

INSPECTION REPORT

SOMERTON INFANT SCHOOL

Somerton

LEA area: Somerset

Unique reference number: 123661

Headteacher: Brenda Quinton-Tulloch

Reporting inspector: Rowena Onions
18354

Dates of inspection: 26th-29th November 2001

Inspection number: 197573

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
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4-7 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Etsome Terrace Somerton Somerset
Postcode:	TA11 6LY
Telephone number:	01458 272537
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Tracy Gosden
Date of previous inspection:	September 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
18354	Rowena Onions	Registered inspector	English Art and design Information and communication technology Music Religious education The foundation stage Special educational needs	The characteristics and effectiveness of the school The school's results and pupils' achievements Teaching and learning Leadership and management
19727	Eric Langford	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development Partnership with parents and carers
15409	Dave Whalley	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Design and technology Geography History Physical education Equal opportunities	Pupils' welfare, health and safety Quality and range of opportunities for learning

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Somerton Infant School is a school of below average size, with 114 pupils on roll. The school caters for pupils from the age of four to seven years, with a broadly equal number of boys and girls. All pupils are of white European heritage. There is one pupil for whom English is an additional language, but this pupil speaks fluent English. The school is situated in the small town of Somerton. The percentage of pupils taking free school meals is near the national average at fifteen per cent. The pupils enter the reception class with a range of attainment but, taken as a whole, this is about average. There are 22 pupils (19 per cent) currently identified on the school's special educational needs register. This is close to the national average. No pupil has a statement of special educational need. The school has pupils with a range of special needs; most of these have mild learning difficulties, but some have more severe physical or behavioural difficulties. Over the last year, the school has experienced considerable disruption. The headteacher was away from the school for two terms taking temporary charge of another school. In addition, two of the four full-time staff have had extended periods of absence due to circumstances beyond their control.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Somerton Infant School is an effective school. Children enter the reception class with average attainments and leave three years later with above average attainments in English and mathematics. The teaching in the school is good overall, being particularly effective in Year 2. The management of the school is satisfactory, but the headteacher has shown energetic, determined and clear-sighted leadership, particularly in ensuring the rise in standards. The loss of direction caused by the absences of the head and staff is now in the past and the school is once again beginning to make improvements. Pupils like the school, try very hard and behave very well. Due to the well above average costs of the school, it gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils attain well above average standards in English and above average standards in mathematics.
- The overall quality of teaching and learning is good in Years 1 and 2 when taken as a whole.
- As a result of very good social and moral education, pupils' behaviour is very good. They try very hard with their work and strive to do well.
- The school takes good care of its pupils. Each is known and nurtured in a safe and secure environment.
- The headteacher is dedicated and very hardworking. She has a clear vision for the education to be provided for the pupils. She is committed to raising standards and is beginning to lead the school forward once again.
- The governors are very involved with the life of the school. They actively help to promote the good standards and the quality of care provided.

What could be improved

- The quality of the education provided for children in the reception year does not sufficiently reflect current national guidance and does not fully meet the needs of the children.
- Standards in science are not high enough.
- Not all pupils in the age groups that are split between classes achieve as well as they could.
- The roles of the subject co-ordinators are not well enough defined or developed. Co-ordinators are not playing a large enough role in the management of the school.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the last inspection in September 1997, the school has made satisfactory improvement. Standards in English and mathematics have risen substantially. There is improved quality of information for parents and improved pastoral care. The school has given attention to the matters outlined in the last report. The school development plan is improved, but is in need of further improvement. More teachers are involved with the monitoring of the work of the school, however this too is in need of further work. The school brochure now meets requirements. The rate of recent improvement has, however, been hindered by the staffing problems identified above.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards attained by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
reading	C	C	B	A
writing	C	B	A	A
mathematics	D	C	D	E

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

Standards in reading and writing are rising pleasingly, there is a general improving trend in English. The findings of the inspection are in line with the results outlined above. Standards in reading in Year 1 are above average. Pupils' attainment is improving in Year 2 and should be well above average by the end of the year. Standards in Year 1 in writing are average. This is because, although pupils have good spelling and handwriting skills, they are not taught how to use these in pieces of work and are not given enough opportunity to write independently. Pupils in Year 2, however, are making very rapid progress. They are already attaining above average standards and are set to attain well above average standards by the end of the year. Since the last inspection, the school's results in mathematics had remained at or just below the national average. The school has recently placed a focus on improving the quality of mathematics and standards are now rising speedily. A good number of Year 2 pupils are already attaining the standard usually expected at the end of the year and should attain above average standards by that time. The pupils achieve well in mathematics and reading in both years; their achievement is satisfactory in writing in Year 1 and very good in Year 2.

Standards in science are below the national average and pupils do not achieve well enough. Some inadequacies in the way the subject is taught are responsible for pupils not doing as well as they should. Because the subjects are well taught, standards in art and music are above average and pupils achieve well in these subjects. In all other subjects, pupils attain average standards and achieve in a satisfactory way.

Children enter the school in the reception year with average attainments. They achieve appropriately in most aspects of their development and, in the main, attain the goals set for the end of the reception year. In their personal, social and emotional development they achieve well and most exceed the goals set. In most aspects of communication, language and literacy the children achieve in a suitable way. In their ability to read and write independently, however, they do not achieve well enough.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils like school and work hard in class. Their enthusiastic attitudes have a very good effect on their learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils' behaviour is very good in class, around the school and in the playground. They are polite and friendly.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils make productive relationships with each other and with adults. Pupils work and play happily together. They learn to take increasing responsibility for helping within the classroom.
Attendance	Good. Attendance is above the national average. There are no recorded incidents of unauthorised absence.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2
Quality of teaching	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.

The quality of teaching and learning for children in their reception year is satisfactory overall. There are some good aspects in the way personal, social and emotional development is taught and supported. Children are well managed and most are happy and settled in school as a consequence. As they become ready, good attention is given to teaching children basic skills in spelling and handwriting. Teaching is sometimes good in the whole-class activities such as those at the beginning of literacy or numeracy lessons. Too little use is made, however, of organised play as a method of teaching and, when play is used, it is too unstructured and without clear purpose. Teachers do not put enough importance on early independence in reading and writing.

Teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 are good overall. Within this, however, there is a significant amount of very good teaching in Year 2 and some aspects of teaching in Year 1 that, require improvement. The very good teaching seen is characterised by very high expectations of effort and attainment. Areas for improvement are in ensuring that there are equally high expectations for all Year 1 pupils, no matter which class they are placed in and in ensuring that each lesson has a single subject focus. Teaching is good in both English and mathematics. Throughout both Year 1 and 2, the daily focus on the basic skills in these subjects pays dividends and pupils make good gains in their knowledge and understanding. Pupils with special educational needs are well taught in class and by teaching assistants. Higher-attaining pupils are well taught in Year 2 in particular because they are correctly challenged and this helps them to learn well. Teaching in most other subjects is at least satisfactory. It is good in music and in most subjects in Year 2. Pupil management is good and pupils respond positively, being well behaved and attentive. Their level of concentration helps them learn well. Teachers are enthusiastic and this enthusiasm is transferred to the pupils, who enjoy most of their work. Teachers organise lessons well in the main, using a good mixture of whole-class teaching, work in groups and individual activities. This is particularly true in Year 2 and is instrumental in ensuring that the pupils make good and sometimes very good progress overall. There is, however, some unsatisfactory organisation in one Year 1 class when pupils are engaged on work in different subjects in the same lesson. This causes a lack of focus and affects attainment. A number of factors including the different expectations in the Year 1 classes, the mixed subject teaching in one class and some lack of understanding on the part of some teachers of the best ways to teach young pupils science combine to make teaching and learning in science unsatisfactory.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The quality of the curriculum for children in the reception year is unsatisfactory because it does not provide sufficiently for independent working and structured play. Insufficient use has been made of national guidance when planning this curriculum. The curriculum for pupils in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory. It has suitable breadth and balance, but is not yet fully meeting the needs of all pupils of the same age in different classes.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The provision is well organised and effective. This helps pupils to make good progress. The school makes good use of its large number of teaching assistants to support pupils with special educational needs.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Throughout the school, good arrangements are made for pupils' personal, social and health education. Very good provision is made for pupils' moral and social development, good provision for spiritual development and satisfactory provision for cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. The school values each pupil as an individual and takes good action to help each mature and develop. The school has suitable child protection procedures and takes very good care to ensure the health and safety of the pupils. Assessment is used appropriately to help teachers to plan work in English and mathematics, but is not systematically used in other subjects.

Overall, links with parents are good. The school tries hard to work in partnership with the parents and is successful with the greater number. It has put in place a number of very positive initiatives, such as encouraging parents to use the school library with their children and arranging curriculum information evenings. These initiatives have met with a mixed response. Parents are very supportive of their child's work at home, however, and this active support promotes better progress.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory overall. The headteacher has shown good leadership in giving a clear direction to the school and in ensuring that standards in English and mathematics have risen over recent years. The subject co-ordination roles of other staff are not, however, sufficiently clearly defined and the contribution that has been made to subject development is very variable.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities well. Through the information they seek and with which they are provided, they are very aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The headteacher and governors and some subject co-ordinators have checked the quality of the teaching and learning in the school and the standards attained. The knowledge gained has been appropriately used to plan for the future. The present school improvement plan is in need of some changes in order that it shows more clearly the areas of improvement to be undertaken in each of the next few years.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school has made good use of the funds available to it. All spending is carefully considered and linked to the priorities identified in

	the school development plan. The principles of 'best value' are established but are not yet fully applied to all areas of the school's work.
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The school has a sufficient number of suitably qualified teachers to provide for the number of pupils in the school. There is a very good number of teaching assistants whose work in supporting teachers contributes positively to the progress the pupils make. The school's accommodation is of very good quality and is very well maintained by the caretaker and cleaning staff. Overall, the school is adequately resourced.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What some parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That children like the school • The progress the children make • That children behave well in the school • The quality of the teaching • That the school expects children to work hard • The way the school helps children to become mature and responsible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The information provided by the school • The approachability of the school • The way the school works with parents • The activities provided outside lessons • The progress that older children make in the mixed-age classes

It should be noted that the above views are representative of the very small number of parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting and/or who returned the inspection questionnaire.

In general, the inspection team agrees with parents' positive views. It judges that the information provided is of good quality. The school makes good efforts to be approachable, but should continue to seek to make all parents feel that this is so. There is only a very small range of activities outside lessons but, as this is not uncommon in infant schools, the provision is judged satisfactory. The team agrees that some children in the mixed-age classes could make better progress.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. In 2001, national tests showed that, when compared with schools nationally, Year 2 pupils attained above average standards in reading and well above average standards in writing. When compared with schools of a similar type, standards in both reading and writing were well above average. These results compare favourably with results at the time of the last inspection. Current inspection evidence shows that the pupils in Year 2 are making very rapid progress and standards should be well above average by the end of the year. Given that pupils enter the school with average attainments, this represents very good achievement in reading and writing. In 2001, standards in mathematics were below those attained nationally and well below those attained in similar schools. This represents little improvement since the last inspection, however current evidence shows that the school focus on mathematics is paying off, that standards are rising and are now above average. Pupils are achieving well. Standards in science were below the national average and standards attained in similar schools and inspection evidence shows that pupils do not do well enough. There are a number of reasons for this, including the lack of recent focus on the subject, the way the subject is taught alongside other subjects in one class and the lack of equality of opportunity for some pupils of the same age group placed in different classes. In no subject is there an identifiable difference between the attainment of girls and boys.
2. Children in the reception year achieve in a satisfactory way in most aspects of their development. By the end of the reception year, they reach the goals set in mathematical, physical and creative development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. Although in most aspects they attain these goals in their communication, language and literacy, there are aspects, for instance their ability to write independently, where they do not reach the set goals. In most ways, pupils are above average and achieve well in their personal, social and emotional development by the end of the reception year.
3. In Years 1 and 2, good emphasis is placed on teaching pupils the basic skills of spelling, punctuation and handwriting. As a result, pupils do well in these aspects of English. By the end of Year 2, pupils can read and write fiction and poetry very well. They can also write for other purposes, for example collecting information and writing recipes, but they require more support when doing this. Pupils are also less sure of how to gain information from non-fiction books. By the age of seven, almost all pupils can read independently and know a range of methods for working out unknown words. Very good attention has been paid to the teaching of phonics. When they read simple texts, pupils can easily combine this skill with recognising words by sight to gain an understanding of the meaning of what they are reading. Pupils generally understand the main points of what they are reading, but, as yet, many find more complex understanding difficult.
4. In mathematics, pupils achieve well especially in number. As they move through the school, daily practice ensures that they steadily gain the ability to use numbers both mentally and in the written form. They learn to count, to add and subtract numbers within 100 and begin to be able to use multiplication and division when solving simple problems. This facility with number should stand them in good stead when they move on to the next stage of their education. Pupils also gain knowledge of aspects of mathematics, such as measurement, shape and space. Most Year 2 pupils, for instance, know the names and simple properties of shapes, can measure with appropriate accuracy and understand and use a satisfactory range of mathematical language.
5. The headteacher has made good use of an analysis of national test results for pupils at the age of seven. The analysis has been used to focus more carefully on aspects of relative weakness in the pupils' attainment. A very careful analysis of the mathematics tests, for example, revealed a weakness in pupils' ability to use different mental strategies when solving mathematical problems. Once identified, teachers re-focused their teaching to concentrate more on the development of these skills, and this has helped to raise the standards of mathematics.

6. Pupils with special educational needs and those of lower ability achieve well because good emphasis is given to providing successful teaching and support. Many attain the expected standards in English and mathematics by the end of Year 2. Good attention is given to ensuring that pupils with behavioural, physical and language difficulties also achieve well. Potentially higher attaining pupils too do well by the end of Year 2 because their teachers hold very high expectations of them. The achievement of these pupils is not as good in Year 1 as a whole because there are different expectations held for them in the different classes.
7. Because they are taught well, pupils attain good standards in art and design and music, and they achieve well in these subjects. Pupils are provided with good opportunities to learn the subject-specific skills in each. They sing tunefully and can play untuned percussion instruments correctly. They begin to be able to analyse music, for example beating a rhythm and recognising the different types of rhythm used. In art and design, pupils are able to observe closely, make detailed and reasonably accurate drawings, assemble materials to a design and begin to use the work of artists, such as Picasso, to influence their work. Standards in other subjects are satisfactory and pupils achieve in an appropriate way. Standards in religious education meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good and have been maintained at this level since the last inspection in 1997. Pupils of all ages and abilities are keen to come into school and quickly settle down to their work. The youngest pupils settle quickly and are soon comfortable with the expectations set for them. Most pupils demonstrate good listening and speaking skills which enable them to take an active part in class lessons and make a valuable contribution to class and group discussions. Pupils demonstrate high levels of commitment to their work and most are highly motivated and enthusiastic learners. Many are able to sustain good levels of concentration during their lessons and collaborate productively with each other in both group and paired activities. Pupils move around the school and between classrooms and the hall in a very orderly, sensible and well-mannered way.
9. The very good behaviour and discipline to be seen in and around school serve to enhance the positive relationships that exist between staff and pupils. The very good behaviour seen in most classrooms is the product of the good teaching practice in the school and the keenness of pupils to learn and to please their teacher. Of note is the extent of the very good behaviour maintained by pupils during wet break times. The well-structured system of rewards and sanctions for behaviour are clearly understood by all pupils, applied in a consistent manner by teachers and are proving to be effective in promoting the positive approach adopted by the pupils to their learning. The school is rightly proud of the fact that there have been no exclusions over recent years, and no evidence of any poor behaviour was seen during the inspection. An anti-bullying culture is actively and successfully promoted within the school. Parents and pupils agree that incidents of inappropriate behaviour, such as occasional name-calling, are swiftly and effectively dealt with by staff to the benefit of all involved.
10. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff are good and have a positive impact on the good progress made by pupils as they move up through the school. Pupils collaborate well with each other in their learning and play activities, happily take turns without question, and willingly share and treat property and learning resources with care. Pupils of all age groups display a natural sensitivity and awareness of the needs of others; a number of examples were observed in the school and in the playground of unsolicited help and support being offered to other pupils and adults alike. Pupils throughout the school are friendly and polite to each other and are encouraged from an early age to consider the needs of others. For example, a reception class pupil sensitively offered paper tissues to an upset pupil that was being comforted by the class teacher.
11. The personal development of pupils is good. Pupils are able to take responsibility for aspects of their own learning in the classroom, for example in assisting in the setting of personal targets. Most pupils willingly help to get out and put away learning resources, for example clearing up

after a collage activity in art and design, and those given the role of class leader undertake their responsibilities with obvious pride. A welcoming atmosphere of consideration, care and tolerance of others permeates the whole school. Through the sensitive support that they receive, pupils with special educational needs develop and maintain good self-esteem. They work hard when in small groups and are very proud of their achievements. These positive attitudes contribute well to their continued progress. When given the right level of challenge, pupils of higher attainment strive hard to improve their work.

12. Pupils' attendance at school is good and has fluctuated between good and very good since the last Ofsted inspection. All pupils enjoy coming to school and there is a very low incidence of late arrival. There has been no unauthorised absence recorded by the school over the past few years. Punctuality within school is very good and, during the inspection week, lessons were seen to start on time

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

13. The quality of teaching and learning for children in the reception year is satisfactory. Some aspects, including personal, social and emotional development and music are well taught. Communication, language and literacy is taught in a satisfactory way in the main, but there is a weakness in the way children are taught to read and write independently. Other aspects, including mathematical, physical and creative development, are taught in a satisfactory way and there are some strengths when children are taught as a whole group. There is, however, too little use of structured play as a teaching method and this has a detrimental impact on the quality of the children's learning. When play is used, it is too unstructured and, on these occasions, the teaching and learning are unsatisfactory. The quality of the teaching has fallen since the last inspection because staff absences have disrupted the development of teaching methods identified as good practice in the Foundation Stage Curriculum
14. As at the time of the last inspection, the quality of teaching and learning over Years 1 and 2 is good overall. There are significant strengths in the teaching in Year 2, much of which is very good, but some weaknesses in aspects of teaching in Year 1. During the inspection just over half the teaching seen in lessons was good or better with about a fifth of lessons being very good. A very small amount of unsatisfactory teaching was observed during the inspection. This was associated with the organisation in one class where children were split into groups engaged on activities concerned with different subjects during the same lesson. As a result, the teacher was unable to give sufficient focused input to promote successful learning in all of the subjects and some pupils were confused about what they were meant to be learning.
15. The teachers have at least appropriate knowledge of the subjects they teach. As a result of school priorities in English and mathematics, the basic skills in English and mathematics are well taught. The daily emphasis on phonic skills and on mental mathematics is paying dividends in increased standards. The basic skills in information and communication technology (ICT) are also being securely developed, largely because the pupils are timetabled to receive good quality teaching from a teaching assistant in the ICT suite in addition to some class teaching. This initiative is ensuring that pupils also use ICT to promote learning in some other subjects. Pupils' use of a simple word-processing program to write a simple poem about a pirate enabled them to consider the effect of words they chose to use and to identify when they were correctly or incorrectly spelled. This made a good contribution to their learning of both aspects.
16. Taken as a whole, the quality of teaching and learning in English and mathematics is good. The good quality of the daily skills input means that most pupils make at least good progress in English and mathematics over the two years. Because the teachers are using the national frameworks for literacy and numeracy to assist their planning in English and mathematics, expectations are appropriately high for most pupils in both year groups. Expectations for progress in English and mathematics in Year 2 are very high and this is a principle factor in the very good progress these pupils are currently making in these subjects. There is, however, some mismatch between the work for Year 1 pupils taught in different classes. Work for the pupils in the mixed reception/Year 1 group is generally correctly aimed at pupils with a lower level of prior attainment,

but does not sufficiently challenge a few higher-attaining pupils. These higher-attaining pupils in this class do not learn sufficiently well because demands are not high enough.

17. In all classes, pupils are well managed. Relationships between pupils and teachers are good. Lessons are conducted with sensitivity and humour and teachers try to plan lessons that will interest the pupils. Discipline is good and pupils are therefore in an atmosphere that supports learning. Pupils are trusting of their teachers. When asked a question by an inspector that she could not answer, one child replied, "I don't know, but my teacher will teach me that soon." These good relationships allow pupils to become confident learners and to enjoy learning. A good range of teaching techniques is used. Whole-class teaching was well used in a Year 1 mathematics lesson when pupils were challenged to recognise and use in 'payment' a number of different coins. The teacher's sense of fun enthused the pupils and learning was easy and secure. Pupils are often grouped for activities, either supported by an adult or working collaboratively. In a drama lesson, pupils worked well together to role-play visiting a sick person in hospital. This promoted their speaking skills and made a good contribution to their personal and social education. Teaching assistants lead groups well. The support given to a group of lower-attaining pupils when engaged in spelling work enabled them to learn well. Pupils are also given the chance to work independently and, by Year 2, most show themselves capable of applying themselves well.
18. Pupils with special educational needs are well taught, both through sensitive teaching in class and through good teaching by teaching assistants in small group sessions. Good attention is given to the teaching of the small number of pupils with more complex needs and these pupils make good progress. Pupils of higher attainment are well taught in Year 2, where they are appropriately challenged. The teaching of these pupils is not as effective in the split age group classes. Generally, pupils of higher attainment make satisfactory progress over the two year groups.
19. In addition to the good teaching in English and mathematics, teaching is also good in music. In music, there is good focus on the systematic teaching of subject specific skills and as a result, pupils learn quickly and are able to apply what they know. The current focus on a project in which music is taught through the development of skills in singing is raising both the profile of the subject and the teachers' knowledge of how to teach the subject well.
20. The quality of teaching and learning over Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory in most other subjects. It is, however, often good or very good in Year 2. In many subjects, the lack of the use of a tight curriculum structure means that there is a greater mismatch in expectations between the split-age Year 1 classes than is evident in English and mathematics. The work the school has done in identifying a clear progression of learning is not currently used sufficiently rigorously to ensure that all pupils, regardless of the class in which they are placed, make as good progress as possible. Both Year 1 and Year 2 pupils placed in the mixed Year 1/2 class are generally suitably challenged, but there is too often a lack of challenge for the middle and higher attaining Year 1 pupils in the reception/Year 1 class. Whilst the quality of teaching and learning in Year 2 is generally sufficient to allow these pupils to attain satisfactory standards in most subjects by the time they leave the school, some pupils have had to make up significant leeway in Year 2 in order to ensure that they meet the required standard. In science, however weaknesses including, the different expectations in Year 1, particularly the lack of challenge in the reception/Year 1 class; the lack of focus on the subject specific skills in the Year 1/2 class; and a lack of understanding of the best way to teach science, for example, by sometimes restraining rather than exploiting natural curiosity, combine to make the overall quality of teaching and learning unsatisfactory.
21. Informal assessment is used in a satisfactory way in Year 1 and very well in Year 2. In both year groups, teachers are aware of the strengths and weaknesses of each pupil. This information is used well in Year 2 in setting expectations of new learning and in planning the work that will assist the pupils to learn. In Year 1, the teachers do not use this information as well as they could because they do not systematically relate it to the identified progression in the subject, in order to decide what needs to be taught next to groups of pupils with similar ability levels regardless of the class in which they are placed. Thus, expectations are not always sufficiently high. Pupils in each class are encouraged to help set targets for the improvement of their work.

This involvement of pupils in setting their own targets is good and helps them have a greater understanding of the way they learn. However, the way this is achieved in each class varies. Some of the targets are too imprecise and vague and are not therefore fully effective in helping them improve. The school intends to review and improve this very positive initiative. Marking is generally well used to acknowledge effort and to point out ways in which a pupil might improve his or her work. Homework appropriately reinforces or extends learning done in school.

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

22. The curriculum for children in their reception year is unsatisfactory. Although activities and lessons cover all the elements required for children of this age, it does not take due account of current national guidance that has sought to provide a richer and more relevant curriculum for younger children. Activities such as play, independent writing and physical activity are not well enough represented and this adversely affects the quality of the experiences provided.
23. For the older pupils in the school, the curriculum is satisfactory. It is broad covering all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. Although there has been a good concentration on the development of literacy and numeracy skills, other areas of learning are also included. There are detailed schemes of work for all subjects that provide a clear structure for the development of key skills. In some subjects, however, there is not yet a clear enough link between these and the teachers' planning. The introduction of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy has been successful. The teachers have implemented these strategies thoroughly and conscientiously and this has been a significant factor in the raising of standards in these subjects. Time has been carefully allocated to different subjects to ensure that pupils receive a good balance to their education and good efforts are made to ensure that the curriculum provided is interesting and stimulating. The school offers a very small but satisfactory range of extracurricular opportunities through clubs for Year 2 pupils.
24. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The school is very conscious of the needs of these pupils and every effort is made to meet them. Considerable extra money is devoted to the support of these pupils and this is well spent. Programmes of work are well devised and teaching assistants are appropriately trained for their roles. Good support is provided for pupils with physical and speech difficulties and very productive links with outside support agencies further enhance the success of this work. The written programmes of work for pupils are of suitable quality and underpin well the work set. Records for the pupils are well maintained and show that progress is being made.
25. Pupils of differing ability, gender or background have good equality of opportunity and access to the curriculum. Care is also taken to ensure that all pupils cover all the required elements of the National Curriculum. Pupils of the same age group in different classes, however, do not have equality of opportunity. This is unsatisfactory. In both Year 1 and Year 2, pupils are split into different classes. This is done taking into account both age and level of attainment. In Year 2, where only a small number of pupils are placed in the Year 1 class, this strategy is largely successful in enabling pupils to make the progress of which they are capable. In Year 1, however, where the split is much more even, differences in expectation mean that some higher attaining pupils in the mixed reception/Year 1 class do not make the progress of which they are capable in science, history and geography in particular.
26. There is a good and very comprehensive policy for personal and social education. The ethos of the school encourages pupils to think of the needs of others and to take responsibility for their actions. There is a good programme for the provision of this education. This includes appropriate reference to sex education and to the safe use of drugs. Good use is made of class discussions to promote pupils' awareness of their part in maintaining their own well-being. Through lessons, as part of their topic work, pupils are encouraged to become more aware of matters relating to their health. In science, for example, pupils consider the benefits of healthy eating. In design and technology, pupils make fruit salad and the healthy nature of such food is emphasised.

27. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. The adults in the school value the views and ideas of pupils and this prepares pupils well for developing an insight into the ideas of others. In lessons such as speaking and listening lessons, pupils are taught to listen to and respect other pupils' ideas. Pupils are given good opportunities to think about the values of others. School assemblies are well used to give pupils opportunities to develop a spiritual awareness. During the inspection, the theme of all assemblies was 'light'. Each day, pupils were encouraged to think about the significance of different religious celebrations of light such as Diwali and Christingle. In these assemblies, pupils were given good opportunities for reflection. Statutory requirements are met. In religious education, pupils develop an understanding of the values and beliefs of others.
28. The provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good and is promoted by the strength of the relationships that exist between adults and pupils. It is a strength of the school. The role models provided by all adults in the school are very good and these examples are successfully imitated by the pupils. Adults respect and value the pupils as individuals and this trust is reciprocated. As they move through the school, pupils' self-esteem is developed and adults successfully promote the virtues of honesty and fairness. Pupils are encouraged to respect others in the school and to take care of property. Pupils are actively taught to work and play collaboratively. In a lesson in religious education, pupils were helped to think about the way a friend behaves and to think about ways in which they could help a lonely child in the playground. In such ways, a strong moral and social code is promoted and its success is evident in the very good behaviour and attitudes seen.
29. The provision for cultural education is sound. The provision for pupils to become aware of their own culture is good. Through visits to the local community and by involving the community in the life of the school, pupils understand more about their culture. Visits to the school by local people help pupils become aware of their community. As part of their geographical studies, pupils go out into the locality looking at local buildings and services provided. This also helps to raise their awareness of the Somerton area. The provision for pupils to study some aspects of the lives and cultures of others is satisfactory. There are good opportunities for pupils to investigate other religions as part of their religious education studies and to experience the art and music of other countries. For example, during the inspection, the assemblies were based around the significance of light in festivals including, Diwali, Hanukah and Christmas. The school has also had visitors from other countries who have talked about different ways of life and beliefs. However, the teaching in lessons and assemblies about the fact that people in Britain follow different religions is not clear enough. After one assembly, for example, pupils were inadvertently left with the impression that Diwali was only celebrated in India.
30. The school has developed sound links with the community. Visits to the school from local people, for example a nurse, help to enrich the curriculum. Each year pupils invite local elderly people into school during the Christmas period to sing carols to them. It is planned to extend this by taking the pupils to a local residential home to sing to the residents. The school receives some support from some local businesses. During the inspection, a local greengrocer provided oranges for the Year 1 pupils to use when making a Christingle in religious education. There are good links between Somerton Infant School and partner schools. A federation of local schools provides a good network of support. This is used effectively to broaden the expertise available for development work. The cluster is also effectively used to provide shared training opportunities for teachers. The links between the school and the linked junior school are good and are strengthening. Each term there is a joint staff meeting between the two schools where curricular matters of joint concern are discussed. The Year 2 teachers and their Year 3 colleagues meet together during the summer term. This helps to make the pupils' transition to the next stage of their education as smooth as possible.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

31. The school makes very good provision for the care of the pupils. This represents an improvement in this aspect of the school since the last inspection and is now a strength. Procedures for child protection are satisfactory. Good systems are in place to assist with this. These are well understood and acted upon by teachers in the best interests of the pupils. Teachers are aware of,

and alert to, the need for vigilance in monitoring the well-being and welfare of the pupils in their care. The generally good relationships that exist between pupils and teachers provide pupils with confidence in sharing any concerns they may have, knowing their teacher will respond in a discreet and sensitive manner. The school, however, does not have a formal practice to ensure that non-teaching staff (teaching assistants and lunch time supervisors) are kept up to date and familiar with the procedures related to monitoring and reporting any child protection concerns they may have.

32. Teachers and support staff know their pupils well and make good provision to support them in their learning and personal development. All staff display a very good level of care and concern for the pupils. Effective strategies have been established to identify those pupils with special educational needs and for involving parents in agreeing how best to support their child's learning.
33. The school has established very good health and safety procedures that involve governors and embrace the whole spectrum of the pupils' time in the school. Pupils and adults in school are aware of the need to work safely and all demonstrated good health and safety practice during the period of the inspection. The school has an adequate provision of staff trained in first aid and very good arrangements are in place for the effective management and reporting of pupil injuries occurring during the school day. Good management systems are in place for the effective storage, recording and administration of medicines to pupils in school when this is necessary. There is a well-established practice for health and safety inspection audits to be undertaken on a regular basis, with all reported recommendations being considered and acted upon by the governors. Good risk assessment is practised in the school. The school provides a safe and secure environment for pupils and staff alike.
34. Very good procedures are in place to record and report pupil attendance and address incidents of unexplained pupil absence within a day. Class registers are well maintained and the daily registration practice within the school fully complies with statutory requirements. The school actively promotes the benefits of good attendance to parents and the good progress made by the pupils confirms the ongoing success of this strategy.
35. Very good and well-established behaviour management routines ensure a very good standard of pupil behaviour and help to promote their self-esteem through positive reinforcement and reward. Great emphasis is placed on promoting good behaviour and the school operates a number of incentives to encourage and reward pupils' good work and behaviour. The whole-school behaviour policy is discussed and personalised within each classroom to provide each pupil with a meaningful focus of their teachers' expectations and rewards for good behaviour. The clear, simple and well-documented behaviour procedures are understood by pupils and parents, applied in a fair and consistent manner by teachers and have proved to be successful in promoting the very good behaviour and attitudes of pupils to be seen in and around the school.
36. A baseline assessment for children in the reception classes gives useful information about what children know and can do. The headteacher uses the baseline assessments productively to identify the strengths and weaknesses of individual pupils and to measure the extent to which pupils make progress during their time in the school. Overall, the school has satisfactory procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' academic performance. Each term teachers give pupils specific assessment tasks that give an indication of their attainment in English, mathematics and science. A number of different systems are used to assist teachers to identify and record the progress pupils make in English, mathematics and science. Some of the systems used are somewhat over complex and, although they provide teachers with the information they need when assisting pupils or reporting to parents, are in need of review so that they are less demanding of time. In English and mathematics, teachers use the records appropriately to assist target setting and to help them identify areas of weakness. Assessments are not, however, sufficiently well used in science to promote satisfactory progress. Satisfactory records are maintained in ICT and these are appropriately used to set work, in particular when pupils are working with the teaching assistant. There are few formal assessment procedures in other subjects. Informal assessment is used well in Year 2 to ensure that pupils are helped to make good progress. The use of assessment outside English, mathematics and ICT is unsatisfactory in

Year 1. Assessment is well used to ensure that pupils who experience difficulties are identified and provided with support at the earliest opportunity.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

37. The evidence presented to the inspection team during the inspection was of a mixed nature. During the inspection, a significant number of parents interviewed at the school door were very pleased with the way the school works, were content with the information provided and expressed the opinion that their children receive a good quality of care and education during their time in school. A very small number of parents attended the pre-inspection meeting and a very small percentage of parents returned the Ofsted questionnaire. Interviews with parents during the inspection suggest a number of parents did not respond to the questionnaire as they felt that they should only return it if they had something negative to say about the school. It is the experience of the headteacher and governors that parental response to their own questionnaires is very low. There were a number of concerns identified by some parents in the two small samples represented by the meeting and questionnaire. These included the quality of the information received by parents, the way the school works with parents, the extent of activities provided outside lessons, the way reading is taught and the progress made by pupils in the mixed-age classes. Despite the very small percentage of parents expressing these opinions, the team has carefully investigated these aspects. The inspectors agree with these parents that the differences in expectations and opportunities for pupils of the same age group based in different classes and the rather rigid method of teaching reading in the reception year are points for concern. The number of activities provided outside lessons is very small but not unusually so for infant schools.
38. The inspection team does not, however, agree with the small number of parents who expressed the opinion that the quality of information provided by the school was not sufficiently good. In total, the quality of information provided to parents is good and has improved since the last inspection. Parents are kept well informed on a regular basis about all aspects of school life, including the progress their child is making. End-of-year progress reports are detailed and provide good levels of information about what the pupils know and can do. The organised autumn and spring term parent/teacher consultation meetings are well attended, however few parents take up the invitation for a summer term discussion with teachers following the production of the pupils end-of-year progress reports. The quality of information is enriched by the informal opportunities provided for teacher and parents at the end of each day to discuss with each other any concerns or queries they may have about the pupils. A small number of parents, however, expressed the opinion that they do not feel comfortable in so doing. This is a matter left for the school to resolve by continuing to seek parental opinion about ways in which this minority could be made to feel more comfortable.
39. Parents are kept well informed through the school newsletter and regular 'Dear Parent' correspondence on all aspects of their child's time in school. The school prospectus and governors annual report are comprehensive, useful publications. Many parents make good use of home/school diaries to exchange comments with the teacher. The school does not, however, provide parents with information concerning the content of the curriculum to be studied each term. As a result, parents are not able to support their child as much as some would like. The school has organised a series of workshops to raise parental awareness to the teaching of handwriting, speaking and spelling skills, mathematics and ICT. Attendance at these meetings is very variable, but many have been very well supported.
40. The school has worked hard to establish good links with the vast majority of parents and provides a wide range of opportunities for the parents' full and regular involvement in all aspects of their child's education and personal development. This effort represents an area of improvement since the last inspection. All parents have signed up to a home/school agreement. Parents are welcomed in school and actively encouraged to become fully involved as partners in their child's learning. A small number of parents respond to this invitation and help in school on a regular basis. Many more parents willingly volunteer to accompany and support pupils on field trips and out-of-school visits. The great majority of parents make very positive contributions to their child's

learning by helping them in the home with their homework and topic research and by listening to their child read.

41. The school benefits from an active 'parents, staff and friends of the school' association which organises termly fund-raising social events, all of which are well attended and provide opportunities for informal exchange between teachers and parents. In addition, the association provides a termly newsletter for parents to ensure they are kept up to date with the dates of future events and planned activities.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

42. Over the last 18 months, the school has been through a difficult period. Prior to this time, there is evidence, from the raised standards and the attention to matters identified in the last inspection report, that the school was well led and managed by members of the current staff. The unavoidable absences and the secondment of the headteacher have meant, however, that many developments planned, including the development of the foundation stage and the curriculum, have been slowed or halted. However, the school is now 'back on track' and improvements in the quality of education are already being seen. Since her return, the headteacher has shown good leadership in a number of ways. She has shown energy and determination to ensure, firstly, that the pupils did not suffer from past upheavals and that momentum in school improvement should be regained. She has been successful in the former; current standards in English are maintained at an above average level, and standards in mathematics are now rising, the current Year 2 having above average attainment. The headteacher has sought help from the local education authority to assist in developing the school and has, for example, arranged for both literacy and numeracy in-service training in the coming term. Through her monitoring of the work of the school, the headteacher is very knowledgeable about its strengths and weaknesses. It was already arranged, for example, for the literacy support to have a particular emphasis on independent writing. The quality of leadership shown by the headteacher has been maintained since the last inspection. The headteacher sets good examples for staff. Her teaching is of very good quality and she is dedicated to ensuring that all pupils, regardless of their background, ability or difficulties, will receive the best education possible.

43. Overall, the leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is well managed. The co-ordinator has developed good systems to ensure that pupils made good progress over their time in the school. Adults are carefully deployed to the benefit of the pupils and good relationships set up with other agencies, for example the local educational authority support service. English and ICT have been well led and these subjects are developing well. The mathematics co-ordinator is now taking appropriate responsibility for development of the subject and this sound management is helping to raise standards. The overall co-ordination of other subjects is unsatisfactory. The expectations of the role of a co-ordinator when his or her subject is a focus for development and the expectations for the maintenance of subjects between these times are not clear. As a result, some co-ordinators have been trying to develop all of their subjects at the same time and understandably have not had the support of other staff because the demands on them were too great. In part due to circumstances beyond their control, other co-ordinators have done too little. In addition, the distribution of responsibilities has not been equitable, with the part time teacher holding too heavy a load.
44. The governors of the school are very dedicated and committed to the school. They regularly visit on both a formal and informal basis and have very good systems for exchanging and evaluating information. They seek information from the headteacher in a systematic way, for example asking for the headteacher to report on the success of actions taken toward the targets set in the school development plan. As a result, they are knowledgeable about the school and are aware of both strengths and some areas of weakness. The governors have been diligent in attending training and have an up-to-date understanding of the duties and expectations placed upon them. They are both supportive and suitably challenging of the school. They fulfil their statutory duties very well and play a good part in school development.
45. Overall, the school monitors and evaluates its own work in a satisfactory way. The part played by both the headteacher and the governors is good, but the role of most of the subject co-ordinators is currently unsatisfactory. After a period of some improvement, this situation has reverted to that at the time of the last inspection and is now in need of urgent action. The headteacher and the mathematics co-ordinator have used data well in identifying areas for improvement. For example, analysis of the last year's end-of-key-stage tests showed that pupils had difficulty in dealing with number problems. This aspect is now receiving particular attention in classes. The headteacher regularly monitors teaching and the mathematics co-ordinator is also beginning to do this. This monitoring of teaching has led to a greater understanding of needs, but the resulting action has been largely in the booking of training and has yet to have an impact. The school development plan is greatly improved since the last inspection, but it is in need of further improvement. It is over weighty and does not show a proper distinction between concerns that need whole-school attention over a period, for example the development of independent writing, and actions that are reminders to take simple actions, for example 'to give co-ordinators time to discuss curriculum issues with appropriate governors'. Also, the current plan does not show how the school will be developed over a period longer than the current year. This contributes to the lack of balance between subject development and subject leadership identified above. The tendency to over-long documents extends to much of the documentation in the school. While much of this has been prepared by the headteacher and has not placed particular bureaucratic demands on other staff, these documents are not always easily accessed by an outside reader and as such may not easily communicate information to new staff.
46. The school has received good financial management and good use is made of strategic resources. The governors, through their finance committee, play an active part in the strategic financing of the school. The committee meets regularly to review the budget spending. The chair of the committee has begun to set up good financial procedures to enable the governing body to have an even better understanding of the school's finances. A draft budget has previously been prepared externally for detailed consideration and analysis by the finance committee and headteacher. Following a review of the effectiveness of this service by the governing body, the school is now taking a greater responsibility for its own financial management. After the last financial year, the school had built up a relatively large reserve of capital. This was due, in part, to unexpected savings made on teaching-staff salaries (due to the prolonged absence of a member of staff) and in part to the understandable reluctance on the part of the acting headteacher to

commit funds while the headteacher was away. Good plans have been made for this sum to be spent on the current priorities, including the improvement of the ICT suite.

47. The governing body has made a good start in applying the principles of best value to the school. They have good knowledge of how the standards in the school measure up to those in similar schools and can use this knowledge in their evaluation of the school. They have compared the expenditure of Somerton Infant School with that of other similar schools. This has shown areas of expenditure on which to focus. At present, for example, they are seeking to reduce the expenditure on cleaning the school to bring the school's spending in this area in line with that spent in other local schools. Currently, however, they do not always have sufficient objective data when making spending decisions. They are therefore not able to judge the effects of these decisions on standards. The governors have, for example, decided to allocate additional funding for co-ordinating the provision for pupils with special educational needs. They have not, however, established how they will measure and evaluate the effect this extra spending has on standards. They realise the need to be more analytical and to question with greater rigour. The school uses specific grant funding appropriately. Good use has, for example, been made of the money allocated to early literacy support in providing successful extra help for a small group of pupils who had had periods of absence during their reception year.
48. The school administrative assistant deals with the day-to-day management of the school's finances efficiently. The school makes good use of modern technology to maintain and monitor financial matters. The administrative assistant also fulfils very effectively the role of receptionist and gives visitors to the school a very positive first impression.
49. The school has a satisfactory number of teaching staff and a very good number of teaching assistants. These assistants generally play a positive role in assisting pupils to make progress. There is, however, a need to consider how these assistants are used when teachers are teaching the whole class. There are examples, however, of assistants being used well, for example in helping a pupil to follow a text being read with the whole class in an individual small version. There are also occasions in the foundation stage classes when there are too many adults in the classroom to allow for proper independence in learning. In the main, the school is appropriately resourced to allow pupils to learn well. The foundation stage classes, however, lack resources for outside activities, learning through play and for experiencing a wide range of reading materials, including books. There are also insufficient up-to-date resources in geography and there is an urgent need to remove books and atlases that give stereotyped or outdated information. The school benefits from plentiful, well-maintained and well-presented accommodation.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

50. In order to further improve the education provided, the headteacher, staff and governors should:

- (1) Improve the quality of the education provided for children in the reception year by using current national guidance and:
 - developing the role of structured learning through play;
 - improving the teaching of reading and writing, in particular the development of independent skills;
 - ensuring that all reception-age children have frequent opportunities to engage in physical activity;
 - providing a secure area for outdoor activities;
 - improving the resources available for all the above developments.

(See paragraphs 2, 13, 22 and 51-59.)

- (2) Raise standards in science by:
 - ensuring a close link between the scheme of work and the teachers' planning;
 - ensuring that each lesson has a clearly defined scientific focus;
 - ensuring that there are equally high expectations in all classes;
 - improving teachers' knowledge of how best to teach science.

(See paragraphs 1, 20 and 73-78.)

- (3) Ensure that pupils in the age groups split between classes make the best possible progress by:
 - ensuring that there are common expectations for pupils regardless of the class in which they are placed.

(See paragraphs 16, 20, 25, 65, 75, 86, 88, 89 and 92.)

- (4) Improve the role played by subject co-ordinators in the management of the school by:
 - providing suitable training for the role;
 - ensuring that responsibilities are distributed equitably;
 - involving co-ordinators in regular monitoring of planning and teaching and learning in their subjects and ensuring that feedback identifies strengths to be shared and weaknesses to be improved;
 - clearly identifying expectations of the different role to be played by the co-ordinator when a subject is being maintained and when it is a focus for development;
 - identifying in the school development plan when each subject will be a focus for development.

(See paragraphs 43 and 45.)

Other issues which the school should consider:

- Continue to seek the support and involvement of all parents. (See paragraphs 37-41.)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	34
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	30

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	4	11	17	2	0	0
Percentage	0	12	32	50	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 two percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	114
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	17

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	22

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	10
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.6
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
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	18	24	42

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	18	18	17
	Girls	21	22	21
	Total	39	40	38
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 (86)	95 (95)	90 (95)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17	17	18
	Girls	20	21	19
	Total	37	38	37
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88 (86)	90 (89)	88 (89)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	74
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 – Y2**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	4.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.9
Average class size	28.5

Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	120

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000-2001
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	£
Total income	282,441
Total expenditure	254,743
Expenditure per pupil	2,316
Balance brought forward from previous year	8,316
Balance carried forward to next year	36,014

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	0

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	114
Number of questionnaires returned	16

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	56	38	6	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	25	44	6	6	19
Behaviour in the school is good.	25	44	0	6	25
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	12	56	19	0	12
The teaching is good.	31	56	0	6	6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	6	44	38	12	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	38	31	19	12	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	12	75	6	6	0
The school works closely with parents.	6	50	38	6	0
The school is well led and managed.	6	63	6	12	12
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	25	50	12	0	12
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	6	12	44	12	25

Care needs to be taken when interpreting this table since the percentage return of the questionnaire was low at 14 per cent and therefore, the views of each parent represents more than six per cent.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

51. Reception-age children are taught in two classes in the school, in a single age group reception class and in a class where they are taught alongside Year 1 pupils. Taken as a whole, the teaching of these children is satisfactory. Personal, social and emotional development is well taught. In each of the other areas of learning (detailed below) teaching is satisfactory, although there are some good features in each area. There are some unsatisfactory elements to the teaching of communication, language and literacy. Children are provided with a range of experiences that cover the recommended areas of learning and many of the individual sessions provide valuable learning experiences. The development of the foundation stage in the light of the new foundation stage curriculum has been severely hampered by the prolonged absences of both reception class teachers. These unfortunate absences were due to circumstances beyond the teachers' control. Overall, the quality of education provided in the reception year is acceptable, although, within this, there are some significant weaknesses that are detailed below.
52. The curriculum provided is much less successful than it was at the time of the last inspection. It now has a number of weaknesses and is unsatisfactory. The curriculum does not take sufficient account of the most recent national advice and does not fully meet the needs of the children. Current planning is not securely based on assessment of where children are in terms of the steps identified in the foundation stage curriculum and does not show how the children's skills, knowledge and understanding will be developed through these stages, nor does it show different expectations for children of different maturity, age or attainment. The curriculum provided is different in the two classes and, while the delivery of the curriculum is necessarily somewhat different when one class also has Year 1 pupils, current planning does not ensure that there are equally high expectations for the children in both classes.
53. In many of the areas of learning, play is not well used. Although children have opportunities to play, these opportunities are not clearly enough linked to what is to be learned through the activities. This does not give clear enough guidance as to how adults might usefully contribute when they have opportunity to play with the children. It also means that too often little actual learning occurs. The accommodation in both classes is spacious and attractively presented, however, there is no secure area for the children to use for outdoor learning. The quality of the education provided in the foundation stage has diminished since the time of the last inspection.

Personal, social and emotional development

54. Many aspects of personal, social and emotional education are well taught. Children are provided with a safe environment in which they feel secure and comfortable. Teachers' high expectations of the way children will behave are rewarded by good behaviour. Despite the fact that they have been in school a relatively short time, the children already conform to the routines and expectations. Good emphasis has been placed on independence in aspects such as dressing after physical activities and going to the toilet, and most children are already independent in these personal matters. There are, however, too few opportunities for the children to select activities and to pursue these independently. This matter is linked with the lack of good quality play opportunities identified above. The children work and play happily together and show an ability to work with concentration when working alone. In the main, they are sensitive to others, for example taking care not to hurt each other in physical education. The children are able to give their opinion, for example saying whether they like a book or not, however too few opportunities are planned for children to actively develop their ability to talk about preferences or about why they feel as they do. In general, the children achieve well in their personal, social and emotional development and in most aspects exceed the goals identified by the end of the reception year.

Communication, language and literacy

55. Children enter the school with average skills in communication, language and literacy. In some aspects, children make suitable gains in learning. Teachers plan good opportunities for children to learn new vocabulary and to use it in conversation. In science, for example, children were encouraged to describe the fruits they were tasting and they learned some new vocabulary while doing this. There are, however, too few specified opportunities for children to learn to plan and talk collaboratively or to clarify their thinking through talk. Teachers give children good experiences in listening to stories and in looking at books independently. Children listen attentively and begin to be able to talk about what has happened in a story. Reading habits such as the correct way to hold a book and to turn its pages are established. Basic skills such as early phonics and handwriting are systematically and successfully taught. On occasions, especially in the mixed-age class, these activities are well taught through games such as sorting objects into hoops. The children greatly enjoy playing these games and this enhances their learning. Children are also taught to read some common words. Because there is too strict an adherence to the use of a reading scheme, however, children do not rapidly enough develop independent strategies for reading. For example, even the most advanced children do not readily use a range of strategies, such as pictures combined with the initial letter of a word when sharing a simple unknown text. Similarly in writing, although letter formation is systematically and successfully taught, the children are not given enough opportunity to write without a model. As a consequence, when they are given the chance, their independent writing is much less developed than that usually seen at this stage in the reception year. In general, children do not achieve as much as they could in these important aspects of communication, language and literacy and, although most are likely to achieve the early learning goals set, too few potentially higher attaining children will exceed them. The development of independent writing skills has, however, been rightly identified in the current school development plan as an area for improvement.

Mathematical development

56. Through the sound teaching they receive the children make suitable progress during the reception year. They achieve in a satisfactory way and most will meet the early learning goals, while a few will exceed these goals by the time they enter Year 1. Teachers recognise the importance of basic skills, such as counting and beginning to add and subtract. Children are given daily practice and as a result learn to count objects, to add one more or one less to a set of objects, to group and sort and to talk about their work. Mathematical vocabulary is carefully taught and children can readily use the new words they learn. Even at this early stage, they confidently use the names of some shapes and can talk about the value of some coins. In numeracy sessions, due emphasis is given to the development of mental skills. Children can count in twos and begin to add mentally. Teachers give children suitable opportunities to engage in practical mathematics, for example positioning objects relative to a bucket in order to learn and use positional language. Too few everyday 'play' or real-life activities that require mathematics are organised for the children, however, and this limits their ability to use numbers more meaningfully and independently.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

57. Children enter the school with average experience of and knowledge about the world. They are given suitable access to activities that develop each aspect of their knowledge and understanding of the world. During the inspection week, children tasted and looked at fruit under a microscope. They were encouraged to record their findings. This successfully encouraged the development of early scientific skills. The good number of adults available to support the children meant that they could be assisted to refine their skills by looking more closely and describing what they saw. Children are also given the chance to think about their own lives, for example discussing different ways in which they get to school and thinking about their own past. In this way, they begin to develop concepts of time and place. A good contribution to the latter is the collection of postcards sent by 'Barnaby Bear' from his travels to places in both the United Kingdom and abroad. The children can talk with some knowledge about different places and a few can describe ways in which these places are different from Somerton. Teachers develop early skills in design and technology through activities such as making a fruit salad. Children receive good teaching in ICT

skills, especially when they are taught in the ICT suite, and are actively taught skills such as controlling a mouse or keyboard to play a game. By the time they enter Year 1, the children mostly meet the early learning goals in this area and their achievement is satisfactory.

Physical development

58. In the reception class, children are given daily opportunities to undertake physical activities. These range from walking in the grounds and playing on the school climbing frame to physical education and dance. Opportunities for pupils in the mixed-age class are more restricted in the main because the curricular demands on Year 1 pupils do not allow for as much time to be spent on physical activity. The school has not yet devised a way of making this more equitable. This is in part because there is no secure outdoor area or ride-on toys for children to use in a more informal way during the day. In lessons, physical activity is taught in a satisfactory way. Teachers are careful to ensure that children build skills such as the control of a ball and that they learn to run and jump with increasing precision and awareness of space. When using gymnastic apparatus, care is taken to ensure the safety of the children as they practise balancing and jumping from equipment. Children are taught to use tools such as scissors, pencils and paint brushes with dexterity and this assists their handwriting development. Their attainments and achievements are satisfactory in all areas of their physical development and children meet the early learning goals by the end of the reception year.

Creative development

59. By the end of the foundation stage, in some aspects of creative development, children's attainment is above that expected for their age and they achieve well. Children can confidently sing songs and rhymes, clap a steady beat and perform an appropriate range of actions to their songs. In music, the teaching is good. The teachers are successfully using techniques developed through in-service training and this encourages them to be confident and to hold high expectations of the children. In other aspects of creative development, both teaching and the children's achievement are satisfactory and they meet the goals set for the end of the reception year. Children use a range of paints and crayons, and they produce pictures both from direct observation and from their imagination. They have successfully produced, for example, pictures of themselves that show features such as detail in eyes. Through the creation of areas such as the class 'hospital' children are given scope for imaginative play. The content of these areas is stimulating and children greatly enjoy the activity. Their learning is not maximised, however, as what is to be learned is not made clear either to adults supporting the activity or to the children concerned.

ENGLISH

60. Standards in English at the end of Year 2 have risen since the time of the last inspection and are currently above average. Pupils are achieving well in English overall. The rapid progress Year 2 pupils are currently making indicates that standards will be well above average by the end of the year. Standards in speaking and listening are above average and pupils are achieving well. By the time they leave the school the pupils show an ability both to converse articulately and listen to others. They have begun to use language to refine their ideas, for example when discussing their ideas of what a 'friend' does. They can discuss as a group, for example discussing the design of a pirate picture, and decide on action to be taken by the group. They have developed a very good level of technical language, for example using 'grapheme' and 'phoneme' correctly in English and knowing the difference between a 'pulse' and a 'rhythm' in music. This facility with language provides them with good skills upon which to build.
61. Reading standards are currently above average in both Year 1 and Year 2. The emphasis given to building basic skills pays dividends as most pupils use a range of these when attacking an unknown word and this helps them achieve well. As a result, most pupils in Year 2 already read within the level identified for the end of the year. Pupils read with good levels of fluency for their age and some begin to be able to read with good expression. Most are able to give a simple account of what they have read, but, as yet, only a few are able to extend this to describing

aspects beyond the literal. Pupils begin to know that they can find information from books and can find a book that will give them information about a subject in hand, but they are not yet sure of how to do this.

62. Taken as a whole, standards in writing in Year 1 are in-line with the national average. Good emphasis is given to pupils' learning to spell and to form their letters correctly. This provides a secure base for further progress. In these aspects, pupils achieve well and their attainment is above average for their age. Too little opportunity is provided, however, for pupils to use these skills either in writing stories or for other purposes, and their independent writing is of below average standard. In Year 2, pupils rapidly progress and are soon writing independently. They are able to write in sentences, using simple punctuation. They begin to vary the way they write, using adjectives and speech to make their work more interesting. They write for a number of purposes, including recipes, letters, poems and stories. Reading and writing is appropriately used in other subjects, for example in religious education when pupils were asked to write sentences describing a friend. Achievement in Year 2 is very good. The progress made by the current Year 2 pupils shows that they are likely to reach well above average standards by the end of the year.
63. Through the good support they receive, pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve well. In past years, the vast majority of these pupils reached the expected standard by the end of Year 2. Higher-attaining pupils also achieve well in Year 2 because high expectations are set for them.
64. The teaching of English in Years 1 and 2 is good overall, although there are relative weaknesses in the way some aspects of writing are taught in Year 1. Teachers have good knowledge of English and the focus on the teaching of basic skills has ensured that pupils learn well. Good emphasis is given to talk and this allows the pupils to develop their vocabulary and thinking skills. Teachers have made good efforts to adopt the nationally recommended methods for the teaching of literacy, and much good work is done at the beginning of lessons to teach pupils about books and reading. Pupils greatly enjoy this reading, for example in a Year 1 class pupils joined in the words spoken by Goldilocks with great enthusiasm! The management of pupils is very good. Because they are motivated to learn, pupils' behaviour is very good and they concentrate hard. The very good level of interest and effort is a major influence on the good quality of learning. Good use is made of whole-class teaching and of group and individual support. ICT is now used in a satisfactory way to support learning in English. Pupils have had opportunity to use computers and some higher-attaining Year 2 pupils are already aware that the use of the computer when writing allows them to produce a better presented result. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from small group work often taught by teaching assistants. The good quality of this work assists pupils to build and maintain self-esteem and this aids their learning.
65. Teachers' planning is clear and identifies what different groups of pupils will learn over a week. There is a lack of co-ordination between the two Year 1 classes that causes pupils to have different experiences, but in English this has only minimal impact on the overall progress of the different groups. In some lessons, there are good links planned between one aspect of a lesson and another. In a Year 2 lesson, for example, pupils, having read a story about pirates, were asked to write independently lines describing aspects of the story, to work as a small group to assemble them before editing them as a whole class to make a class poem. In addition, this work built upon an earlier lesson in which pupils practised the spelling of words to describe a pirate. This type of cohesion allows the pupils to understand why they are asked to undertake activities and further increases their effort. Writing is less successfully taught in the Year 1 classes because there is too little emphasis given to it and too few activities for using writing are identified in the teachers' planning. Teachers make regular assessment of pupils and the knowledge gained makes a suitable contribution to the planning of further work. The quality of marking is often good, giving pupils targets to aim for and praise for work completed. Except in writing, there are appropriate expectations for pupils in Year 1 and high expectations of those in Year 2.
66. English has benefits from good leadership. The co-ordinator has made good use of the monitoring of the subject to identify areas of weakness and to address these. For example, the identified weakness in spelling has been addressed by the introduction of a scheme for daily work. This has

resulted in the rising attainment in spelling. Present weaknesses in writing have been identified and training for teachers already booked to try to further improve standards. Resources in the school are generally adequate and there is a good stock of large texts for teachers to use in the first part of lessons. There is, however, a lack of variety and quality in the reading books used in the lower part of the school.

MATHEMATICS

67. In the time since the last inspection, pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 has generally hovered at or just below the national average. Inspection evidence shows that standards are now rising and that pupils' attainments are likely to be above the national average by the end of Year 2. Currently pupils are achieving well. This is an improvement since the last inspection when standards were in line with expected levels.
68. The youngest pupils in Year 1 are developing a sound understanding of the number system. The vast majority is able to count accurately to 10 and many are able to count well beyond this. They are beginning to understand the concept of addition when using a small number of objects. Pupils are able to recognise regular shapes such as a circle, square and triangle. Year 2 pupils are able to add and subtract mentally up to 10. They have a sound understanding of the number system to 100. Most are able to count on in 10s well beyond 100. They enjoy the challenge of large numbers. For example, they can count on in 5s starting with the number 7. The higher-attaining pupils can add and subtract two-digit numbers correctly. They are beginning to develop good strategies to solve simple number problems. The majority of Year 2 pupils are able to recognise common two and three-dimensional shapes and to describe their properties, such as the number of sides or corners. Most are competent at gathering data and recording their findings in appropriate mathematical forms. Nearly all are able to construct and interpret block graphs. Most pupils show a willingness to tackle new number problems and are confident in using a range of different strategies.
69. The quality of teaching of mathematics is good overall with some very good teaching in Year 2. Teachers are confident in their use of the National Numeracy Strategy and give appropriate emphasis to the development of pupils' facility with number. As a result, pupils learn the skills and knowledge they require to enable them to operate mentally and on paper. Good use is made of ICT to challenge pupils further. The use of a program requiring pupils to subtract money from a total in a competitive game, for example, not only challenged pupils' thinking, but also proved very motivating. The resultant learning was very good. All aspects of the mathematics curriculum are covered in the required depth and teachers have the subject knowledge they require to do this. Aspects of numeracy are used in subjects such as science and design technology, however this is not yet systematically planned for. Teachers manage their pupils very well. They all value individuals and foster very productive relationships with them. In lessons, the pupils' behaviour is good. These factors enable pupils to learn in an environment in which they feel comfortable and can concentrate on their work.
70. Good attempts are made to interest the pupils in mathematics and pupils respond positively. They enjoy the challenge of completing their work. These positive attitudes towards the subject help to promote the pupils' learning. In some classes, especially in Year 2, teachers expect and are successful in obtaining high standards from their pupils. In other classes, there is not always a sufficiently demanding challenge and the work given does not always enable pupils to extend their mathematical knowledge and skills sufficiently rapidly. Pupils with special educational needs are given good support that enables them to learn effectively.
71. All teachers know their pupils well. Teachers in most classes make effective on-going assessments and are sometimes prepared to change what they have planned to better meet the needs of their pupils. During the inspection, for example, the teacher in the Year 1 and 2 class noticed that many pupils needed further consolidation in their recognition of coins before progressing with problems involving money. He sensibly amended his pre-planned activities to take account of this. The quality of learning for the pupils was thus improved. Teachers regularly assess more formally what pupils know and can do. Each term, assessment tests are given to

pupils and kept in their assessment record book. Although this provides some indication of what pupils have attained, it is not always in a form that enables teachers to use it easily when planning the next steps for pupils.

72. Leadership of mathematics is satisfactory. The mathematics co-ordinator has recently received suitable training to enable him to undertake the responsibilities of the role more effectively. A start has been made in broadening the monitoring of teaching and learning so that the co-ordinator is more actively involved. There is a shared commitment on the part of all teachers to raise standards further.

SCIENCE

73. The attainment of pupils at the end of Year 2 in 2001 was below the levels expected nationally. Inspection findings are in line with this and the current pupils are not doing as well as they should. Standards have fallen since the last inspection when they were judged to be in line with expectations.
74. By the age of seven, the majority of pupils have a sound knowledge of the scientific facts they have been taught. They know, for example, that a circuit is necessary for electricity to flow. They are able to identify the five senses and know that these are important in sustaining the quality of life. The majority of pupils have a basic understanding of magnets and know that a magnet will attract metal. When undertaking scientific enquiry, pupils are able to make simple observational drawings, such as how the colour of different fabrics change when viewed through coloured acetate sheets. However, the way in which they undertake scientific investigations is not systematic or logical. Even the oldest pupils do not yet begin to understand the meaning of a fair test and need help to undertake investigative work. The majority of the pupils do not achieve enough in science.
75. The quality of teaching and learning in science is unsatisfactory overall. As with all other subjects, the general organisation of pupils is good. Discipline is good and lessons are conducted in an orderly way. Teachers want their pupils to like learning science and try hard to provide activities that will interest them. There is a good scheme of work in science with a clear progression of skills. This very useful document has, however, had too little impact on the science provided for pupils in the classroom. Teachers' planning is detailed, but it fails to show what pupils of differing attainments are expected to learn in a lesson. In addition, the teaching staff do not plan together sufficiently rigorously to ensure that pupils of the same age within different classes have a similar level of challenge. Books and planning show that the expected level of scientific understanding for the pupils in Year 1 who are in a class with reception children is lower than for pupils of a similar age who are in a class with Year 2 pupils. This limits the progress made and has a particular effect on the potentially higher attaining pupils. The planning also sometimes fails to indicate sufficiently clearly what scientific skills and knowledge the pupils will acquire. For example, in one lesson, Year 1 pupils were finding out about different foods. The science within the lesson was to explore taste. However, because this was not made sufficiently clear, the vast majority of the lesson was involved with pupils identifying the countries of origin of the foods on a map that few understood. This made their learning unsatisfactory.
76. There are lessons in Year 1, however, where learning is well organised. In one lesson, for example, following a whole-class discussion about what is inside the body, pupils were encouraged to explore their own understanding by drawing pictures. This was then productively used by the teacher to move forward those that were ready, while organising additional activities for those who needed more consolidation. More effort needs to be taken to identify such good practice in order to use it as a model for other lessons.
77. Over the school, there is considerable variability in the way that science is taught. In the majority of lessons, the subject is appropriately taught as a subject distinct from others, however, it is sometimes taught alongside other subjects in a single lesson. This makes it very difficult for teachers to teach directly and to ensure that learning is correctly focused on science when the pupils are working away from the teacher's direct support. It was as a consequence of this type of

mixed activity, that pupils were diverted from the scientific tasting activity to the geographical one identified above. As in this instance, learning is therefore, sometimes unsatisfactory. In addition, not all teachers are sure of the best ways to teach young pupils science. As a result, on occasions teachers fail to exploit the pupils' natural interest and curiosity and do not then show them how to use this to its best effect. In one lesson, pupils were investigating the effect of viewing differently coloured fabrics through coloured acetate sheets. They were provided with good resources. The pupils immediately started investigating, enjoying finding out what happened when they looked through the coloured acetate. This encouraged them to learn through experience. The requirement to stop and write out their objectives and hypotheses before starting, however, reduced the impact of the activity and the resultant learning. There is little use of ICT within science at the present time, in part because some teachers are unsure of how to exploit ICT in teaching science.

78. The leadership and management of science are unsatisfactory, however the co-ordinators have recently begun to receive suitable training. They have not yet been able to find out about the quality of teaching and learning through the school or to support the development of the subject through staff training.

ART AND DESIGN

79. Standards in art and design were judged from the small number of lessons seen and the artwork displayed around the school. Standards in Year 1 are at the expected level and standards at the end of Year 2 are above the national expectation and have been improved since the time of the last inspection. Pupils in Year 1 achieve in a satisfactory way and those in Year 2 achieve well. These standards reflect the quality of teaching and learning, which is sound in Year 1 and good in Year 2.
80. By the end of Year 2, pupils are able to work in a number of media, observing and working carefully. They can, for example, work together collaboratively to produce a collage. During the inspection, two groups of pupils of differing attainments showed themselves capable of drawing a design, selecting materials and assembling very good images of a pirate. The collaborative effort was particularly commendable. Pupils are able to look at the work of artists, for example Picasso, and can, with help, adapt his style to use when painting their own portraits. Pupils have been given good opportunities to experience a wide range of media, for example painting with dyes on fabric to make a Christmas drape.
81. Lessons are well organised to provide the opportunities that pupils need. A good range of methods that include demonstration by the teacher, modelling of the way to evaluate work and individual support are used to assist pupils to build their skills. Pupils are interested and involved and this enables them to concentrate. In both year groups, art is often taught in conjunction with other subjects. This is effective where planning is specific as to the skills that will be developed in the artwork and where these skills are taught in a dedicated fashion before the work is undertaken. It is much less effective when the art is merely a vehicle for linking an activity to a theme. The work on pirates complemented the work done in literacy but was underpinned by the good teaching of skills such as the selection of texture and the ability to cut and stick materials. Teachers make appropriate use of art or drawing packages on the computer to assist pupils to develop both their design and their ICT skills.
82. Art and design has been largely uncoordinated in the school, but the co-ordinator has produced a useful document that identifies the progression of skills to be taught to the pupils. As yet, the link between this and the teachers' planning for units of work or lessons is not sufficiently clear and does not fully exploit its quality. Taken as a whole, the leadership of the subject has been satisfactory because, while not a school focus, the informal maintenance of the subject has ensured that the pupils have made good progress.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

83. During the inspection, it was possible to observe only one lesson of design and technology. Judgements are also based on a scrutiny of pupils' work, teachers' planning and discussions with pupils. Standards in design and technology at the end of Year 2 are in line with national expectations and all pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve in a satisfactory way. This is similar to the findings from the last inspection.
84. The youngest pupils learn to make things using a range of constructional equipment. Pictorial evidence indicates that younger pupils use this construction equipment to investigate how to make structures. They begin to have an awareness of design through, for example, learning to make a fruit salad. They learn to select different fruits, combining the flavours, textures and tastes to make a pleasing result. The oldest pupils learn to make a wider range of structures. Pupils in Year 2 have made model aeroplanes from junk materials. They learn that different materials are suitable for different tasks, and that materials require different techniques to join them together.
85. There is very limited evidence on which to judge the quality of teaching and learning. Only one lesson was seen during the inspection week and the school was not able to provide samples of work previously completed. In the aspects of teaching and learning that are possible to judge, the work is satisfactory. Teachers' files and the lesson seen show that teachers plan conscientiously. They know their pupils well and try to provide activities appropriate to their needs and interests. Activities are often appropriately linked to a current theme and this gives the pupils an understanding of purpose. A group of pupils in Year 1, for example, experienced the skills of wrapping a present to send to a friend in hospital. This linked productively with the work focused on hospitals in other subjects. Teachers' planning, however, tends to show what pupils will make rather than the design and technology skills they will learn. Resources for design technology are satisfactory. There is an appropriate range of construction equipment for pupils to use, and a resource area in the main part of the school contains a good range of tools, cooking utensils and fabrics. Teachers use these resources creatively and they make good use of teaching assistants to the benefit of the pupils' learning.

GEOGRAPHY

86. Standards of attainment in geography at the end of Year 2 are in line with national expectations, and pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve in a satisfactory way overall. The youngest pupils are able to make simple observations about the locality of the school. They know that some houses are different from others and that some buildings are constructed of different materials. They are beginning to gain an awareness of the wider world. By following the journeys of 'Barnaby Bear', they begin to understand about other places. The oldest pupils are able to describe some of the physical features of the locality. They have an understanding of simple maps. They learn more about the local environment through field studies using the Withy Trail and in the Cary Valley. In Year 1, pupils generally achieve in a satisfactory way. Pupils' books, however, reveal that there are differences in attainment between the pupils in the different classes. Whilst satisfactory overall, a small group of the middle and higher ability pupils in the reception/Year 1 class are not doing as well as they could because insufficient demand is placed upon them.
87. During the present inspection, it was possible to observe only one lesson of geography. Judgements are therefore based also on an analysis of teachers' planning and discussions with both teachers and pupils. As in the last inspection, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Pupils' books and conversations show that they are developing good subject vocabulary and that this aspect has been carefully taught. Teachers have been able to enthuse pupils about geography. As a result, pupils say they enjoy geography lessons. They are keen to learn and this helps them to do so effectively. During the inspection, pupils showed great interest in a graph they were making about their parents' jobs and this encouraged them to concentrate hard. In the main, geography is appropriately taught as a separate subject and evidence in pupils' books and from discussion with them shows that pupils learn in an appropriate way in these lessons. There are occasions, however, when geography is taught alongside other subjects in a single lesson. In these lessons, learning is much more variable and is sometimes unsatisfactory and pupils show some confusion about what they should be learning. In the lesson seen, for

example, pupils not working directly with the teacher were engaged in an activity identified in the planning as science but became engaged in an activity locating where foods came from. This left some pupils with mistaken impressions about the source of some of the foods because neither the science nor the geography was clearly enough taught.

88. The leadership and management of geography are unsatisfactory. The subject co-ordinator has an over-heavy curriculum workload and is, therefore, unable to give sufficient attention to the subject. There is a detailed policy, but there are no procedures to ensure that there is consistency throughout the school. The work produced by pupils shows that there are differences in the level of attainment of pupils of the same age within different classes. The lack of time for objective evaluation of teaching and learning has not made it possible for the co-ordinator to identify weaknesses in the subject. Resources for geography are unsatisfactory. Although there are some good modern globes and atlases, many of the geography books are old and outdated. Several show incorrect images of places that are now historical rather than geographical. Some reinforce stereotypical ideas. Several atlases show countries that no longer exist, giving pupils incorrect information about the world.

HISTORY

89. Since the last inspection, teachers' attention has been correctly focused upon the raising of standards in English and mathematics throughout the school. The school has correctly increased the time and energy spent on these subjects and, as a direct consequence, less time and energy is now devoted to teaching and learning in history and standards have dropped from the time of the last inspection when they were found to be above average and when pupils achieved in a better way than most pupils did nationally. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, now achieve appropriately. Standards in history at the end of Year 2 are currently average. As in geography, and for the same reasons, a small group of the middle and higher ability pupils in the reception/Year 1 class are not doing as well as they could.
90. The older pupils are beginning to develop an awareness of the lives of famous people. They know, for example, about the work of Florence Nightingale and the voyages of Christopher Columbus. These stories do not yet, however, fit into a mental understanding of the passing of time. Even the higher-attaining pupils are unable to place these two characters from history into sequence, nor do they understand their historical significance. The youngest pupils are beginning to become aware of how things have changed. They appreciate that the ordinary things they use, such as electrical items, are not the same as when their parents were young.
91. The quality of teaching and learning of history is satisfactory. Teachers know their pupils well and try hard to give them an interesting experience of history. Teachers make extensive and productive use of the good range of historical artefacts available within the school. In a Year 1 lesson, for example, the pupils were finding out about the development of ways of cleaning the house. They listened attentively whilst their teacher showed them how the methods to clean carpets had evolved from a carpet beater to a modern vacuum cleaner. In lessons, the teachers ensure that pupils' behaviour is very good. They all provide pupils with a secure environment within which they feel able to learn. The pupils' attitudes to their learning are very good. They try hard to do their best.
92. A clear scheme of work is supplemented by good guidance showing the development of historical skills. This is not yet used consistently enough throughout the school to ensure consistency in the provision within different classes, particularly in the demands made upon the small group of potentially higher attaining pupils in the mixed age classes. The planning for lessons fails to identify with sufficient clarity the extent to which pupils of all prior attainments will improve their knowledge and skills. This inhibits the progress made by the few potentially higher attaining pupils in Year 1 because they are not always given suitable opportunities to further develop their knowledge and understanding. These pupils do not achieve sufficiently well.
93. In part because of the instability of the school's staffing and in part because the leadership role of subject co-ordinators is under developed in the school, there has been little recent effective

development of history. Despite the very conscientious dedication shown by the curriculum co-ordinator, there has been a lack of opportunity to check the quality of teaching and learning. This has resulted in a lack of awareness of the drop of standards in history since the last inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

94. By the end of Year 2, all pupils attain the standards expected for their age in ICT. The increased demands of the new National Curriculum since the last inspection make comparisons with standards at that time unrealistic. The school has made good headway in improving the resources available for the teaching of the subject. These are set to improve still further in the near future. This increase in the number of computers means that pupils have more chance to learn the increased range of skills. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve in a satisfactory way. The subject co-ordinator has made the very sensible decision to employ a teaching assistant to teach and supervise small groups of pupils in the ICT suite. This has ensured that the facility is used productively and is key to the progress pupils currently make. At present, the use of computers in classrooms is somewhat limited by the differences between these and the computers in the suite; however, plans are in place to improve this situation.
95. By Year 2, pupils have a secure understanding of how to load, save and print their work. The pupils know how to change the type of print and can enlarge and reduce its size. They understand that computers are used in a large number of ways and contexts and that ICT has advantages over pen and paper methods of writing when correcting mistakes or altering what they have written. They use a number of programs confidently. In mathematics, pupils have used the computer to display data in the form of block graphs and used games, such as a competitive game involving subtraction of money, to increase their mathematical understanding. They draw and paint using the computer and have good knowledge of how to use tools such as the 'fill' and 'line width' facilities. The present group of pupils have not yet used programmable toys to learn to understand how to program a series of actions, however this is planned for the near future. Pupils thoroughly enjoy all the activities concerned with computers and this enhances their learning.
96. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and good in Year 2. The teaching assistant, who now undertakes much of the teaching for Year 1 and supports the teaching in Year 2, is well organised and has good knowledge of the aspects she is teaching. Although relatively newly appointed, good care has been taken to ensure that she has this knowledge. She maintains clear records of her work and this informs teachers appropriately. In both these small group sessions and in the ICT lesson led by the class teacher, pupils are well organised, and clear instructions are given as to how programs are operated. This enables pupils to steadily gain skills, knowledge and understanding in the subject. In one lesson, for example, the Year 2 class was gathered round a single computer while the teacher talked through the way to change the density of the spray facility in an art program. This clear instruction enabled the pupils to demonstrate the facility later in the week. Very good emphasis was placed on pupils' using technical language to reinforce their knowledge and this further improves memory. Because vocabulary is very carefully used, pupils learn correct terminology and readily use terms such as 'menu', 'font', 'icon' and 'double click' when they talk about work. During the Year 2 lesson, 'density' was added to this vocabulary. Good attention is paid to the differing needs of pupils who have or do not have computers at home and this ensures that each makes suitable progress. Because pupils enjoy ICT, they apply themselves with concentration, and this good level of concentration speeds their learning. The very good scheme of work underpins this teaching, but is not yet fully embedded in classes other than Year 2. The full use of the ICT scheme of work is a priority in the current school development plan. This plan also correctly identifies the need to increase the knowledge and confidence of teachers and other teaching assistants in the use of ICT in the context of both the ICT suite and the classroom.
97. The development of ICT has been successfully led and the knowledge of the co-ordinator gained from some monitoring of the subject has led to the appropriate identification of priorities for further development.

MUSIC

98. Only one lesson was taught during the inspection and this was considered in conjunction with teachers' planning and discussions with pupils when judgements were made. At this early stage in Year 2, pupils have above average skills and knowledge in the aspects of music seen. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, are achieving well. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Pupils throughout the school sing tunefully. They are given opportunities to listen to a range of music, sometimes in lessons, but also in assemblies and they do this with attention. They are developing their own likes and dislikes, which they readily discuss. Pupils have a good understanding of some elements of the music they sing or play. They can clap rhythms, identify the pulse of the music and consider whether to sing a song loudly or softly. They play correctly some percussion instruments. They have very good understanding of musical terms and use them easily when talking about their work.
99. In general, the teaching of music is good. A number of the staff in the school have musical expertise and this enables a confident approach to the teaching. The school is also now involved with a project to encourage the development of music skills through singing. This positive approach to music pays dividends, especially in singing. Teachers adopt an enthusiastic approach to the teaching of music; this enthusiasm is communicated to pupils, and they too take a confident and enthusiastic approach to their learning. A good range of different types of activity is organised around a single theme in a lesson. For example, in the lesson seen, the teacher confidently demonstrated to pupils the difference between the pulse and the rhythm, using careful terminology. The pupils then clapped, walked, beat and talked about these two elements, and the range of different types of activity taught and reinforced their knowledge and understanding well.
100. Music has been securely led and the involvement in the current project is raising the subject's profile. There is now external monitoring of the teaching and learning in the school and this is linked to good quality in-service training. Music is thus set to improve further.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

101. Standards in physical education at the end of Year 2 are in line with those expected nationally and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Good attention is paid to a small number of pupils who have physical difficulties and these pupils also achieve well, within their limitations. The oldest pupils are able to use large gymnastics equipment to explore different ways of moving. They can find different ways of traversing climbing frames, using different skills that they have already acquired. Most pupils have a sense of their own capabilities. However, the higher-attaining pupils do not use a sufficient range of gymnastic skills, for example in dismounting from a piece of apparatus. All pupils are developing a good awareness of the importance of safety in physical education. They know that it is important to warm up carefully before activities.
102. Taken as a whole, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, although in some lessons teaching is good. Teachers are careful to make sure that pupils are safe. They all establish good routines so that pupils understand the need to maintain high standards of behaviour. The pupils respond positively. They have a sensible and mature approach to their physical education lessons. In the hall they are very well behaved. When they undertake activities, they are aware of others in the class. They wait their turn to use equipment and use it sensibly and this helps them to learn effectively. The teachers prepare carefully, but they are not always aware of the differing abilities of the pupils in their class and do not always provide sufficient challenge for the higher-attaining pupils. In the best lessons, teachers provide very direct guidance to enable pupils to acquire new skills. In a good lesson for older pupils, for example, the teacher gave the pupils some good opportunities to work on the equipment within the hall. This enhanced skills, particularly when they were given direct guidance on how to improve. In lessons, pupils are very enthusiastic. They enjoy physical education and this helps their learning.
103. Since the development of physical education has not been a priority for the school, it has received minimal leadership. There is a good scheme of work that gives a clear structure to the subject, but the co-ordinator has not had time allocated to check the quality of teaching and learning, nor

to further promote the subject. As a result, standards whilst still acceptable have fallen slightly since the time of the last inspection.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

104. Only two religious education lessons were seen during the inspection. Evidence was gathered from these, from teachers' planning, from discussions with pupils and from looking at their work. As at the time of the last inspection, standards in religious education are in line with those set out in the Somerset Agreed Syllabus. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve in a satisfactory way. Through a carefully thought out programme of work, pupils gain the skills and knowledge they need. By Year 2, pupils have a secure knowledge of some of the traditions, beliefs and stories associated with the Christian faith and begin to relate these to their own lives. They can, for example, talk about the story of Moses and relate the Ten Commandments to the rules that they have devised for their own classroom. They understand the significance of times such as Christmas and Easter, knowing that they are not just secular festivals. Pupils talked about Christmas as being the celebration of Jesus' birthday and, although presents had an obvious place of importance for them, talked about how the Kings and shepherds of the story show that it is important to give as well as receive. Pupils also know some stories about important figures in religious history. They understood that Ghandi was a very religious man and that influenced the way he lived. The story of Mother Theresa was related by them to the idea of helping others. Through work in assembly, they have begun to have some very sketchy understanding that other people have different beliefs and traditions. Work on Judaism is planned for the next two terms and understandably, therefore, the pupils had little or no knowledge of this, other than that gained in their study of Christianity.
105. Teaching in religious education is satisfactory overall and was good in the lessons seen. Teachers plan conscientiously, although this planning fails to show different levels of expectation for different groups within the class, and planning for split-age groups is not sufficiently collaborative. The subject co-ordinator has ensured that each teacher has suitable knowledge of the aspects of religious education they teach and this is effectively supported by the scheme of work. Well thought out assemblies are used to extend religious education knowledge and understanding. During the inspection week these were related to light and pupils were given opportunities to understand how light is used in festivals in the Hindu, Jewish and Christian faiths. This provided a basis for further study. More care, however, needs to be taken to ensure that pupils understand that followers of different faiths live in Britain as well as in other countries.
106. In the lessons seen, children were well managed and teachers used good whole-class teaching to communicate ideas clearly to the pupils. Follow-up activities are suitably linked to this input and give pupils time to consolidate what they have been told through practical activity. In a Year 1 lesson, for example, the teacher gave a very clear explanation of the significance of elements of the Christingle and this was very profitably reinforced by talk when the pupils assembled their own Christingle during the day. Pupils greatly enjoyed this, learned the required knowledge and they showed remarkable self-control over not eating the sweets!

107. In many ways the subject has been well led. The scheme of work is good, but is not yet having sufficient impact on mixed-age planning. The provision of advice by the co-ordinator has ensured that teachers are armed to teach the subject. The co-ordinator has assembled a small but useful collection of artefacts for teachers to use and these are very organised and accessible. There has been no opportunity for the co-ordinator to properly monitor the subject, however, and this has limited further development. Overall leadership is, therefore, satisfactory.