

INSPECTION REPORT

STOGUMBER C of E FIRST SCHOOL

Stogumber

LEA area: Somerset

Unique reference number: 123774

Headteacher: Mrs Joy Bell

Reporting inspector: Mr Fred Riches
23235

Dates of inspection: 5 - 7 November 2001

Inspection number: 196936

Short inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: First
School category: Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils: 4 - 9
Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Station Road
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Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Cliff Matravers

Date of previous inspection: 9 - 11 June 1997

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This Church of England Voluntary Controlled school has 31 boys and girls on roll aged four to nine, two more than at the last inspection, with a fairly even gender balance. All come from Stogumber and the surrounding area. Pupils are all of white United Kingdom origin. Their attainment on entry to the school in the current year is average, but in some recent years it has been below average. Three per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals. This is below average. The school has 38 per cent of pupils on its register of special educational need. This is above average. No pupils have statements of special educational need.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

With sound leadership and teaching, the school provides an appropriate all-round education, ensuring that the very small number of pupils in each year group achieve satisfactorily by the time they leave the school. The school offers very good care and guidance and ensures positive personal development for all its pupils. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to work are positive; they enjoy school and relate well to each other and adults as a result of the school's good arrangements for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, together with very good care and guidance;
- Teachers and support staff show very good knowledge of the pupils, planning thoroughly for small groups and for individual needs;
- An effective partnership with parents involves them fully in supporting their children's learning;
- The school is efficiently managed, well staffed and makes thoughtful use of funding.

What could be improved

- The quality of pupils' writing, including more regular opportunities to write for different audiences and purposes;
- Pupils' ability to explain their mathematical understanding and use mental agility;
- Systematic checking of how well the school is doing by the headteacher, teaching staff and governors, in order to ensure that agreed, appropriately high expectations for all pupils are met;
- The way the daily timetable is organised, in order to use time more efficiently.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in June 1997, when leadership, teaching and pupils' progress were judged to be good during a time of stable staffing. Teaching and leadership are currently satisfactory, as is pupils' achievement. The current position, following staffing upheaval in the last two years, represents a decline in the school's performance. The school has, however, recovered from the considerable upheaval, which parents and governors feel had a detrimental effect on pupils. Inspectors are confident that the new headteacher's clear educational direction and the dedication and commitment of all staff place the school in a good position to make necessary improvements.

STANDARDS

Because there are fewer than 11 pupils in each year group, this summary does not include a table showing the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on National Curriculum test results in comparison with national statistics and similar schools.

Standards at ages seven and nine in 1997, at the last inspection, were described as good. Results fell in 1998 and remained lower in 1999. They rose in 2000 and fell again in 2001. One or two pupil's results in such small year groups represent a large enough percentage to effect a change from well above to well below the national average. Standards at Stogumber vary considerably from year to year because the proportion of higher attainers and pupils with special educational needs varies.

The school rightly concentrates on comparing each individual child's attainment on entry to the school and tracking their progress throughout their time at Stogumber, using statutory and optional tests to check teachers' own assessments. Standards towards the end of the reception year in 1997 were deemed average by the previous inspection. Standards achieved by this year group as seven-year-olds in 1999 suggest considerable underachievement during the intervening two years. However, the school's records show that those pupils who had been in Year 2 at Stogumber in 1999 and were in Year 4 in 2001 had made good progress overall in English and mathematics by the time they moved on to middle school.

Results of national tests for seven-year-olds in 2000 show pupils achieving better in reading than in writing and mathematics. Standards seen in the work of current Year 4 pupils broadly reflect this pattern, though the content of their writing and the accuracy of their written mathematics have improved. Standards vary considerably between year groups. Pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is average in the current reception year and in Year 4. It is below average overall in Years 1, 2 and 3 because of the higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Using assessment scores to predict future attainment, teachers set individual targets and adjust termly objectives in individual education plans. (Over 50 per cent of pupils in Years 1 and 2 are on the school's register of special educational needs.)

Inspection findings show that boys and girls of all abilities throughout the school achieve satisfactorily in speaking and listening and in reading. They do not all make sufficient progress in writing and the mental aspects of numeracy, however. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 do not have sufficient, regular opportunity to express themselves in their own original writing and standards in handwriting are not as good as they should be in Years 3 and 4. Pupils' written mathematics is accurate, but their ability to explain their mental calculations and their use of mental recall are also weaknesses. Not all pupils therefore achieve as well as they should in these areas. From samples of work and the few lessons seen, pupils are judged to be making satisfactory progress overall in science and other National Curriculum subjects.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils enjoy school. They concentrate well and show interest in lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. In lessons, at break times and around the school, all pupils behave well.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils mix well across the whole age range. They collaborate well in pairs and groups. A few lack the confidence or focus to work independently for sustained periods.
Attendance	Good. Currently above the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 4
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

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.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall throughout the school. Within this general picture there are strengths and weaknesses. Relationships are good and tasks are well matched to pupils' needs. In the best lessons, the tasks stimulate pupils' interests, as when older pupils created a play script or designed an advertisement for a new swimming pool. Teachers plan lessons very thoroughly, especially for literacy and numeracy. Lesson plans contain the main objectives and teachers share these regularly with the pupils, though they do not always remember to review with the pupils whether these have been met. Teachers deploy assistants carefully, with particularly thorough briefing for assistants working among the three different year groups in one class. The shared responsibilities for working with reception pupils are particularly well defined. The very favourable adult-pupil ratio is mainly a positive feature, offering good opportunities for pupils to ask questions and explain what they are doing. The school needs to guard against younger pupils receiving insufficient opportunity to develop the skills of sustained independent concentration, however. Many show a readiness to seek adult help rather than find ways of tackling a task. Teachers' selection of resources and equipment mainly supports learning well, but the choice and use of some poor quality worksheets leads to occasional unsatisfactory teaching and learning. Teachers set a steady pace to lessons, but do not involve pupils sufficiently in organising their time, setting clear time limits for example and clarifying expectations for the amount and quality of work to be achieved. This allows pupils to work at a less than satisfactory pace on occasion. Teachers give good attention to phonics, reading skills and spelling, but not enough to original writing, especially in Years 1 and 2, or to handwriting throughout the school. Teachers focus appropriately on developing pupils' mathematical knowledge, skills and understanding through the use of equipment and written recording, but pupils' weak knowledge and skills in mental and oral mathematics shows that teaching in these areas has not been sufficiently effective. Teachers' marking is sound, but their feedback during lessons is currently more effective, giving appropriate encouragement, as well as clear and effective guidance for improvement. Overall, teachers' detailed planning, together with their close knowledge of every individual, ensures that they focus on the needs of pupils of all abilities.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Meets requirements. Broad and balanced over the year for all pupils. Some stimulating activities, but some inefficient use of time, with literacy and numeracy filling most mornings.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. Good planning, individual attention and sharing of information with parents, but insufficiently tight monitoring and reviewing of outcomes and pupils' progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The school plans well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It encourages positive attitudes towards cultural diversity. It needs to offer more opportunities for younger pupils to show independence and initiative.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very well. Child protection procedures are secure and all staff know pupils well and provide a very good level of care.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory. Strengths include good consultation and communication, well-organised procedures and a clear educational vision. The main area for development is the monitoring of pupils' achievement.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactorily. Governors are very supportive, visit the school regularly and have clear procedures. Monitoring is not sufficiently rigorous.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The priorities set are appropriate, but outcomes are not rigorously checked in order to gauge effectiveness.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school makes effective use of funding, especially specific grants, for additional staffing, training, accommodation and information and communication technology development. The school applies the principles of best value appropriately.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents returned 20 of the questionnaires sent out and 14 parents attended the meeting.

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teaching is good and children are making good progress (100%) Behaviour in the school is good (100%) Parents feel comfortable approaching the school (100%) The school helps children become mature and expects them to work hard (95%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 25% feel their children do not get the right amount of work to do at home. When asked if the school provides an interesting range of additional activities outside school, 15% tend to disagree.

Replies to all other questions show 90% positive response from parents.

The inspection agrees that behaviour is good and that headteacher and staff are very approachable. It finds teaching and learning satisfactory. The school provides well for pupils' personal development overall, but needs to encourage greater independence and use of initiative in order to develop their maturity. The inspection largely agrees with the positive views expressed by parents, especially about the school's caring attitude and the family atmosphere created, resulting from the staff's openness and their close knowledge of the children. The school's arrangements for homework are clear, but could focus more on agreed class, group and individual targets. The inspection finds that the school has very good links with the community and church and that, working together, the community, church and school provide as good a range of activities as can be expected in a small community.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to work are positive; they enjoy school and relate well to each other and adults as a result of the school's good arrangements for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, together with very good care and guidance.

1 In lessons, at break times and around the school, all pupils behave well. Pupils play together and relate well to each other across the whole age range, in the playground and at lunch in the large classroom. In this small community every individual is valued and as a result pupils are happy and secure at school. The whole staff work together to ensure that everyone working with individuals knows of any particular medical or emotional needs. Child protection procedures are secure and the school provides a very good level of care.

2 Teachers and visiting speakers plan opportunities in collective worship for pupils to reflect and experience a sense of wonder when looking at the natural world. The school's rules and behaviour code are well known by all staff and pupils. Younger pupils have written their own personal targets, which include several showing their enthusiasm to work harder and do their best. The school is involving pupils successfully in developing positive attitudes and staff provide good, calm role models, as they help pupils to understand the rules of discussion and the difference between right and wrong. The school plans well for pupils' social development in the main, offering regular opportunities to work in pairs and groups and giving pupils the chance to participate in regular sporting, musical and cultural activities with the local cluster of schools. The school also gives older pupils the chance to participate in a short annual residential visit, again with the local schools cluster. It offers good opportunities to raise pupils' awareness and develop positive attitudes towards cultural diversity in British society. A display of pupils' paintings shows the school making positive use of Aboriginal artefacts brought in by pupils and a striking display of posters and religious artefacts raises pupils' awareness of major world religions. Another cluster group activity shows the school joining positively with others in Somerset to develop pupils' understanding of the pluralist nature of wider British society in a mainly white, traditionally Christian, rural area.

3 As a result of the very good levels of care and the positive provision for their personal development, pupils enjoy school. They concentrate well and show positive attitudes through the way they settle at the start of the day and the interest they show in lessons. They listen well and many readily volunteer their comments and ideas. They usually collaborate well when asked to work in pairs and groups. A few tend to fuss a little if they are not sure what to do, but several older pupils show a capacity to think, discuss and record joint ideas and views over a sustained period. A few younger pupils appear to lack the confidence to work independently for sustained periods, tending to rely too much on the ready supply of adults available for support. A few of the older pupils also show a lack of initiative on occasion, asking for clarification rather than trying to read through instructions and show initiative. Overall, however, pupils show responsibility and are sensible in the way they carry out routine organisational tasks and duties, older pupils seeing the humour in their designation as 'slaves' during the current study of Romans.

Teachers and support staff show very good knowledge of the pupils, planning thoroughly for small groups and for individual needs.

4 All staff know all pupils well. Teachers' planning systems are very thorough. In a small school, the critical element of planning is in the ability to match support and challenge for pupils in different year groups and of wide-ranging ability. The school ensures that its planning links closely with that of other first schools in the cluster and that the curriculum

leads appropriately into that planned for the middle school at Danesfield. It shows appropriate coverage of all National Curriculum subjects and religious education. Half-termly planning shows the objectives to be met by each year group and teachers then concentrate on pupils' needs at individual and small group level when drawing up detailed weekly plans. Alongside the lesson plans, teachers have drawn up individual education plans, setting distinct targets for all pupils. Currently, these plans are drawn up at the start of each term.

5 A particular strength in the planning for pupils in the reception year and Years 1 and 2 is the clear briefing of teaching assistants and volunteers. In particular, the precise tasks to be undertaken and the resources to be used, together with clear definition of the associated teaching and learning focus, are handed to each assistant at the start of the morning, with due opportunity for clarification with the teacher. These ensure that each pupil's needs are being addressed. For example, in one literacy lesson observed, during the group activity time, two pupils worked with a volunteer, four with one assistant, five with another, and five with the teacher, thus ensuring close support and focused attention on appropriately matched tasks for all. The only danger of such an excellent adult-pupil ratio, as staff are aware, is that pupils become over-reliant on the adult support. The inspection found good evidence of effective teaching and learning associated with spelling and phonics in this small group situation, but not enough evidence of activities such as extended writing, which require adult support only before and after a sustained period of independent work.

6 The headteacher is also making good use of assessment scores to predict pupils' attainment. The school has a clear picture of each pupil's progress from a baseline test shortly after entry to the school through to the most recent set of tests used in summer 2001. The information system used to collate this information is relatively new and with the headteacher in post only a year, the school has not had time to use the information gained to ask probing questions about the rate of progress made by individual pupils. When the inspection team tracked the most recent year group to pass through the school, it found a pattern that fitted the picture parents had of a relative decline during the recent staffing upheaval followed by a recovery by the time the year group left the school. The tracking and assessment systems enable the school to identify early pupils with special educational needs and any who have particular gifts and talents.

7 The school has put considerable time and effort into the creation of individual education plans for every pupil. The detail of these shows the teaching staff's commitment and dedication to doing their best for each pupil. The inspection acknowledges the positive effect of time spent setting up these plans and the openness with which they are shared with parents. Current procedures allow too long a focus on specific targets, however, which are not replaced soon enough. The school does not yet have agreed procedures for checking and noting the outcomes of the strategies in order to plan the next areas of focus. The school now needs to review this important feature of its work in terms of effectiveness and manageability.

An effective partnership with parents involves them fully in supporting their children's learning.

8 All parents at the meeting and the vast majority who returned questionnaires speak very highly of the headteacher and staff. They feel welcome at the school. They know they can mention any concerns and that the staff will listen and take action. They know that the staff know their children well and care for them. They recognise the commitment that staff bring to the school and community. The inspection endorses these views fully.

9 The school gives full and detailed annual reports on pupils' progress and produces interim reports on pupils with special educational needs, which again show very good knowledge of

the individuals concerned. The individual education plan set up in April and again in September for each pupil was shared with the respective parents, enabling them to know what was to be the focus at school, suggesting an area for them to support and setting targets for each child. This detailed documentation gives parents confidence in the staff and welcomes them as co-educators. The school's readiness to see parents informally and additional termly opportunities for formal discussion of progress add to the very good level of information and consultation the school offers parents.

10 Despite this, a small percentage of parents are not fully happy with homework arrangements. These are clear and the homework set is effective in supporting pupils' learning in particular areas, especially reading. Most parents at the meeting supported the school's approach to homework, stressing the need for their children to undertake activities outside school. The inspection concludes that the school has adequate homework arrangements, but that in the context of a review of teaching and learning in writing and mathematics, a look at the nature, quantity and balance of homework activities is appropriate.

The school is efficiently managed, well staffed and makes thoughtful use of funding

11 The headteacher has worked extremely hard to put in place management systems which provide the essential structures underpinning day-to-day teaching and learning. As a result of the staffing upheaval and the lack of continuity at a time of rapid national change, systems previously in place needed renewing or changing. The headteacher has instigated and almost completed a complete review of the schools' management and curriculum policies, introduced a series of measures to improve planning and developed much tighter systems for tracking the results of tests.

12 Whilst all key issues from the previous inspection had been addressed before her arrival, the headteacher undertook a thorough review of the school's strengths and weaknesses and drew up an appropriate draft development plan for staff and governor approval. This needs some adjustment to enable governors to monitor progress through the plan, but it embraces all aspects of the school's work, gives details of improvements to be made in the current year and sets out an appropriate longer term view. It is well supported by the school's budget planning.

13 A particular strength of the school's financial management is the way the school allocates funding for training, additional support, improved resources and better accommodation. National initiatives over recent years have made more funding available directly to schools. The headteacher has used these funding initiatives to guide governors towards appointing more assistants and to train them to give additional support in literacy. She has also encouraged wise use of parents' and friends' funds to update and enhance the school's provision for information and communication technology. Further good use of funds from national initiatives is planned to train staff in making best use of ICT equipment and programs. The school is also planning appropriately to re-site its office and reception area at the entrance to the school and to improve toilet and cloakroom provision, currently inappropriately sited adjacent to the entrance hall.

14 The headteacher receives good support in the day-to-day management of administration and finance from the administrative officer, who fulfils a vital role. Her efficiency takes a considerable burden off the shoulders of a headteacher who teaches a class for four days a week and has just one day to manage the functions of leadership.

15 One positive outcome of the wise spending decisions is the very positive adult-pupil ratio. The school's 31 pupils benefit from the attention of the headteacher, one full-time and one part-time teacher and four teaching assistants working a total of 52 hours. Together with the

ready support of volunteers from the community, this offers pupils very positive opportunities for individual attention.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The quality of pupils' writing, by providing more regular opportunity to write for different audiences and purposes.

16 The school has already recognised the need to set writing as a priority by including it in the current year's development plan. A thorough inspection of pupils' written work shows a positive focus on the teaching of phonics, spelling and comprehension, but insufficient opportunity for pupils to express themselves through descriptions, accounts, reports and story-writing. They spend plenty of time on exercises to improve their knowledge, understanding and skills in literacy, but little in applying these in their own original writing. The lack of opportunity to express themselves is having a detrimental effect on their progress in writing, particularly in Years 1 and 2. Pupils throughout the school need more regular opportunity to organise their writing for a range of purposes.

17 Displays of work and books of pupils in Years 3 and 4 include examples of stimulating writing activities, which effectively develop pupils' powers of written expression. These include the letters from Bob Cratchet to a friend about Scrooge and the retelling of the story of Scrooge in three chapters. In these pieces, pupils clearly enjoyed using powerful vocabulary, showing their understanding of the characteristics of the miser and his employee. 'Scrooge is mean, miserable and grumpy. I'm petrified of him, terrified of him', wrote one. The pupils in Years 3 and 4 also wrote their impressions following the events of September 11th, the school giving them the opportunity to express their feelings and fears personally. During a literacy lesson observed, one pupil wrote an effective series of bullet points advertising the attractions of a new swimming pool in Watchet and read these persuasively to the class. A number of Year 4 pupils created interesting points for their advertisements, but overall the pace of pupils' writing was slow and many showed themselves to be hesitant writers, in need of more regular practice to develop fluency.

18 Booklets containing sentences about Guy Fawkes were displayed in the younger pupils' classroom, but the main focus of recorded work in pupils' books and on worksheets was spelling and phonic exercises. Pupils show appropriate knowledge of phonics and spelling and they are making at least satisfactory progress with their reading. However, pupils' books in Years 1 and 2 show few examples of writing for a genuine purpose or audience. Alongside the many worksheets from the first half term, for example, are just five short pieces of original writing. The school's expectations are not high enough in this area. There are insufficient samples to track pupils' progress and where pupils of higher ability show good expression, they are not currently challenged enough in this aspect of their work.

19 The school is also not looking carefully enough at the quality of worksheets chosen for activities in different subjects. These all require literacy skills. Among those seen, sheets used in numeracy lessons were mainly of good quality, requiring careful reading and comprehension. A few literacy worksheets also served to stimulate positive use of vocabulary, replacing 'weak' adjectives such as 'nice' for example. Many, however, result in untidy completion and careless letter formation by the pupils, who clearly do not value them as something worthy of care. In one example used with older pupils, the worksheet used was confusing to both staff and pupils and resulted in slow progress and unsatisfactory learning.

20 Pupils' handwriting practice books showed some careful letter formation, but this is not yet being transferred to their writing. Examples on display in Years 3 and 4 show few pupils joining letters and there is considerable variety in the standard of pupils' handwriting, with many older pupils still printing. Pupils' handwriting and presentation skills need development throughout the school.

Pupils' ability to explain their mathematical understanding and use mental recall

21 Pupils' written work in mathematics shows them making solid progress in their understanding of counting, number patterns, the positioning of tens and units and then hundreds and thousands. Most older pupils use paper and pencil methods appropriately to work out calculations. They show a growing understanding of how to read, understand and solve mathematical problems, working out what kind of calculation is needed to find the answer.

22 Standards reached vary year on year, with good results in 2000 both preceded and followed by poor results. In such small year groups, such comparative results are not of themselves significant. Taken alone, they can be misleading. The headteacher has rightly tightened the school's assessment processes so that the school has a clear picture of each pupil's progress in reading, writing and mathematics year on year, with a clear prediction for each pupil of what should be achieved by the end of the current year. This level of rigour is required in a small school setting, as only by tracking each pupil's individual progress can staff, governors and parents gain a picture of the school's effectiveness. As outlined in the summary report, pupils who left the school in summer 2001 had made satisfactory progress overall during their time at Stogumber, but this included some apparently unsatisfactory achievement during at least part of their reception and infant years, followed by good achievement during their two junior years.

23 Discussions with pupils and observations of them answering questions in lessons show weaknesses in two specific areas of mathematics. Firstly, the skills and knowledge of the large majority of pupils in Years 3 and 4 in terms of mental calculation and use of known number facts is poor. Given a grid showing the use of the two, three, four and five times table, most chose to count their fingers or objects to complete the grid. Pupils of this age are expected to remember these tables, along with addition and subtraction facts to 20, and to begin to use mental agility to calculate more efficiently. Very few pupils are able to work out that if $8 \times 3 = 24$, for example, 24 shared among 3 gives each person 8. In the lessons observed, the mental and oral sessions at the start of lessons did not challenge pupils to respond in a quick-fire manner to known number facts. Also, during the lessons, teachers tended to help pupils explain their thinking rather than requiring them to explain their understanding and the way their own mental strategies worked. In order to raise standards in mathematics and particularly in the knowledge, understanding and use of number skills, the school needs to build pupils' confidence in their mathematical ability. Regular review of learned number facts is one aspect of this and regular opportunity to explain to each other and to adults 'how I worked it out' is another.

Systematic checking of how well the school is doing by the headteacher, teaching staff and governors, in order to ensure that agreed, appropriately high expectations for all pupils are met.

24 Two parental comments at the preliminary meeting gave the inspection team particularly positive views of the school's work. One parent explained how well a more able child had been challenged and had fulfilled the potential to work at a level more typical of an 11-year-old. The other spoke of a child who could hardly make eye contact when starting school and whose confidence had been boosted and who was now enjoying school, readily participating in discussion and making good strides with reading.

25 The headteacher has developed rigorous procedures for planning individual education programmes with termly targets and for tracking pupils' progress by comparing test results. These procedures have had clear benefits as already outlined in this commentary. At the

same time, the information gathered in order to plan is not yet being used as effectively as it could be.

26 The individual education plans set up in April 2001 list a series of targets to be achieved (for example 'know numbers to 10 and initial letter sounds'). They go on to set 'achievement criteria' ('accurate when tested 3 times', for example), resources and techniques to be used individually and possible strategies to be used in a class setting. Each plan also includes ideas for the use of a teaching assistant, suggestions for parents and suggestions for the pupil.

27 The plans list quite specific targets and these are suitable for pupils with special educational needs. The time committed to formulating a plan for every pupil is only efficient if the plans are all-embracing in their coverage of reading, writing and numeracy. Currently the planning for literacy and numeracy lessons rightly takes precedence over the targets in the individual education plans. For many pupils, these appear to be set up but not followed through. For example, there is no clearly defined continuity between the plans set up in April and those set up in September. The success of the April strategies in helping pupils reach the targets set has not been made explicit.

28 Inspectors noted two points for improvement. Firstly, the success of the programmes set up for pupils with special educational needs is not being monitored sufficiently rigorously. Secondly, the tracking of most pupils' progress in developing literacy and numeracy skills would be more efficiently achieved by using the National Curriculum level targets set and highlighting pupils' progress against these. The school's planning for literacy and numeracy covers the curriculum well. The individual education plan assessments only cover a small part of what each pupil needs to learn.

29 Currently, the staff are not looking at pupils' work in a sufficiently systematic way to check that it shows appropriate progress and that there is sufficient evidence of work in each subject. Teachers' detailed planning ensures day-to-day coverage of each aspect of literacy and numeracy, for example, but without periodic checks, there is no guarantee that the coverage is resulting in sufficient progress for all pupils. Inspection findings show insufficient opportunity for pupils to write, for example, with insufficient progress by some pupils, despite the daily focus and high time allocation to literacy. Without clear procedures for monitoring pupils' progress in their written work, the headteacher will be unable to report from a secure evidence base on the success of the targets set in the school's development plan.

30 In a small school, governors cannot easily make use of comparative statistics to help judge the school's performance. At Stogumber, as in all small schools, governors rely on information from the staff in order to check the school's effectiveness. The headteacher has put considerable effort into tracking pupils' progress since their entry to the school. This information had not been readily available to share with governors. Information on standards and the tracking of pupils' progress needs to be shared with caution, in order to avoid identifying pupils. However, the use of assessment information together with predictions of future attainment can now help governors to use hard evidence in order to gauge the school's success, particularly in the critical areas of reading, writing and mathematics.

31 At present, the governors' views of the school stem largely from their knowledge of the working ethos and happy atmosphere, which they gain through their own regular visits and from parents' views, shared openly in the village community. These present a very favourable picture. They are a valid element in coming to a view of the school's effectiveness, but not sufficient alone. The school development plan sets appropriate priorities, including the monitoring and evaluation of writing, but procedures for measuring, checking and reviewing the success of each target are not sufficiently rigorous. It is not

clear, for example, how the governors will measure whether 'children have access to a well-planned, broad, balanced and challenging curriculum', one of the success criteria. The intention to monitor effectiveness is clear from the plan, but the systems for monitoring are too vague. The school is not setting clearly measurable criteria against all of its priorities, in order to check that it is meeting its targets. Without these, the governors have to rely too much on shared opinion and a 'feel' for the school.

The way the daily timetable is organised, in order to use time more efficiently

32 The school has an intricate balancing act to perform in order to ensure that all pupils have their entitlement to the full National Curriculum. The thoughtful arrangements whereby the whole school travels one morning weekly for two terms to Knights Templar for swimming and physical education solve the difficult small school challenge for these aspects of the curriculum. The school's imaginative use of time in the third term ensures that any shortfall in time allocated during the rest of the year to subjects such as design and technology and geography is redeemed.

33 Alongside these positive features, the current curriculum consists of a narrow programme of literacy and numeracy on four mornings a week. The school morning is three hours in length and the literacy and numeracy lessons do not require more than 1 hour 45 minutes. There is scope for more imaginative use of the morning session. Even allowing for a break and collective worship, a further 45 minutes is available. While this could on some days be spent on additional English or mathematics, the school may wish to consider opportunities for contrasting activities, with additional shorter opportunities for developing specific speaking, listening, reading and writing skills during the afternoon sessions. Current arrangements allow pupils too much time to complete group activities or encourage teachers to spend an unnecessarily long time introducing or summarising learning. The numeracy lesson particularly demands a quite tightly structured approach, with the setting of time limits a useful tool in encouraging concentrated effort. Another area yet to be fully developed by the school is the application of numeracy in other subjects. Similarly, in Years 1 and 2, there are few examples, other than the work on Guy Fawkes, of children developing their literacy skills in other subjects. In reviewing the overall time spent in literacy and numeracy, the school needs to look at the balance of active and sitting down pursuits and the kind of activities which parents might be involved in with their children at home.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

34 In order to raise standards and improve the quality of education offered, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- (1) improve the quality of pupils' writing by:
 - encouraging pupils to create their own original writing more regularly;
 - teaching handwriting skills and challenging pupils to apply these in their day-to-day writing;
 - sampling and reviewing children's writing samples jointly on a regular basis;

(Reference paragraphs 16-20)

- (2) improve pupils' ability to explain their mathematical understanding by:
 - asking pupils to explain regularly to each other how they work out their calculations, sharing a range of strategies;
 - developing pupils' mental recall of addition and subtraction number facts, tables and other mental skills;

(Reference paragraphs 21-23)

- (3) improve the monitoring of the school's performance and of pupils' work in order to set appropriately high expectations by:
 - sharpening the focus and tightening the success criteria in the school's development plan;
 - using analysis of the results of tests and work reviewed to check the school's effectiveness;
 - using information from tests and reviews of work to set specific targets for pupils with special educational needs and agree next steps in literacy and numeracy for other pupils;

(Reference paragraphs 24-31)

- (4) Make more efficient and imaginative use of time by:
 - reorganising the timetable so that literacy and numeracy lessons do not take up the full teaching time available in morning sessions;
 - quickening the pace of these lessons to improve focus and raise pupils' own expectations;
 - creating a better daily balance between active and sitting down pursuits.

(Reference paragraphs 32-33)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	8
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	19

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	0	2	5	1	0	0
Percentage	0	0	25	62.5	12.5	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than 12%.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (Full Time Equivalent for part-time pupils)	31
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	1
Special educational needs	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	12
English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0
Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	4
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.7
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

No table of comparative standards is included in this report. The legal minimum number of pupils per year group for publishing comparisons of data on standards is set at 11. The size of year groups currently at Stogumber ranges from two pupils to eight.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	29
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR– Y4

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	2.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	14.1
Average class size	15.5

Education support staff: Y[R– Y4

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	52

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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000
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	£
Total income	142142
Total expenditure	127542
Expenditure per pupil	3543
Balance brought forward from previous year	9318
Balance carried forward to next year	23918

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2

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	31
Number of questionnaires returned	20

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	60	35	0	5	0
My child is making good progress in school.	55	45	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	75	25	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	50	25	20	5	0
The teaching is good.	75	25	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	80	10	5	5	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	95	5	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	75	20	0	0	5
The school works closely with parents.	80	10	10	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	75	15	5	5	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	70	25	0	0	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	45	40	15	0	0

Other issues raised by parents

Parents at the meeting were very pleased with the way the school helps their children to learn and involves them in this. They felt that some year groups had suffered from the almost total changeover of teaching staff within a year.