusiasm lead to good teaching in physical education, and there is good attention to skills development. Music is taught very well by a part-time, specialist teacher, who is very much part of the school. Very good subject knowledge and enthusiasm ensure that the pupils learn very well.

41. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is good, and pupils with formal statements receive very good support from the special needs assistants. Within all classes, classroom assistants support pupils well and promote the learning of literacy and numeracy skills among pupils with SEN. In addition, the co-ordinator and assistant for SEN withdraw pupils in small groups to a specialist room, during independent and group sessions in literacy hour, to give them individual support. This is working well. Class teachers take into account the attainment and needs of pupils with SEN to support them in their lessons.

42. The co-ordinator for special educational needs (SENCO) gives good support to helping the pupil for whom English is an additional language (EAL) to settle in school. Her support is proving valuable in developing skills in speaking and listening, reading and writing. Class teachers and classroom assistants take into account the attainment and needs of these pupils to support them in their lessons and to promote the learning of literacy and numeracy.

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

Strengths:

- The range of extra-curricular activities.
- The contribution of the community.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- The arrangements for the teaching of literacy and numeracy.
- The provision for pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, which is very good.

Areas for development:

- The curriculum has insufficient breadth and balance.
- Curriculum planning is insufficiently developed.
- Some statutory requirements are not met.

The Curriculum

43. The curriculum is satisfactory overall, because of the good provision for teaching literacy and numeracy throughout the school, and the good curriculum enjoyed by the Foundation Stage children and the pupils in Years 1 and 2. For pupils aged seven to eleven, it is unsatisfactory because it does not have the required breadth and balance, and the appropriate statutory curriculum is not in place in all subjects. However, provision for pupils with SEN is good. The quality and range of learning opportunities is satisfactory overall. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

44. The curriculum has been improved in that the literacy and numeracy strategies have been introduced and the arrangements for teaching in both subject areas are good. Newly acquired computers are being used well to develop skills in ICT. This is another significant improvement. However, there is now insufficient time allocated to work in design technology, geography and some aspects of science, and this has had an effect on learning in these areas. The school has a four-year cycle for teaching the programme of study for geography and history, and this is not providing sufficient coverage of geography or of all

aspects of history. The school is not following a coherent programme in the teaching of religious education and is not meeting the requirements the locally Agreed Syllabus. Curriculum planning is underdeveloped, and the role of curriculum coordinators is not sufficiently well defined. This is having a negative effect on the curriculum as a whole.

45. Provision for equality of access and opportunity is good. Pupils have full access to the curriculum, and in-class support is good. Individual pupils also have some support outside the classroom; this is well managed and allows pupils to participate in the full range of classroom activities. The school identifies gifted and talented pupils and it now has a member of staff who takes responsibility for ensuring that higher attaining pupils achieve well. It fosters the talents of pupils in music, sport and model making by encouraging them to take part in competitions and share their talents with others in a variety of ways. For example, music played by pupils in the school is a feature of many assemblies.

46. Personal and social education is provided for within the curriculum as a whole rather than through a specific programme of lessons. Provision is satisfactory. Social and health issues are discussed, and the policies and programmes are in place to ensure an appropriate provision of health, sex and drugs education. The classrooms have displays on healthy lifestyle and environmental matters, and pupils are made aware of important health issues. As part of their work in literacy, pupils in Years 5 and 6 discussed vaccination and why it is important. In Reception, children do 'Brain Gym' exercises during literacy sessions. This helps them to learn that physical activity helps relieve stress and encourages concentration.

47. Links with partner institutions are satisfactory. There are links with the local secondary schools to ensure smooth progress into Key Stage 3 work. Students from the local secondary school work with pupils as part of their work placement, and during the inspection one such student made a valuable contribution to developing pupils' computer skills. The school makes good use of the local education centre to provide extension courses for pupils. Links with the pre-school playgroup are good, and this helps children to settle into school easily.

48. The programme of extra-curricular activities is good. It includes sport, music and chess. Pupils are also involved in art and drama during various celebrations and festivals in the course of the year. Many pupils join in after-school activities on a regular basis, but there are no planned activities during the long break at midday. Many individuals learn to play a variety of musical instruments and many more are involved in the choir, including pupils who have recently gone on to the secondary school. During the inspection, pupils were about to take part in a model-making contest with pupils from other Somerset schools.

49. The local community makes a very good contribution to learning. The school has a close relationship with the local church, and members of the local community play an important role in the school. Local people come into school to talk about the history of the area, and the school has links with both the National Trust and the local nuclear power station. Pupils go on a variety of visits in the area and they make good use of the village itself as a learning resource. They take part in all the major events in the village, such as the recent Jubilee celebration. The school provides high quality school meals, and on Fridays the senior citizens from the village are invited to join the pupils for lunch. The life of the school within the community is celebrated in the 'School Times', which is published each term and is sponsored by local businesses.

The provision for pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

50. The provision for pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. There is a strong spiritual element in many assemblies. It is also prominent in other areas of the curriculum, including science, music and English. Pupils have the opportunity to reflect on the value of creativity and the wonders of the natural world, for example when writing poems about senses and how they will remember life in school. Younger pupils say grace before meals and, although assemblies are Christian in theme, pupils are aware of how other faiths are practised. Younger pupils are aware of the Bible and other holy books and there was a good display of these in their classroom.

51. Pupils are encouraged to develop a strong moral awareness and the provision is again very good. They clearly understand the difference between right and wrong and they are encouraged to consider moral issues in the context of healing and working together for a better world. The theme of an assembly about an African Children's Choir had a strong moral message about how people can help one another. Provision for moral education is also very good within the curriculum, where pupils learn about moral issues in a range of subjects.

52. Provision for pupils' social development is also very good. Even quite young pupils take responsibilities in the classroom. The opportunity to join clubs and to compete against other schools is available to all pupils. The range of visits, charity fund raising and village activities also contribute very effectively to social development and to real awareness of what it means to be a good citizen. The Year 6 residential visit to Hampshire provided very valuable opportunities for the pupils who took part, and was very enjoyable. Pupils are very caring and concerned in their support for a teacher with a disability. She in turn provides an excellent role model for pupils.

53. Cultural development is promoted well, and provision for it is good. Pupils are introduced to many kinds of music in assembly and in music lessons. The library has only a limited choice of books on art and music, but pupils are aware of how they might find out more by using the Internet. In religious education lessons they are helped to become aware of their own culture and that of others, and are being made familiar with non - European cultures. During the inspection, pupils were seen enjoying African music in class and in assembly. Pupils are very aware of their own local culture and history because of the close relationship with the village community.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

Strengths:

- Pastoral care.
- Teachers' knowledge of their pupils.

Areas for development:

- Formal systems and policies, especially for academic assessment and recording.

54. The school cares for its pupils well, and continues to provide a friendly and supportive environment for learning. The high expectations for behaviour and the high standard of pastoral care make a positive contribution to the academic achievement of all pupils, helping to secure their good progress and their personal development and happiness.

However, there has been little development of procedures since the last inspection. Some aspects of support and guidance rely on an implicit understanding by staff who have worked together over a long period, with the result that new staff can be at a disadvantage in implementing procedures.

55. The headteacher and all his staff have a thorough working knowledge of all their pupils. They willingly accept their pastoral role with diligence and determination, and are well supported in their role by the vicar and the community. Pupils feel well supported by the inclusive and secure school community, without any loss of their independence, and they have good trust in all staff. In turn, older pupils promote the school's caring culture in the help they give to younger pupils. Parents greatly admire the school's supportive ethos, and its values and attitudes, and many make significant daily journeys to be a part of the school.

56. The procedures for monitoring the personal development of all pupils are informal, except where pupils develop special educational needs (SEN). The school does not have formal written procedures and relies on the teachers' long experience in the school, mental observations and recording, and discussions between staff. The limitations of the school's support records in this area have been evident during the recent absence of the deputy headteacher. The teacher who has provided cover has had very few written records to help her to plan work for the class. This situation is unsatisfactory. In the case of pupils with SEN, the school's good personal knowledge of each child allows it to involve professional agencies as required. Provision for SEN is good. It is promoted by good individual educational plans which include attainable targets, and these are agreed with parents on a termly basis.

57. The school has an adequate number of support, guidance and welfare policies, which guide and underpin its actions. However, the policies on attendance and behaviour are insufficiently detailed.

58. The school is very welcoming to outside agencies which support the pupils on a routine basis or visit if there are specific problems, but the school's infrastructure would be unsuitable for supporting complex disabled pupils. The school nurse supports the school well with routine medical checks, and trains staff in special procedures. She helps in the provision for sex education, from which there have been no withdrawals by parents.

59. Child protection procedures are satisfactory, and the school is vigilant in this respect. However, the headteacher and staff would benefit from further formal training in new procedures. In relation to child protection the school receives good support from the school nurse and from outside agencies where appropriate.

60. Despite the lack of a written policy, the procedures for monitoring and promoting behaviour are good and produce a generally effective outcome in a small village school. However, the effectiveness of the behaviour procedures owes more to a common understanding by experienced staff, who have worked together over a long period, than to well-developed systems. They represent good role models, skilled in nurturing good relationships with pupils. Rules are few in number and are not obviously displayed, but they have the implicit consent of all parts of the school family. Adults consistently give praise where it is earned, which raises the self-esteem of pupils, but rewards are insufficiently developed, except in the younger classes. Pupils are reminded of the need for a team effort through a low-profile house system. Sanctions are understood by pupils and parents, but are understated and little used. Both pupils and staff reinforce aspects of the moral provision by their contributions to assemblies, or during the personal health and social

education lessons. Members of staff have a thorough knowledge of any short-term problems between pupils. They are thus able to detect any oppressive behaviour, and deal with it by discrete and sensitive interventions. However, there is insufficient recording of behaviour incidents to help in developing future strategies.

61. Procedures for monitoring attendance are satisfactory and have been sufficient for a small village school. However, informal procedures have produced a less good result in the present year, as the incidence of unauthorised absence and in-term holidays has increased. Historically, parents have been very aware of their statutory obligations, and the headteacher and staff will occasionally meet parents to discuss problems regarding absence. The school does not have reward systems in place to focus the attention of pupils and parents on attendance and punctuality, and it does not benefit from any support from the education welfare service.

62. The premises committee of the governing body have a good overview of health and safety matters and take appropriate action. The school is a safe environment for all pupils and staff. However, the long-standing practice of pupils walking to the playground from the dining hall via the adjacent cul-de-sac, particularly at lunchtimes, should be discouraged. All members of staff are trained in first aid, but there is not a dedicated on-site medical room and the recording of minor accidents lacks rigour. Pupils are well acquainted with health and safety principles in the home and at school, through the personal health and social education provision or by guidance from the teacher at the start of lessons where appropriate. All pupil-based information systems are updated by the school secretary, and are sufficiently focused and specific to help in any emergency.

63. There is a satisfactory liaison and relationship between the school and the local secondary schools, so that parents receive sound support at transfer, and parent and pupil anxieties are minimised. Induction procedures for new parents to the school are comprehensive, so that pupils make a confident start to their school lives.

Assessment

64. Procedures for the assessment and recording of pupils' attainment and progress are unsatisfactory overall. They are satisfactory in English and mathematics, where pupils are tested regularly and their progress tracked. Assessment procedures are satisfactory for children in the Foundation Stage. Children are formally tested in the first half term they are in the Reception class. The results are used to plan appropriate activities for the children. The quality of ongoing assessment is good for personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, and mathematics. However, there is no formal assessment of children's progress through the 'stepping stones' for knowledge and understanding of the world and for creative and physical development.

65. In the rest of the school, the teachers assess and record pupils' progress and attainment regularly in English and mathematics, but the assessment of pupils in science and the Foundation subjects is not recorded and is done informally.

66. The teachers know their classes well and so have a good knowledge of how each child is progressing across the curriculum at large. They make use of this information to give additional support to pupils who they know will need additional help, or to provide extra challenge to those who need extending. Little of this is recorded. There are few grades or levels to pass on to the next teacher, and if a teacher is absent, as happened during the

inspection, the replacement teacher has no information to help him or her to set appropriate work. As a matter of urgency, the school now needs to introduce procedures for recording and tracking pupils' progress. This has been recognised, and a computer programme has begun to be used to record assessment information.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

Strengths:

- Parents' involvement in the school, and their support for their children's education.
- The openness of the school and the welcome it gives to parents.
- The parent/teacher association.

Areas for development:

- Annual reports on children's progress.
- Some aspects of information to parents.

67. The last inspection report indicated that the school's partnership with parents was one of its strengths. This remains true, as many aspects of the partnership are at a very good level. However, there are aspects which are only satisfactory. Presently there are some areas of discord between the school and a significant minority of parents, and the quality of information for parents has not been developed sufficiently since the last inspection.

68. There are strong indications that most parents have a high degree of interest in their children's education. The questionnaire had an improved level of return compared with that at the time of the previous inspection. The opinions recorded there, together with remarks made by parents in discussion, indicate that, overall, parents have a satisfactory view of the school. However, satisfaction levels have declined since the last inspection.

69. Dissatisfaction has grown in four areas: partnership; information on children's progress; the management of the school and the consistency of the setting of homework. The criticism of the management and the school's partnership with parents has its roots in the provision of mixed-age classes for pupils aged nine to eleven. Parents whose children are affected by this are upset, whilst the parents of children in lower-age group classes are extremely satisfied with single-age classes. The problems have been exacerbated by the long illness of the deputy headteacher, who is well respected by parents and has gained a reputation for his teaching of Class 6 over many years. Overall, the school makes every effort to build a very good partnership with parents, and they are only partly justified in their criticisms. Parents are satisfactorily informed of the progress of their children, but annual reports have not progressed in their development to include some essential factors, and to this extent parents are partially justified in their criticism. The school does have a homework policy, but teachers set homework inconsistently. The school has no choice other than to teach split-age classes, but needs to communicate the issues more effectively to parents.

70. Other aspects of the education partnership, such as the effectiveness of the school's links with parents, are at a very good level. Parents find it easy to develop informal communications with teachers and staff at either end of the school day. The school wants to be a listening and welcoming school, and parents find no impediment to approaching the school and developing very good relationships. The impact of parents in the school is very good. Many perform a service of high quality, either within classrooms as volunteers, or working in staff positions. Parents fill many governor roles and are having a developing impact on the life of the school. All vacancies for parent governors' positions are filled through competitive elections, and those appointed are committed and enthusiastic and

gain a good working knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The Parent Teacher Association (PTA) is vital to the school's well being, and it works tirelessly through an enthusiastic committee and is well supported by most parents. It communicates well with all parents through high quality newsletters and a notice board.

71. All documents indicate that the school values its parents and their importance in the life of the school. The quality of information for parents is variable, but generally satisfactory. The prospectus and the annual governors' report to parents are both adequate in quality, but omit some statutory features. The school communicates well with parents through notice boards and displays which denote pride in its history and vitality. The display of policies would be a useful addition. All written communications are mindful of the need to engage parents' interest, are regular and timely, and are respectful of the role of parents. The 'School Times' is a very good publication that communicates the essential school ethos. Annual reports to parents are satisfactory but have received insufficient development over time. Although they give adequate information on pupil's abilities and performance in all subjects of the National Curriculum, they do not contain any reference to prior or future targets. Reports do not seek the views of parents and do not require pupils to contribute their thoughts on the past or forthcoming year.

72. The contribution of parents to children's learning is a very good feature of the school for most parents. They are very aware of their statutory obligations regarding attendance and punctuality, and support the school to produce a good outcome. Parents have signed the home-school agreement, and comply in most aspects. There is good attendance at information evenings and at meetings with the teacher to discuss progress, but the annual governors' meeting for parents is not well supported. Parents are given an overview of topic work, but they are not told enough about homework arrangements to ensure their consistent involvement, and there are no homework diaries. There is close collaboration with the parents of pupils with special educational needs (SEN), and the parents are drawn into the framing of individual educational plans, with targets. When pupils have special difficulties, the school gives good support and the parents are well involved, often with outside agencies. Parents are well supported at induction into the Reception Year, and they appreciate the clear communication of school routines.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

Strengths:

- Some aspects of the management of the school by the headteacher are good.
- The governing body is monitoring the school well.
- The school's educational priorities are supported well through careful financial management and planning.

Areas for development:

- The management structure. Some aspects need to be strengthened, especially management of the curriculum.

73. The headteacher is very experienced. There are some areas of considerable strength in his leadership and management of the school. He uses his wisdom and people management skills to ensure that the school runs smoothly and that it is a harmonious place in which to work, for example. His care and concern for individuals sets the tone for the school. The very good relationships that permeate the school originate from the example that he is setting. His presence and manner, seen to good effect in the whole-school

assemblies that he leads, model the attitudes to peace, care and concern for others that are a feature of the school. He has also a vision of a school that develops the whole child, not just the academic side, and he has made this vision real. As a result, the personal development of pupils is very good throughout the school.

74. He is aware of areas of the school's work that are in need of further development. He has recognised and regretted the loss of emphasis on subjects other than English and mathematics as the school responded to national initiatives. Under his leadership, the literacy and numeracy strategies have been introduced in a thorough and rigorous way. The teaching of them is the more effective because of the thought and care, and the resourcing, that have gone into their introduction.

75. The excellent administrative support, from the very effective secretary, has helped him to run the school efficiently. He is also very aware of the need to work closely with parents. Although recent staffing problems have forced him to make unpopular decisions, the school works very closely with parents as a result of his leadership.

76. The absence of a deputy headteacher has put an increased burden on the headteacher and revealed some weaknesses in the management and leadership structure. The school does not have a curriculum manager and so there is no-one with a clear overview of the whole curriculum. Work is not being monitored satisfactorily in a number of subjects. Some subjects have been given too little time, so much so that statutory requirements are not being met. The inspection revealed weaknesses, of which the school was not aware, in the coverage of the programmes of study for science, geography and religious education. The co-ordination of subjects is uneven in its quality, partly because too much of this responsibility is falling on one person - the headteacher. The role of assessment co-ordinator has only recently been created and the teacher responsible has not been given the time, status or training to make a significant impact in her role. As a result, assessment and recording procedures have not been developed sufficiently. A small group of the most senior teachers has been established, but it does not meet regularly and its function is not clear. As a result, there is no-one on the staff to support the headteacher in the strategic planning for the school's future development and this adversely affects communication and leadership.

77. Some governors are linked to curriculum areas and they visit regularly. Although many governors are relatively new, they take their role seriously and are effective as critical friends. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development.

78. The school improvement plans are clearly set out and have been implemented effectively. The priorities for improvement, including the development of pupils' writing skills and the resources for information and communication technology (ICT), are appropriate and there is clear evidence that progress is being made.

79. The Foundation Stage is very well led and managed. The management of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is good. The policy on special needs has been recently updated and is comprehensive. Records are up-to-date and very well organised. The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) oversees the provision for the pupil with English as an additional language (EAL), helping her to be fully integrated into classes.

80. New technology is used satisfactorily, both to assist in the administration of the school and to help in teaching. However, there is a need for further development of its use to help with the recording and use of assessment data, to ensure that such records are accessible and easy to use.

81. The administrative and clerical staff and the classroom assistants are deployed very effectively and support the teachers well to ensure that they can concentrate on their primary roles. The caretaking and cleaning staff work effectively to ensure that the school buildings and grounds are clean, tidy and attractive.

Staffing, Accommodation and Learning Resources

82. There are sufficient, suitably qualified teachers to meet the demands of the National Curriculum. All teachers have received sufficient training to develop their skills in new national initiatives or fill gaps in their experience. The school has implemented performance management satisfactorily.

83. The pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 are taught in mixed aged classes, because, given the numbers in these year groups, it is not possible to staff a separate class for each year group. Under the circumstances, this is a satisfactory deployment of staff, although it is unpopular with parents. There are sufficient teaching assistants for there to be one for each class. They are effectively deployed, well qualified and add significantly to the quality of teaching and learning in the school.

84. The quality of the school's accommodation is satisfactory overall. Facilities in the main school building are good. However, pupils aged from seven to eleven are taught in temporary, outlying buildings. These are cramped, because of the many resources that are stored in them. The early years play area is restricted in both size and resources.

85. Teaching resources are satisfactory in quantity and quality, overall. Both mathematics and physical education resources are good, whilst music resources are very good. Resources in history and religious education are supplemented well through the County Loan Service. However, the stock of books in the library has not been replenished for a number of years and is unsatisfactory. Teachers make good use of resources to support pupils' learning.

Finance

86. The school's educational priorities are supported well through careful financial management and planning. The school has been through a very difficult period of financial stringency, brought on by the reduction in pupil numbers. The governors, with the headteacher, have steered the school through this well. Now that more funds are available, they are being targeted appropriately at improving the resourcing of those areas of the curriculum that have suffered most from the shortages, such as ICT. The governors, school secretary and senior management team work together to ensure that good financial records are kept and that the principles of best value are applied to all spending decisions. The additional grants and funding that the school receives, for example for its pupils with SEN, are used appropriately.

87. Pupils make satisfactory progress as they move through the school. Their personal development is very good and the quality of education that the school provides is good. The cost per pupil is close to the national average. Although there are improvements that need to be made, especially to the curriculum and to the management structure, the school gives satisfactory value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

88. In order to bring about further improvement and to raise levels of attainment, the governors, headteacher and teaching staff should:

- Reorganise the management structure of the school so that:
(Paragraphs 76, 143, 148, 154, 181)
 - * the management tasks, such as management of the curriculum and of assessment, are allocated properly;
 - * all subjects have co-ordinators responsible for leading and monitoring them;
 - * a senior group of staff is established to take a clear and strategic role in the school's development.

- Assess pupils regularly and record assessment information so that the progress of each pupil can be tracked.
(Paragraphs 56, 64, 66, 71, 93, 113, 136, 143, 148, 154, 159, 165, 170, 172)

- Review the balance of the curriculum in order to give appropriate time to the teaching of history, geography, design and technology and art, and to ensure that all statutory requirements for the curriculum are met, including coverage of the locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education.
(Paragraphs 17, 37, 43, 44, 144, 149, 165)

Minor issues

89. The minor issues listed below should be considered by governors for inclusion in the action plan.

- Continue to seek to raise attainment in writing, as already identified in the school improvement plan.

- Introduce a behaviour management policy, so that expectations of pupils' behaviour are uniform across the classes and there are clear systems for dealing with any disruptive behaviour.

- As already planned, replenish the stock of books and other resources in the library, in order to make it more effective as a learning resource.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	38
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	24

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	9	15	13	0	0	0
Percentage	3	23	38	34	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	157
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	14

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	14

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	3
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	1

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	3.5
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.1
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 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year:	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	17	9	26

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	15	15	16
	Girls	7	8	9
	Total	22	23	25
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	85 (67)	88 (72)	96 (78)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	15	16	16
	Girls	7	9	9
	Total	22	25	25
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	85 (72)	96 (78)	96 (78)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year:	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	6	18	24

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	5	5	5
	Girls	17	14	17
	Total	22	19	22
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	92 (87)	79 (90)	92 (94)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	5	5	5
	Girls	17	14	17
	Total	22	19	22
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	92 (94)	79 (94)	92 (94)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	2
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	1
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	152
Any other minority ethnic group	2

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)	7.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21
Average class size	26

Education support staff:

YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	129

Qualified teachers and support staff:

Nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	N/a
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	
Total number of education support staff	
Total aggregate hours worked per week	
Number of pupils per FTE adult	

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	364,889.00
Total expenditure	363,632.00
Expenditure per pupil	2,377.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	22,751.00
Balance carried forward to next year	24,009.00

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out
Number of questionnaires returned

150
61

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	51	43	5	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	44	41	15	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	21	61	15	3	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	20	46	23	10	2
The teaching is good.	40	52	7	2	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	27	38	27	8	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	56	25	10	5	5
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	34	49	16	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	25	39	23	13	0
The school is well led and managed.	20	38	23	15	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	41	51	8	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	37	53	5	5	0

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

FOUNDATION STAGE

90. The Foundation Stage comprises the children in the Reception class. Children enter the school in the September after their fourth birthday. At first, they attend part-time, but soon stay all day as they become confident in their new environment. By January, all the children attend on a full-time basis.

91. Children enter the school with levels of attainment in line with those expected of children of this age in the six areas of learning: personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development. They make good progress through the 'stepping stones' of the Foundation Stage curriculum during the time they spend in the Reception class, and they are on course to meet the Early Learning Goals in all areas of the curriculum by the time they enter Year 1.

92. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. It is now good in all areas of the curriculum. In a third of the lessons observed it was very good. The teacher plans a good range of activities that help the children to learn the skills they need. She teaches well the basic skills required for literacy and numeracy. All adults who work with the children have high expectations of behaviour and learning. They use a good range of teaching methods. For example, they work with large and small groups and individuals on planned tasks; they interact well with children who are working on tasks chosen by themselves; and they move children on in their learning through skilful questioning. The children are managed very well. They are taught the rules and systems in the classes and are regularly reminded of how they should behave and relate to one another.

93. Children are formally tested in the first half term they are in the Reception class, and the results are used to plan activities for them. The quality of ongoing assessment is good for personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy and mathematics. There is no formal assessment of children's progress through the 'stepping stones' for knowledge and understanding of the world and for creative and physical development.

94. Resources for all areas of the curriculum, except the outdoor environment, are good. There is a very small secure paved and grassed area just outside the classroom. This is a pleasant area, but it is too small for any large equipment for physical development, such as a climbing frame or for wheeled toys. This is unsatisfactory. To compensate for this the Reception classes have physical education lessons in the hall. The planned activities in these lessons are satisfactory, but are more formal and restricted than outdoor play.

95. Children have very good attitudes to learning. They achieve well, acquiring skills, knowledge and understanding in all areas of the curriculum. The children are very interested in all the activities, learn to concentrate for increasing lengths of time, and become independent. During lessons, many children work unsupervised at specified tasks while the adults work with other groups.

96. The Foundation Stage is very well led and managed.

Personal, social and emotional development

97. Children settle quickly and confidently into the class, because of the close relationship the teacher has built up with the local pre-school group to which most children go, and the very good induction programme. Children make good progress and soon gain the confidence to relate well to adults and to co-operate with one another. The children learn to take turns and share through playing together in the sand and with 'small world' toys. They listen carefully to adults and comply with instructions. Assemblies and class discussion time are planned opportunities for children to think about themselves and others, and to share ideas about what is special to them. They can dress and undress themselves, with help and reminders. They go to the toilet independently and remember to wash their hands afterwards.

Communication, language and literacy skills

98. Provision for this aspect of learning is good. Children develop their skills in listening and speaking through a good range of role-play activities. They recount their personal experiences when discussing what they do at home, and use appropriate language when interacting with adults and other children. Most of them enjoy looking at print, pictures and books. All the children are aware that print goes from left to right and recognise familiar words, such as their name. The majority of the children know all the phonemes and can read some words which are commonly used. Many can read simple texts and are keen to learn more. Children make good progress in writing. They write captions for pictures about their own experiences, for example: 'I went swim (ming) I went on the fast slid (slide)'.

Mathematical development

99. Children are taught to count objects one by one, to aid accuracy. They learn quickly, especially when specific language is used, such as the names of shapes. All count accurately to 20. They are beginning to identify the number before and after a given number, and the majority can quickly give the correct answer to: 'What is 1 more than 8?' or '1 less than 3?' The more able children can work out which number the teacher is thinking of when there are two variables, for example: 'I'm thinking of a number bigger than 5 and smaller than 10'. All the answers given were within the correct range and the children got very excited as the choice narrowed until the answer was revealed.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

100. Children enter school with a good knowledge of their families and immediate neighbourhood. Some have good recall of where they have been on holiday and of relatives who do not live nearby. They show an interest in their environment and in the visitors in the classroom. Children begin to develop their sense of place through playing with 'small world' toys, such as the train sets, cars and dolls' houses. They explore the properties of water and sand, carefully filling and emptying containers and washing clothes. They learn about the world around them. Whilst watching the caterpillars hatch into butterflies, they stood silently, spellbound, while the butterflies flapped their wings to dry them.

101. The children enjoy using the computer and use the mouse with skill.

Physical development

102. The children enjoy taking part in a range of physical activities, including indoor and outdoor role-play. They use the small outside area for playing with small apparatus such as bats and balls. The size of the area, and the fact that it has a considerable slope, restricts its usefulness. The children have two physical education lessons in the hall each week. In the lessons seen, children were given free choice about which equipment to use first and how to move on it, but they do not have as much as freedom to experiment and be inventive as they would in a good outdoor play session. Almost all the children have good manipulative skills, handling small objects with skill and care. They use scissors, pencils and brushes well.

Creative development

103. The children enjoy drawing and painting, and demonstrate care in such activities. They like to experiment with colour and texture, and use glue, straw, wool, glitter and other collage materials with confidence. There are opportunities for the to join in good quality role-play to extend their skills of expression. The children enjoy singing and playing instruments. Some show good rhythmic ability when moving in time to the music. They are given many opportunities to develop these skills and have a good repertoire of simple songs and rhymes when they leave the Reception class.

ENGLISH

Strengths:

- The development of reading skills.
- Teaching and learning.
- Use of Information and communication technology.

Areas for development:

- Standards in writing in Year 2
- Library resources
- Assessment

104. In the national tests in 2001, pupils in Year 2 reached standards in reading and writing that were below the national average and the average for similar schools.

105. Results achieved by pupils in Year 6 were in line with the national average overall, and with the average for similar schools, although relatively few pupils reached the higher levels. In the 2002 tests, standards in Year 6 show an improvement, especially in the number of pupils achieving the higher levels. Standards have risen in reading in Year 2, to last year's national average, but they are below average in writing.

106. The finding of the inspection is that attainment is below average at the end of Year 2, because of weaknesses in writing. There are more pupils with special educational needs (SEN) in Year 2 than in other classes in the school. Attainment in English is average in Year 6. Pupils achieve appropriately in both Year 2 and Year 6 in relation to their standards on entry to the school. The overall trend in performance is an improving one.

107. Standards in speaking and listening are above average in both Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils are confident in the classroom or in a social situation, and higher attaining pupils are often very articulate. Pupils express their ideas clearly and they all listen to others

considerately. They participate well in the many discussion activities. In Year 2, pupils particularly enjoy oral work related to comic poetry. Younger pupils always have a story session at the end of the day, and this is very well used to encourage listening skills and a love of fiction. The literacy hour fosters the development of skills in speaking and listening, and other subject areas, including music, also make a valuable contribution. No drama or role-play was observed during the inspection other than in assembly, where it made a major contribution and was enjoyed by everyone present.

108. Standards of reading are average in Year 2. The majority of younger pupils are able to use a variety of strategies to support their reading, including phonics and picture clues. The classrooms have a good range of fiction and pupils read during registration. This frequent opportunity to read helps them to progress well. Pupils are confident in using dictionaries to look up unfamiliar words. Pupils who find reading difficult receive additional literacy support, on an individual basis if necessary. These pupils achieve well in reading because of the emphasis on basic skills and on reading comprehension. Reading standards in Year 6 are above average. Pupils read aloud expressively and confidently. Their comprehension skills are good. Average and higher attaining pupils have good skills in skimming and scanning texts for information. In a Year 6 literacy lesson, the pupils were able to summarize a complicated article on the eradication of small pox. Pupils enjoy reading fiction and non-fiction texts. By the end of their time in the school they have experienced a satisfactory variety of literature, including a wide range of poetry.

109. All pupils are developing the use of computers to further their skills in reading and research.

110. Standards in writing are below average, overall, at the end of Year 2. The proportion attaining Level 2, the expected level, is close to the national average, but the proportion of pupils who reach Level 3, indicating above average attainment, is smaller than that for the country as a whole. Written work is often presented well, with pupils using joined up writing, rather than printing, because they have regular handwriting sessions. Most pupils can write competently, using simple punctuation correctly, and accurately spelling short, common words. Few, however, move beyond this. They do not acquire the skill of organizing their writing into paragraphs, for example.

111. By the end of Year 6, writing standards are average. The higher attaining pupils can write about their ideas expressively and accurately and produce pieces of extended creative writing. The range of written work is good. All pupils are able to write descriptions, letters or accounts, and all write imaginative and lively prose. Particularly successful work in poetry was seen during the inspection. The average and lower attaining pupils have a less secure grasp of the technical aspects of writing than the higher attainers.

112. Pupils respond well to work in English, and behaviour is usually good. In most classes they are enthusiastic about their work because they are taught well. They are prepared to experiment and to think for themselves. They work well in pairs and groups, because the work in all lessons promotes inclusion, through the discussion and the sharing of ideas, and encourages all pupils to play their part.

113. The quality of teaching and the quality of learning is good. Learning is monitored effectively. Assessment information has been used to set targets and to improve results in national tests through the revision programme in Year 6. However, the recording of information about individual pupils is not consistent across the school.

114. Teachers have a good understanding of all aspects of the teaching of English and they are confident in teaching all the elements of reading and writing. In the large majority of lessons, pupils make good progress because of the pace and rigour of the work, the high quality of questioning, and the interesting range of activities. In rare instances, pupils are not kept firmly on task.

115. The management of the subject is satisfactory. The literacy strategy has been fully implemented, but a system for the monitoring of all aspects of work in English has not yet been established. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory, particularly in improving standards in reading and in the development of resources for literacy.

Literacy

116. The school has good strategies for teaching literacy skills. The national Literacy Strategy is firmly in place and the majority of subjects are being used to develop skills in reading and writing. In history, pupils produce extended pieces of writing. In mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT) there is an appropriate emphasis on the development of skills in reading and comprehension.

117. Pupils have handwriting, spelling and guided reading sessions in addition to the formal literacy hour. New resources have been purchased, including a range of Big Books for use during literacy lessons. Parents make a valuable contribution by hearing pupils read at home and in school.

118. Library skills are appropriately developed, in that pupils can talk about how to find a book and to use an index. However, the small and inadequately stocked school library gives pupils only limited opportunities to develop skills in research and does not prepare them well for work at the next stage of their education

MATHEMATICS

Strengths:

- Standards are above average, with all pupils, including those with special needs or with English as an additional language, generally working at or above the level expected for their age.
- Good teaching.
- Lessons are well planned, with a clear focus, with activities appropriate to pupils of all abilities within the class.

Areas for development:

- Improve pupils' ability to select different strategies in calculations and explain their methods.

119. National test results at the end of Year 2 in 2000 were below the national average. They improved in 2001 and were in line with the national average and those of similar schools. The inspection evidence shows that current standards in Year 2 are in line with national expectations.

120. The test results at the end of Year 6 in 2001 showed that attainment was in line with the average nationally, compared with schools nationally and with similar schools. The provisional results for 2002 show a marked improvement, especially at the higher level, Level 5. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. The finding of the inspection is that standards are above average at the end of Year 6.

121. Several factors have contributed to this improvement in standards of attainment. These include the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy, which has resulted in better teaching by more knowledgeable and confident teachers. In addition, systems for the assessment and tracking of pupils' progress have been developed, enabling teachers to focus specific teaching and support where it is most needed.

122. By Year 2, most pupils reach the expected level for their age and are confident with numbers up to 100 and beyond. They are mainly secure in their understanding of tens and units. When calculating, they can double and halve numbers and many can add and subtract two digit numbers mentally. They have begun to work with multiplication beyond the two, ten and five times tables. The more able understand that multiplication is repeated addition. Most can recognise right angles and identify which shapes contain them, such as a square. All pupils recognise different coins and understand their relative values. They make sensible decisions when deciding which coins to use to pay for different items. A small minority of pupils attain lower levels: they are still, for example, working with single digit numbers.

123. By Year 6, attainment is above average. More than a third of pupils are working at Level 5, which is above the expected level for pupils of this age. They do money calculations confidently and accurately. They are familiar with standard measures, including those of capacity, and can compare lengths, and they are also familiar with the properties of complex shapes, such as polygons and octagons.

124. The pupils' ability to solve mathematical problems is developing, but they need to be given more opportunities to practise these skills and to reflect on and discuss which method works best in different situations. Some have a relatively narrow range of strategies for doing calculations, such as multiplication of three-digit numbers including decimal places. Most are secure in their ability to 'guesstimate' the answer to check their calculations, but the lower attaining pupils, who need this skill the most, are least adept at it.

125. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall throughout the school. The staff share experience and skills to improve teaching, and the quality was satisfactory or good in all lessons observed. All teachers have good subject knowledge. They plan effectively to ensure that pupils' learning builds progressively. Pupils' work is assessed regularly and this information is used to provide all pupils with work that is appropriate to their individual needs and abilities. As a result, all achieve well, including high attainers and those with special educational needs (SEN). At the end of lessons, teachers bring pupils together to discuss their work. This helps pupils to make progress, by consolidating what they have learnt.

126. The teachers' appropriate expectations of the pupils are evident in the level of challenge in the tasks they set. The pupils respond well, concentrating on the tasks, taking the work seriously and showing a real desire to succeed. Teachers consistently apply positive strategies to encourage good behaviour, such as praising those who are keen to answer questions or quick to start work. This results in very good relationships and attitudes to learning. Pupils are co-operative and responsible, working well individually or in small groups. In all classes, teachers make good use of practical aids to support pupils' learning. This aids pupils' conceptual development and is particularly helpful to the average and lower attainers.

127. The subject is led effectively and the National Numeracy Strategy has been introduced into the school well.

128. The co-ordinator was absent from the school at the time of the inspection. The changes in mathematics teaching that have resulted from the numeracy strategy are having a positive effect on pupils' achievement.

Numeracy

129. There is an effective numeracy policy and all teachers are aware of the need to reinforce skills in all the subjects of the curriculum. Even before lessons begin, teachers invite pupils to help with the tasks of working out how many pupils are present and absent, and how many girls and how many boys. There is good use of number skills in science, including recording results of practical work in graphs and tables. Teachers seek out opportunities in art, design and technology and ICT to give pupils practice in mental mathematics, and to reinforce what they have learnt in their numeracy sessions.

SCIENCE

Strengths:

- Attainment above average at the end of Year 6.
- Pupils' attitudes.

Areas for development:

- Allowing pupils to develop investigative and prediction skills sufficiently.
- Assessment.

130. The teacher assessments of Year 2 in 2001 indicated that standards achieved by the seven year olds were above the national average. The 2001 national test results for 11 year olds showed that standards achieved were in line with the national average and with those in similar schools. Attainment at the end of Year 6 has risen since 1998, when it was below the national average. The provisional test results for Year 6 in 2002 show a continued improvement. More than two fifths of the pupils achieved the higher levels in science and the great majority of pupils gained at least the national expected level.

131. Evidence from this inspection shows overall standards in the current Year 2 class to be broadly in line with expected standards. This is the same as at the time of the previous inspection. Attainment in Year 6 is above average and has improved since the last report. All pupils, including those with special educational needs (SEN), achieve satisfactorily.

132. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 know how seeds grow. They learn that seeds need soil and water in order to grow, and understand that seeds from the same plant would grow at different rates. They are able to draw and label their predictions. Year 2 pupils are able to form hypotheses and test these out, as was seen during their work on relative size. They wanted to know if people with big feet had big hands, and were able to work methodically to measure their own hands and feet, using a strip of paper. Groups of pupils collected data and entered it on the computer, while other groups compiled a bar graph using the paper strips. One group suggested that it would be easier to see if the hypotheses were true if they arranged the paper strips in size order. The pupils were interested to discover that their hypothesis was true for some people, but not for others.

133. By the end of Year 6, pupils have a good knowledge of living things. In Years 4 and 5, pupils learn the names of the parts of a flower and why bees are attracted to them. They have a good knowledge of electricity and carry out well their experiments with circuits. All pupils have further developed their skills in being able to predict and test their predictions, for example through experiments which involve using different materials to insulate cups to keep water hot. Year 6 pupils showed above average standards in their work on healthy living during a discussion on the effects of drugs, alcohol and tobacco on their bodies. Their general knowledge of the subject was good and included ideas they had gathered from the television or from home, as well as from school. Pupils were interested in the theme and produced well-informed posters to discourage people from abusing their bodies.

134. An analysis of pupils' work shows that pupils are making satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2. The teachers are working hard to improve investigative skills, but the pupils do not always explain clearly enough what they did, and why. In the classes containing Years 3, 4, and 5 pupils, progress is satisfactory and coverage follows the school's plan. There is better coverage of materials and their properties and physical processes than of life processes. Much of the work in Year 6 is oral. There is evidence from talking to pupils that they have discussed widely and developed good understanding, but little of this has been written down. Although the pupils have good knowledge and understanding of science and scientific principles, there are long periods of time when no work is recorded.

135. Teaching was satisfactory in two out of the three lessons seen and good in the third. This is broadly in line with that seen at the time of the previous inspection. Teachers explain the tasks carefully to pupils, prepare the resources well and show appropriate subject knowledge. The weakness in the teaching of science is that some teachers concentrate on the subject knowledge too much and do not allow pupils to develop investigative and prediction skills sufficiently.

136. The knowledgeable co-ordinator has had the opportunity to monitor the quality of teaching and learning, and ensures that planning follows the agreed sequence of work. Assessment is underdeveloped in the subject.

ART AND DESIGN

Strengths:

- Use of information and communication technology.
- Pupils' attitudes.

Areas for development:

- Curriculum planning.
- Assessment.

137. Only two lessons were observed during the inspection and no lessons were seen in Years 1 or Year 2. Judgments are therefore based on discussions with teachers and on looking at the displays of pupils' work. The quality of work observed shows that standards are average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Overall, pupils achieve satisfactorily, including those with special educational needs (SEN).

138. Displays show many aspects of art, including collage, drawing, painting, printing and the use of colour. Most pupils draw carefully and reasonably accurately when making pictures of plants. Pupils in Year 2 paint bold and colourful portraits. Year 6 pupils produce more sophisticated images of the human face, with a reasonable sense of proportion.

Although no clay work produced by pupils was available for the inspection, there is other evidence that they have the appropriate skills in this medium. There are photographic records showing that pupils produce models of heads and that they make ceramic tiles. The school has its own small kiln and uses the facilities of the secondary school during arts-based activity weeks.

139. Older pupils use the work of famous artists to inspire them. The work of the artist George Seurat was used during the inspection to help pupils understand and then follow the technique of pointillism. Pupils have some knowledge of the work of the Impressionists, but only a limited knowledge of the work of other famous artists. Skills are well established. Younger pupils can explain about mixing colours and older pupils use a variety of media to good effect. In a successful lesson taken by a visiting artist, pupils responded well to the use of charcoal, which they used to explore the patterns and shapes made by natural objects. Pupils with SEN make good progress in practical tasks because of the quality of support they receive and because of the effective use of resources.

140. Art is used to support work in many subjects. For example, pupils produce illustrations from stories and poems in Year 3. Pupils study photographs and portraits of people in history lessons and this gives them some understanding of portraiture. A higher attaining pupil in Year 6 was able to talk about the purpose of Tudor portraits and to understand that they might be symbolic, rather than actually represent the appearance of a person. Pupils in Year 1 make pictures of reflected faces and paintings of animals, and older pupils develop techniques in painting, drawing and in observational work, for example in drawings of flowers, as part of their work in science.

141. The subject makes a useful contribution to literacy because of the use of descriptive language and vocabulary in discussion. However, pupils are not given the opportunity to experiment and to evaluate their work because they do not use sketchbooks. Pupils are interested in art and they responded well to the new approaches that were developed in the lessons observed.

142. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Work seen and lessons observed during the inspection show that teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of the subject and that they are able to encourage pupils to work with confidence in a variety of media. There is a real emphasis on creativity, as well as on careful observation. Pupils are encouraged to look carefully and then copy the techniques used, thus extending their own skills. In the lessons observed, art was planned in a way that met the learning requirements of all pupils, and it was fully inclusive. Artwork is well mounted and displayed, and this encourages pupils to value it. Some effective use of art-related computer software was on display during the inspection.

143. There is no co-ordinator to ensure that the subject is planned or resourced appropriately, although individual teachers are planning lessons well. Assessment procedures have not been developed in the subject as yet. There has been unsatisfactory improvement since the last inspection because of the lack of planning or curriculum development.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Strengths:

- Good design and making skills in Years 1 and 2.

Areas for development:

- Curriculum planning and coverage for Years 3 to 6.
- Assessment.

144. Work in design and technology for pupils in Years 1 and 2 follows the recommended National Curriculum programmes of study. Standards at the end of Year 2 are in line with national expectations for pupils of this age. Too little design and technology is taught to pupils in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 to cover the National Curriculum programmes of study. As a result, pupils do not develop all the skills needed for the subject. Because of the year-by-year rotation of subjects, no design and technology had been taught in this academic year to these older pupils. Discussion with junior pupils revealed that they had done little design and technology work since leaving Year 2. Attainment at the end of Year 6 is below national expectations.

145. Design notebooks from pupils in Year 2 show that they are developing good design and making skills. Pupils understand how to choose appropriate materials, as was evident in the construction of a chariot for Queen Boudicca. One pupil wrote, 'I made the horses out of plasticine and the chariot out of cardboard. Boudicca is made out of pipe cleaners and material'. The pupils write good instructions and are beginning to evaluate their work. Year 1 and 2 pupils reinforce their scientific knowledge of the properties of materials when they make Ginger Snaffles. They measure ingredients accurately and enjoy kneading the mixture with their hands.

146. Teaching in the lessons seen in Years 1 and 2 was satisfactory, a judgement broadly in line with the findings of the previous inspection. The skills of measuring and weighing, in food technology, were taught well by two parents. Teachers use resources well, and their skilful questioning helps to keep the pupils on task and resolve any technical problems that pupils encounter.

147. Progress over time is inconsistent. All pupils, including those with special educational needs (SEN), make steady progress in Years 1 and 2 and achieve satisfactorily. Progress slows through Years 3, 4, 5 and 6, and achievement is unsatisfactory.

148. The teachers' planning is monitored, but there is not a planned programme of lesson observation. There is no assessment procedure. There has been unsatisfactory progress since the last inspection.

GEOGRAPHY

Strengths:

- Knowledge of geographical terminology.
- Ability to compare local geography with that in different countries.

Areas to be developed:

- Curriculum planning and coverage.
- Assessment.
- Co-ordination of the subject.

149. Work in geography for pupils in Years 1 and 2 follows the recommended National Curriculum programmes of study. Standards at the end of Year 2 are in line with national expectations for pupils of this age, and pupils achieve satisfactorily. Work for pupils in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 is planned in a four-year cycle. This is done as a response to the problems of planning work for mixed age-classes and finding additional curriculum time for literacy and numeracy. The result is that for long periods of time no geography is taught. All the pupils in these years follow the same topic at the same time. Teachers' planning shows little difference between year groups in the content of this work. Discussion with Year 6 pupils revealed that about a quarter of the Key Stage 2 programmes of study have not been covered. Attainment at the end of Year 6 is below national expectation, and achievement is unsatisfactory.

150. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 develop their map-making skills through drawing plans of the classroom, then making picture maps of the local area. Year 2 pupils had visited Wookey Hole and had drawn maps of their journey there, with the main landmarks drawn and labelled. Pupils understood about changing seasons and were able to name their major features.

151. Pupils in Years 3 and 4, and some pupils in Year 5, had studied the human geography of Kenya and Guyana. They could identify similarities and differences, knowing that in each country the language was different but that food was generally similar. Pupils also know about the water cycle and rivers. Their knowledge of terms such as *delta*, *estuary* and *river mouth* is good. Some classes developed the theme into work on contrasting climates, learning about countries with too little or too much water. Pupils' factual knowledge is good but their ability to hypothesise and make generalisations is less well developed. Their knowledge of other aspects of the geography curriculum is sketchy.

152. Teaching was satisfactory in the one lesson observed. This was for the class containing all Year 6 and some Year 5 pupils. Year 6 pupils were researching their animal study. Many were well motivated, using the Internet to find facts. Others were writing and illustrating parts of their study. However, not all pupils are mature enough to work on their own for the whole lesson, and time was wasted. Year 5 pupils were prepared well for a video illustrating the effect of climate on life style in Cyprus. The teacher ensured that the pupils knew what they were trying to find out. Learning for these pupils was satisfactory.

153. Progress over time is inconsistent. All pupils, including those with special educational needs (SEN), make steady progress in Years 1 and 2. Progress speeds up in the first two junior classes and slows down again at the end of the juniors. Pupils do not discuss geography with enthusiasm. They recall visits they have made and talk about them at length, but they do not remember the geographical elements as well as they do the historical aspects.

154. Resources are satisfactory. There is no assessment procedure. There is no co-ordinator for geography, although the headteacher has overall responsibility over this and a number of other subjects. He has monitored the planning, but not teaching. Leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory.

HISTORY

Strengths:

- The use made of visits and the local area.
- The contribution of the subject to literacy.

Areas for development:

- Planning and curriculum development.

155. No lessons were observed during the inspection. Judgments are based on pupils' work, and on talking to them about it. Standards in Year 2 are as expected of pupils of similar age, and achievement is sound. Pupils in Year 6 show a good level of knowledge and understanding of the role of key figures of past centuries and a satisfactory awareness of how historians find out about the past. Standards and achievement are again satisfactory.

156. In Years 1 and 2, pupils understand how the ways in which people live change over, time through their study of their own place in the family and society. They examine aspects of life in the past through a focus upon significant people, such as Florence Nightingale. The work of pupils in Years 1 and 2 shows that most pupils are able to understand that life in the past was different, and they can compare aspects of life today with life then. The highest attaining pupils are aware of how historians find out about the past, because they know that people such as Samuel Pepys have left us eyewitness accounts. Lower attaining pupils know that electricity is part of modern life, and that it was not available at the time of the Crimean War. One average attaining pupil was able to provide lots of information on the work of Louise Braille. It is clear that pupils are being introduced to an adequate variety of sources of evidence, and that photographs and video are being used effectively to help pupils' understanding.

157. Work in history through Years 3 to 6 is arranged in blocks over a four-year period, with all pupils studying the same topics at the same time. This year, they have studied the people who have invaded and then settled in Britain. They are able to talk informatively about some aspects of life in Roman Britain. Average and above average attainers can understand the difference between primary and secondary sources of evidence and can talk about how we carry out research in history. Pupils have benefited from visits to the Roman fort at Caerleon, and Year 6 pupils have a good knowledge of the Tudors, following their visit to the Mary Rose at Portsmouth. Some average attaining and all lower attaining pupils show little recall of recent or earlier work. The way in which the subject is organized and planned has adversely affected pupils' understanding of the sequence of historical events and does not lend itself to the progressive development of skills. It does, however, allow good use to be made of borrowed resources and visits to historical sites.

158. Learning is satisfactory overall. The use of information communication technology (ICT) to enhance work in the subject has been underdeveloped, but it is satisfactory now that new computers have become available. Pupils have good opportunities for independent research, particularly in Year 6, as most of their work is project-based. In all year groups, there is a good emphasis on written work. Pupils often write about history in considerable detail, and this is making a valuable contribution to their progress in literacy. The scrutiny of pupils' work indicates that learning is satisfactory over time in the topics covered this year. Pupils say they enjoy the study of history, and they clearly benefit from a variety of visits and from the historical interest provided by their own village.

159. Management of the subject is satisfactory. A new co-ordinator has been appointed and some planning is in place for work at both key stages. There has been a sound level of improvement since the last inspection. However, there is a clear need to review overall curriculum planning in the subject and to develop assessment in order to ensure continuity and progression in history, particularly in the development of skills.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Strengths:

- Pupils' confident and competent use of computers.
- Pupils' positive attitudes to the subject.

Areas for development:

- Coverage of the curriculum.
- Assessment.

160. Attainment in information and communication technology (ICT) is satisfactory at the end of Years 2 and 6, and pupils achieve well.

161. By the time the pupils are seven they are familiar with a good range of hardware and software. For example, they are able to word process and amend material for stories and accounts of events. Following the example of modern painters, they can create shapes, confidently selecting and using commands, whilst using a drawing program. They know how to open a program, find the file they want within it, and save and print their work. Their understanding of how to use a computer is good. Pupils make good progress in their first years in school, quickly becoming familiar with a range of programs and commands.

162. By the time they are 11, pupils can use computers confidently and competently and handle information sensibly and effectively. They word process their own poems, adding illustrations to their text and trying out a variety of fonts and sizes to obtain the result they want. They make pictures and patterns by changing the colour, size, number, and arrangement of shapes on the screen. They also make tables to enter results from a scientific experiment, varying the size of the columns and rows to meet their own requirements. Pupils make good progress, building on their prior attainment and using an ever-increasing range of software and commands.

163. Pupils enjoy their work in this subject. They are always keen to have their turn on the computer and then work hard and concentrate on the task. Pupils work well as a class, in small groups, and individually. They support each other well in group tasks and respond well when given independent tasks. They show enthusiasm and sustain concentration when tasks are challenging and new skills are being practised.

164. The quality of teaching of ICT, both to a whole class and to groups, is satisfactory. There is no ICT suite, however, and the result is that when new skills are taught to a whole class, only small numbers can practise those skills immediately on the two or three computers available in the classroom. Teachers and pupils alike cope with this difficulty well. Teachers give clear instructions and expect pupils to listen carefully and to understand quickly. The pupils remember what they have learnt, and when their turn comes they work well independently, for example when they are learning how to create a table for the first time. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used very well across the curriculum, and in the majority of lessons some pupils were working on the computers for part of the time. Particularly good use of ICT was seen in science lessons.

165. The newly appointed co-ordinator is very enthusiastic and has a clear vision of what she wants for the school. Teachers have worked very hard in a very short time to learn the necessary skills to teach their classes. Teachers are enthusiastic, with good subject knowledge and high expectations, and this enables pupils of all abilities to succeed very well. The quality and range of learning opportunities and resources are good. The good number of computers in the classrooms allows ICT to be used regularly across the curriculum. Because the equipment is new, older pupils have not covered all the programme of study for ICT, but planning is in place for younger pupils to do so. Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) use a range of computer programs to support their learning. There is no assessment of pupils' skills, but all classes keep a portfolio of work. Some classes have a skills list that pupils complete.

MUSIC

Strengths:

- Good teaching, including specialist teaching which enhances pupils' learning.
- Good singing.
- Good opportunities to take part in musical performances.
- Strong subject knowledge on the part of staff.
- Good opportunities for pupils to develop their music further through extra-curricular work in the choir and instrumental tuition.

Area for development:

- Ensuring that pupils' performance in the subject is monitored effectively so that teachers can assess progress.

166. The school's provision for music has improved since the previous inspection, with the majority of pupils reaching above average levels in the subject by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 – at the ages of seven and eleven. The curriculum is good, the subject is taught well, and pupils have access to a good range of resources. The school ensures these standards by employing a part-time specialist teacher in the subject, who is also a very effective subject leader. She provides lessons for the pupils in all aspects of the music curriculum, as well as supporting the other teachers with planning and resources.

167. In Years 1 and 2 all pupils, including those with special educational needs (SEN) or for whom English is an additional language (EAL), make good progress in their learning and achieve well. In the aspects of music seen during the inspection, the older pupils reached standards that are above national expectations. Pupils in Year 1 work together to identify instruments that can represent particular sounds in a story. They listen carefully to the instrument played by the teacher and then suggest which of the story sounds they could represent. They composed a delightful musical accompaniment to a story of a bear, including sounds that reflected trees moving and rain falling. They helped the teacher to devise a system of picture notation to help them to remember the sounds and the sequence of sounds in their composition, and then performed the final piece with very good concentration, control and sensitivity. The Year 2 pupils sing well and tunefully and listen appreciatively to music which is played to them. In a music lesson based on the 'Rumpelstiltskin' story, they all sang well, whilst half of the class also played tuned and untuned percussion instruments very well in a carefully arranged accompaniment.

168. In Year 6, attainment is well above average. Singing is a considerable strength. Pupils perform very tunefully and confidently. They sing complicated part songs, keeping together and in time to the music. They experience and sing songs of many types from across the world. Their composition and performance skills are well above average. When

they performed a rondo, which they had composed in small groups, some of the performance was of a very high standard, particularly from the tuned instruments. Adults walking past the hall, where the composition was being played, stopped and listened. The players conveyed moods very well by the range of notes, the skilful use of melody, and the sensitivity to the dynamics of the piece.

169. All pupils enjoy singing and they sing well, at a standard well above average. In assembly they sing very tunefully with good use of dynamics and clear intonation. The many pupils who are in the choir sing very well indeed. The school arranges a programme of concerts where children perform to parents and the community. This offers the children many opportunities to develop their performing skills and enhances their progress in the subject. They respond well to being in front of an audience and perform with energy, enthusiasm and skill.

170. As a result of the strong leadership provided by the co-ordinator, teachers have increased their expertise and become more confident. This ensures that teaching is good and that pupils are developing their skills as they move through the school. The curriculum is good and includes a wide range of different styles of music and music from many cultures. The specialist music teacher has very good subject knowledge and high expectations. Her teaching is very good. She infects the pupils with her own enthusiasm and drives them on to more and more ambitious work. They respond very well and this helps them to achieve very well and attain highly. Class teachers have a sound knowledge and understanding of the subject. Lessons are carefully planned and well resourced and, where possible, linked to other curriculum areas, such as literacy. At present, teachers assess pupils' progress informally during the lessons, but assessment information is not used well to support their learning. The hall is used as a music area when needed and the school has purchased a good range of new instruments that support the curriculum very effectively.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Strengths:

- Relationships with pupils are good.
- Accommodation and resources are good, including swimming.

Areas for Improvement:

- The recording and use of assessment.

171. At the end of Year 2, attainment is average in physical education and all pupils achieve satisfactorily, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language (EAL). The higher attaining pupils show good balance and control and good ball skills, including striking, catching and throwing. The standards have improved since the last inspection. By the end of Year 6, attainment is above average. All pupils swim unaided and safely, for example. They achieve well. Discussion with pupils revealed that, in gymnastics, they can devise and perform a series of movements, including rolls, with balance and confidence, most concluding with a good finishing position. In games, all pupils understand the basic rules, and play as part of a team with awareness of others. Overall, their skills are above average. The older pupils compete very successfully against neighbouring schools in a variety of sports.

172. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, the majority of pupils of all abilities have made good progress, their skills, knowledge and understanding improving over time. During lessons, pupils make good progress, helped by the teaching points that guide them on techniques. Teachers assess their pupils' performance and give them feedback, though the assessment is not recorded. Pupils also assess their own performance and that of others. Pupils with special needs (SEN) are integrated well into the lessons and make good progress.

173. All pupils fully understand the health-related benefits of exercise to improve their fitness, and know the effect of vigorous exercise on their bodies. In all the lessons seen, pupils were keen to take part and all wore the appropriate kit. Behaviour is good, and pupils are polite and courteous. They work well together in small groups, taking turns and co-operating. They appreciate each other's efforts and sometimes applaud particularly good achievement.

174. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers have a good rapport with pupils and make clear their high expectations of standards of participation and behaviour. There is good emphasis on the need for pupils to improve the quality of their performance. In all lessons, teachers plan the activities well and use resources well. Equipment, which is of good quality, is set up in advance. Teachers demonstrate well, so that the pupils can see clearly what they are expected to do. They praise good attainment, and this helps to sustain pupils' positive attitudes and so encourages them to make good progress.

175. The subject is led well by an enthusiastic co-ordinator. She monitors planning across the school and supports and guides teachers.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Strengths:

- There is good teaching of Christianity and this enables pupils to develop better understanding in this aspect of religious education.
- The contribution the subject makes to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in the school.

Areas for Improvement:

- Implementing the new Agreed Syllabus.

176. The school states that it follows the locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education. The work of pupils in Years 1 and 2 shows that in their case it does, and standards at the end of Year 2 are in line with those expected by the syllabus for pupils of this age. Work for pupils in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 is planned in a variety of ways. The work for Year 3 is based on a published cross-curricular scheme. The work for Year 4 and for some pupils in Year 5 is drawn upon some units of the work from the national guidelines. There was no planning for Year 6 pupils and for the Year 5 pupils in their class, and no work in their books. The vicar of the local church teaches these pupils for half of each term and there is a list of the topic for each lesson. There is no teaching of religious education for the other half of each term. Discussion with Year 6 pupils revealed that they had good recall of recent work, but were less clear about what they had learnt in the two previous terms. Through Years 3 to 6, the planning is not coherent and does not cover all aspects of the locally Agreed Syllabus. Attainment at the end of Year 6 is below expectations.

177. At the end of Year 2, pupils know of the major festivals of the Christian year such as Christmas, Easter, Epiphany and Advent. They have a good knowledge of many Bible stories, especially from the New Testament, and of the main features of religious buildings. Pupils know the main features of a church and that people in other religions have different special places where they worship and special books that they use.

178. At the end of Year 6, the pupils understand that Jewish people have different festivals from Christian ones, though some happen about the same time of year. They can relate the story of Christmas to the stories of the birth of major figures in other religions, such as Krishna and Muhammed. They also know the stories of patriarchs such as Abraham and Joseph.

179. Pupils enjoy religious education and recall stories in detail, but achievement is inconsistent; it is satisfactory through Years 1 to 4, but not in Years 5 and 6.

180. Teaching in the only lesson seen, which was in Year 2, was satisfactory. Pupils had previously visited the local church where the vicar had explained the functions of the main features of the building. In the lesson, the pupils had to match the photographs of themselves in the church with the name of the feature they were next to, such as pew, altar, or font. These resources were well prepared. Pupils did this well and some of them could remember the functions in detail. The presence of the vicar to reinforce previous teaching was a strength of the lesson.

181. Resources are satisfactory. However, there is not a co-ordinator for the subject and so teaching has not been monitored. Planning, though given in, is not monitored. There is no assessment procedure. Leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory.