

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **CROSCOMBE C of E PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Crocombe

Wells

LEA area: Somerset

Unique reference number: 123829

Headteacher: Mrs S Budden

Reporting inspector: Mrs L Woods  
21079

Dates of inspection: 20 – 22 May 2002

Inspection number: 198467

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Long Street Croscombe Wells Somerset
Postcode:	BA5 3QL
Telephone number:	01749 343114
Fax number:	01749 344826
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs J Brown
Date of previous inspection:	10 – 13 November 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mrs L Woods 21079	Registered inspector	The Foundation Stage curriculum Mathematics Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology Music	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
Mrs C Webb 9614	Lay inspector		Attitudes, behaviour and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mrs E Pacey 25925	Team inspector	Additional educational needs Equal opportunities English Science Geography History Physical education	How good are curricular and other opportunities?

The inspection contractor was:

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## REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>	<b>10</b>
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
<b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>24</b>

## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Croscombe Church of England primary school is a central part of the village community, and is part of the Kent-Somerset Virtual Education Action Zone (VEAZ)<sup>1</sup>. There are currently 72 boys and girls on roll between the ages of 4 and 11, who are taught in three mixed age classes, making it considerably smaller than most primary schools. Pupils come from a wide range of social backgrounds, but none is from an ethnic minority family. Many pupils travel from nearby Shepton Mallet to attend this popular school. Four per cent of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals, which is well below the national average. Seventeen per cent of pupils are identified as having additional educational needs, on the old Code of Practice for the identification of such pupils, and the school is well on the way to implementing the new Code of Practice<sup>2</sup>. This figure is broadly in line with the national average, although the number of such pupils in each small year group varies significantly, and affects their overall attainment on entry to school and standards each year.

### HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school is working well despite its difficult circumstances. Pupils feel secure, work hard and are happy and interested in their work. They reach average standards in English, mathematics and science by the time they leave at the age of 11 years. Small year groups of pupils have very variable levels of attainment on entry to school. They make sound progress overall, and pupils with additional educational needs make good progress, during their time in school. Many changes in staff have compounded the school's problems in implementing improvements, but the school has a very high commitment to ensuring pupils feel secure and valued, and develop as mature, confident individuals. The school is led well by the headteacher, with concerned support from the governing body, although governors' strategic involvement in managing and monitoring its work is under-developed. The headteacher has too heavy a workload, although management is satisfactory overall. As a small school, its income per pupil is high, but the school manages its finances well and provides sound value for money.

#### What the school does well

- Pupils really enjoy coming to school and appreciate the opportunities provided. Their behaviour is good.
- Standards in physical education are above expectations by the end of Year 6.
- The school has a warm, welcoming family atmosphere in which children and pupils thrive.
- All staff share a commitment to the welfare and well-being of the children and pupils. Procedures for ensuring their welfare and assessing their progress are very good.
- Partnership with parents and the community is very good. Partnership with other educational establishments is excellent.

#### What could be improved

- Consistency in the quality of teaching and learning could be strengthened.
- Curriculum planning could be improved.
- Management of the work of the school needs reviewing.

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

### HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good progress in addressing the key issues identified by the previous inspection in November 1997. Teachers' expertise in both mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) has improved. Resources for ICT are very good, and are used well throughout the school. The school improvement plan is a comprehensive document, showing areas for improvement in the different aspects of the work of the school. It does not, however, indicate which areas have the highest priority. Schemes of work are fully in place in all subjects; many adapted sensibly from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's guidelines. Class restructuring, however, means that the school needs to revisit its long term planning to take

<sup>1</sup> A partnership of 24 schools in two counties who communicate electronically and share their ideas and successes in an atmosphere of mutual co-operation.

<sup>2</sup> [Code of Practice – this gives practical advice to schools and local education authorities about their responsibilities, duties and tasks to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs receive the most appropriate help and support to further their learning and personal development. This is a statutory duty under the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001.](#)

account of the different age groups in each class. The role of subject co-ordinators is defined appropriately, but significant changes in teaching staff have been a barrier to ensuring these roles are implemented fully.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests. With a standard admission number of 13, children's levels of attainment when they join the school, and the standards they reach by the time they leave, vary considerably each year. Consequently, comparison between national test results in different years, and an evaluation of trends over time, is unreliable, as each pupil represents a significant percentage of the whole.

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

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

The table shows that in the 2001 tests for 11-year-olds standards in English were below the national average, and well below performance in similar schools. In mathematics and science, standards were average, but below average compared with schools in the same free school meals bracket. In 2000, standards were above average, and in 1999 they were well above average. In the 2001 national tests for 7-year-olds, standards in reading were below the national average. In writing, standards were well below the national average, and in mathematics were very low, being in the lowest 5 per cent nationally. Compared with similar schools, attainment in reading was well below average, and was very low in writing and mathematics.

The school has very good procedures for measuring each individual pupils' attainment and progress, enabling the school to set realistic and challenging targets and establish effectively the value added during pupils' time in school. Pupils taking the tests in 2001, for example, made overall good progress in the junior years, in relation to their attainment in the tests for 7-year-olds.

Inspection evidence shows current pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are attaining average standards in English, mathematics and science. Standards are in line with expectations for their age in information and communication technology, art and design, design and technology, history and music. Throughout the school, pupils achieve good standards in singing. Standards in geography are below expectations in Year 2, but just in line with expectations in Year 6. In physical education, pupils reach expected standards in the infants, and good standards in the juniors. Current reception children are attaining above expectations for their age in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. In personal, social and emotional development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development, their attainment is in line with expectations.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils enjoy coming to school, work hard and are eager to please.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good overall. Much of the time pupils' behaviour is very good, although a minority of pupils cause disruption, and play is very boisterous in the playground.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Relationships between pupils, and between adults and pupils are warm and friendly, so that pupils feel secure and valued.
Attendance	Good overall. Term time holidays, however, impact adversely on overall attendance, and a small number of pupils are persistently late.

The warm, caring ethos generated by pupils' good attitudes and the good relationships throughout, is a strength of the school. Absence for holidays during term time has a negative impact on pupils' access to education.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	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 is satisfactory overall and is good in the junior classes. The use of individual teachers' enthusiasm and expertise, and the invaluable input from teachers from local secondary schools, make an important contribution to the quality of learning for the pupils. Teaching in English is good overall, and it is sound in mathematics. The basic skills in literacy and numeracy are taught well and pupils make steady progress in acquiring these. Teachers use an appropriate range of teaching strategies to capture and hold pupils' interest and attention, and work hard to provide a rich and relevant curriculum. Relationships throughout the school are good, and teachers manage pupils well, so that almost all lessons have a buzz of purposeful hard work. Occasionally, teachers spend too much time in introductory sessions, leaving too little time for practical activities or for time at the end of lessons to draw together results and findings. Teachers are careful to include all boys and girls, including those with additional educational needs in all discussions, and value all contributions. The work provided, however, does not always take full account of pupils' different ages and abilities within the class. Learning support assistants make an invaluable contribution to the quality of teaching and learning, particularly for pupils with additional educational needs and children in the reception age group. In the latter case, however, the school does not maximise fully on the assistant's knowledge and expertise.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The school provides a broad, interesting range of curriculum experiences for pupils, supported well by extra-curricular activities. The balance of time allocated to different subjects and when different topics are studied, however, need reviewing.
Provision for pupils with additional educational needs	Good. Provision is managed well. These pupils are fully included in all activities, well supported and make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The development of mature, confident individuals, prepared well for life outside school, is central to the school's philosophy. Provision in all aspects is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. The school places a high priority on ensuring pupils' health, safety and well-being.

The school's partnership with parents and with the local community is very good and is a strength. The links established with the local secondary schools are exemplary, and make a very valuable contribution to the quality of learning in the school, as do links with schools in the VEAZ partnership. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are very good, but the information gained is not used to maximum effect.



## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory overall. The school is led well by the headteacher, and the teamwork between staff is good. However, the headteacher carries too many of the management responsibilities on a day-to-day basis.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory overall. Governors are deeply committed to the school, and fulfil all statutory responsibilities. However, their involvement in strategic management and monitoring of its work is under-developed.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The school has a clear picture of its strengths and areas for development, but significant turbulence in staffing has affected its ability to implement improvements.
The strategic use of resources	Good. As a small school, income per pupil is high, but it makes good use of all resources at its disposal.

Following a period of change, the school now has sufficient appropriately qualified and experienced teachers to meet the needs of the pupils. Learning support assistants play an invaluable role in supporting teachers and pupils. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory, although the library is somewhat inaccessible, poorly stocked and underused overall. Governors need to play a more active role in the management of the school, particularly in relation to the curriculum and additional educational needs. The school manages its budget well and takes the principles of best value into consideration fully when making strategic decisions.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Eight parents attended the meeting with inspectors, and 60 per cent of questionnaires were returned.

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children like coming to school; they work hard and make good progress.</li> <li>Teaching is good, and the school helps children to become mature and responsible.</li> <li>The school is led and managed well, and approachable when there are problems.</li> <li>Children's behaviour is good.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A small number of parents do not feel that homework is satisfactory.</li> <li>A similarly small number feel that the range of activities outside lessons is insufficient.</li> </ul>

Inspectors fully support parents' positive views. The range of activities outside lessons is good considering the size of the school, with parents and teachers working hard to provide these. Appropriate homework is set in all classes.

## PART B: COMMENTARY

### HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

#### The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. This popular village school has a standard admission number of 13 and consequently a small number of pupils in each year group. Levels of attainment when children join the school, and the standards they reach by the time they leave, vary considerably each year. Comparisons between national test results in different years, and evaluating trends over time, are unreliable as each pupil represents a significant percentage of the whole. Procedures for measuring each individual's attainment and progress are very good, enabling the school to set realistic and challenging targets and establish effectively the value added during pupils' time in school. From this assessment, it is clear that boys and girls, including those with additional educational needs, make steady and often good progress as they move through the school, and attain standards in line with their abilities by the time they leave.
2. Current reception children have average levels of attainment on entry. They make steady progress overall, and good progress in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. Attainment in these two areas of learning is above expectations for their age. In personal, social and emotional development, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical and creative development, their attainment is in line with expectations in the early learning goals for the Foundation Stage<sup>3</sup>.
3. In the 2001 national tests for 7-year-olds, standards in reading were below the national average. In writing, standards were well below the national average and in mathematics were in the lowest 5 per cent nationally. Compared with similar schools, based on free school meals statistics, attainment in reading was well below average, and was very low in writing and mathematics. Teacher assessment of standards in science showed these to be average. However, amongst these pupils, now in Year 3, a high proportion has additional educational needs. By contrast, pupils now in Year 4 achieved overall standards in the national tests, which were well above the national average, and were very high in reading. These differences are clearly evident in the standards of pupils' class work. Pupils currently in Year 2 are achieving average standards in English, mathematics and science.
4. The 2001 tests for 11-year-olds showed standards in English to be below the national average, and well below performance in similar schools. In mathematics and science, standards were average, but below average compared with schools in the same free school meals bracket. In 2000, standards were above average, and in 1999 they were well above average. This, however, reflects differences between each group of pupils, and does not represent a decline in standards. Pupils taking the tests in 2001 made overall good progress in the junior years, in relation to their attainment in the tests for 7-year-olds. Standards in English, mathematics and science are average for current pupils in Year 6.
5. Inspection evidence shows pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are attaining standards in line with expectations for their age in information and communication technology, art and design, design and technology, history and music. Throughout the school, pupils achieve good standards in singing. Standards in geography are below expectations in Year 2, but just in line with expectations in Year 6. This is the result of insufficient time being allocated to

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<sup>3</sup> [The Foundation Stage begins when children reach the age of three and ends at the end of the reception class. It is a distinct stage in preparing children for later schooling and is based on six areas of learning. Early learning goals - these are expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage. They mainly refer to achievements children make in connection with communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; personal, social and emotional development; knowledge and understanding of the world; and physical and creative development.](#)

the subject in the infant years. In physical education, pupils reach expected standards in the infants, and good standards in the juniors, through the effective use of a local secondary school's facilities to promote a high quality of learning.

6. Pupils with additional educational needs make good progress throughout the school. When withdrawn from classes to work in small groups, work is well matched to the targets on their individual education plans. As a result, pupils achieve well and occasionally reach average standards by the time they leave the school. Pupils are well supported by learning support assistants in class. However, they are not always given work that matches their needs and as a consequence their opportunities for learning are sometimes restricted.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

7. The school continues to instil in children and pupils the positive attitudes to their learning and strong moral values and good social skills within a Christian family environment recorded in the 1997 inspection report. Parents are pleased that their children attend Croscombe Primary School and ensure that the majority arrive on or before time in the mornings. Punctuality and attendance are improving with over 95 per cent achieved during the inspection week, though there are still the few persistent latecomers who arrive five or ten minutes late every morning.
8. Children and pupils like their school and are eager to start their work once they enter the building. Registration provides a calm and purposeful start to the school day. Children quickly learn what is expected of them and how to work and play well together. Having carefully cut out their pictures, for example, those in reception chatted happily as they made their own books. During the Class 1 music lesson, all were so engrossed in 'passing the ring' that many forgot to sing! When their interest is kindled, pupils are enthusiastic, share their views and make helpful comments about others' contributions. This happened when pupils in Years 3 and 4 were composing their formal letters of protest to the local council against the proposed development of their school field and a lively debate developed. During their physical education lesson at a local secondary school, junior pupils concentrated really hard and were very successful in improving their skills, following the teacher's requests for them to perform to the very best of their ability.
9. Behaviour at school is very good most of the time and good overall, which is an improvement since 1997. The code of conduct and the sanctions which follow if the rules are not kept are well known to all. Pupils like the house points, which are counted weekly with the winning house rewarded by being first in for lunch. Relationships are good and teachers provide good role models for all to follow. All pupils, whatever their educational or social needs, are very well integrated and supported by their peers. Occasionally, some silly and rather immature behaviour occurs in lessons, which takes up the teacher's time and limits the progress of others in the class, but this is the exception rather than the rule. There have been no exclusions for many years.
10. Outside, very exuberant and sometimes over-boisterous play is enjoyed by the majority, unfortunately resulting in some minor accidents as a few are 'bowled over' in the rush. Pogo sticks, used with enthusiasm and some skill by pupils in Years 3 and 4, just avoid the tricycles, frantically pedalled by the determined younger children. However, none of the behaviour seen during the inspection was malicious and others are genuinely concerned if one of their number is hurt, with the older ones comforting and accompanying the youngest for first aid treatment. 'Wet play' presents no problems. Although the mid-morning break was abruptly curtailed by heavy rain one morning the orderly retreat in which all the equipment was carried back inside and the pupils' cheerful acceptance of this was very impressive.

11. Children's and pupils' personal development is good. Year 6 pupils are appointed monitors, their duties displayed prominently in the classroom. All like to assist adults and carry out any task conscientiously and well. The youngest carefully carry the register back to the office. Older pupils organise the fruit tuck shop at morning break and choose what to purchase with the money they make.
12. Assemblies and group sessions known as circle time provoke thoughtful discussion. During the debate on friendship, loyalty and 'nasty' nicknames, all pupils agreed that individuals are unique, whatever their colour or creed, and should be valued equally. Pupils' confidence and self-esteem are well developed, and it was with great patience that Class 1 and their teacher listened attentively as the youngest proudly explained at length how his two points had been obtained during his physical education lesson! Pupils' develop mature and responsible attitudes, and they look forward with confidence to the next stage in their education.

### **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

13. The quality of teaching is sound overall, and is good or better in ten of the 22 lessons seen. Two sessions were judged very good, and no unsatisfactory lessons were observed. This represents some improvement since the last inspection, when 7 per cent of lessons were judged unsatisfactory, although the percentage of very good teaching is lower than in 1997.
14. The school has suffered considerably from changes in teaching staff and it is all credit to the current teachers that the warm, family atmosphere has been maintained and that pupils make steady progress in lessons and over time. Several teachers work part-time and they maintain close liaison to ensure there is no disruption to the quality of learning. It has excellent relationships with local secondary schools and maximises to the full on the expertise of teachers in these.
15. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall. Both the teacher and her assistant have a clear understanding of the needs of young children and their curriculum requirements, and plan an interesting range of activities for them. Reception children are taught in the same class as infant pupils, and benefit from the challenge of working alongside their older peers. However, the school is not maximising either on the skill and expertise, or on the time, of the learning support assistant. Some whole-class sessions do not meet the specific needs of the youngest children and they become restless during long sessions on the carpet. During sessions when the assistant is focusing specifically on the reception age group, teaching is good; children respond very well to expert questioning and make good progress.
16. Teaching in the infants is satisfactory, and it is good in the juniors, where the expertise of teachers from the local secondary schools makes a valuable additional contribution to the quality of pupils' learning. The expertise of teachers within the school is also used to good advantage, particularly in art and design and music. This could usefully be extended, as the art co-ordinator does not currently teach the oldest pupils. Overall, teachers have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach, and work hard to plan interesting and relevant activities, which capture pupils' interest.
17. The school has successfully incorporated the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies into its work, and the basic skills in literacy and numeracy are taught well. However, teachers do not consistently share the objectives of the lesson with pupils, so that they are not always completely clear about what they are aiming to achieve. Sessions at the end of lessons are used appropriately to share pupils' successes, as in a Class 2 literacy lesson, where pupils shared the letters they had been writing with each other, but again, teachers seldom revisit the aims to see how well they have been met or to extend these

with additional challenge. Teachers use a satisfactory range of methods to capture and hold pupils' attention, and ensure all pupils are fully included in lessons. They read stories expressively, and boys and girls listen attentively as a result. Pupils in Class 1, for example, became completely engrossed in the story *Peace at Last* and joined in enthusiastically with repeating phrases. Teachers provide clear, detailed explanations, as in a Class 3 mathematics lesson on gathering and collating data, but these introductory sessions are sometimes over long, so that pupils become restless, and have too little time for practical activity. Teachers support pupils effectively whilst they are working, and learning support assistants provide very valuable help and advice to pupils with additional educational needs so that all pupils make steady and often good progress. In a Class 2 art lesson, for example, the purposeful, calm working atmosphere was impressive. However, in too many lessons, teachers do not set work that matches pupils' ability closely enough, and this reduces their opportunities to learn and make progress.

18. Teaching for pupils with additional educational needs in small groups is very effective. The additional educational needs co-ordinator liaises closely with class teachers to ensure that when pupils are withdrawn from lessons, their work closely matches that carried out by the rest of the class. This ensures that pupils are included well in all learning activities. During small group work, pupils' work is closely matched to the needs identified on their individual education plans. This helps them to achieve well at the level at which they are working and encourages good attitudes to their work. Learning support assistants give good support to pupils during lessons.
19. Teachers know their pupils well, and relationships are good throughout the school. This gives pupils confidence to approach any adult in the class if they need help. All adults share the same high expectations of good behaviour and hard work, and these are almost always met. On the rare occasions when pupils' behaviour is disruptive, this is handled well, although the pace of learning for the majority is slowed as teachers deal with individual pupils. Most teachers continuously monitor, assess and guide pupils satisfactorily during lessons. Some teachers make notes about how pupils have achieved and made progress during lessons, but this practice is inconsistent. Teachers' marking is also inconsistent. Some celebrates pupils' achievements well, some is just ticks, but there are too few comments to inform pupils of what they need to do to improve in their next piece of work. Homework is used well, particularly for the oldest pupils, to extend and enhance their learning in school.

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

20. The curriculum for children in reception is based securely on the recommendations for the Foundation Stage. The six areas of learning are covered fully in planning, and children benefit greatly from the additional challenge provided by learning alongside their older peers. Appropriate resources are available for each area of learning, but the school day for Class 1 is closely structured to meet the needs of infant pupils. This means that the youngest children have too few opportunities to use wheeled toys, construction kits and climbing apparatus to develop their physical skills and for imaginative play to support their creative development.
21. Good progress has been made in addressing the issue relating to the curriculum reported by the previous inspection. All subjects now have effective schemes of work. The curriculum provided in the infants and juniors is broad and includes all the subjects of the National Curriculum including religious education. Provision for pupils' personal social and health education, sex education and education about drugs misuse is sound. However, not all subjects in the curriculum are treated with equal importance. For example, geography, where one topic was missed in order to continue with history, and another became dominated by historical features. As a result, the range of opportunities

to develop pupils' geographical skills, knowledge and understanding are limited and this has an impact on their attainment. Strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy are being implemented appropriately.

22. The two-year cycle for each subject is planned carefully by co-ordinators to try to ensure that there is no unnecessary repetition in the work covered. However, there is no whole-school overview of the topics to be covered. The planning of topics by subjects, year groups and in two-year cycles has resulted in three sets of long-term planning. This makes it difficult to track and monitor exactly which topics should be taught at a given time. In addition, the recent reorganisation of classes has resulted in some confusion as to which topics should be taught, and very recent staffing changes have resulted in an increase in the headteacher's teaching commitment. All of this has made it very difficult to monitor the curriculum. As a result, some topics are being repeated, such as teeth in science, and subjects such as geography are being neglected.
23. The school ensures that all pupils are fully included and all have full access to the curriculum. Provision for pupils with additional educational needs is good. These pupils are identified early in their school lives, and monitored closely as they progress through the school. The school is fully aware of pupils who need extra support. Individual education plans provide for pupils' needs well, and give teachers clear and useful advice when planning work in class. However, although these ensure that any work planned for sessions outside the main class activities fully support the learning that takes place in lessons, they are not always used as well as they might be when pupils return to their classes. There is a policy for gifted and talented pupils but this is not being used to provide suitably challenging work for more able pupils.
24. The curriculum is enriched by a wide range of visitors and visits to support the work in class. Visits to museums for work on the Romans in history, music technology demonstrations and visits by the local police to enhance work on the local environment are some examples amongst many. Members of the community make a good contribution to the curriculum, for example, when they visit the school to show pupils how to spin wool and knit. Pupils take a very keen interest in local affairs when they visit the ploughing competition each year. Older pupils enjoy taking part in an exciting residential visit, which enhances their personal and social education very well. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities. These include a popular music club, a football club run by a local football coach and recorders, run by a teacher and a parent. Other activities occur at different times during the year, such as cycling awareness, a revision club before the statutory assessment tests and handbells. Excellent links with local secondary schools enable pupils to share sports facilities and experience expert coaching in physical education, design and technology, music and drama. Pupils thoroughly enjoy these activities; they develop a high level of skills and are extremely well prepared for the transition to the next stage of their education.
25. Partnership with other schools in the VEAZ group is good. It provides an invaluable opportunity to share ideas and good practice in relation to national initiatives, and to develop the partnership between the school and both primary and secondary schools in two counties. It has made an important contribution to the information and communication technology work in the school, both for the pupils and as a means of communication between schools.
26. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good, as a result of the strong Christian ethos and caring, family atmosphere evident in school. During one assembly, all pupils were genuinely reflective as they bowed their heads and remembered the importance of friends, and in another they contemplated the picture of a baby cuckoo thoughtfully, whilst listening to music. It is a delight to watch Year 6 pupils help those in reception with their

reading, the former making careful notes in their own record books on the progress their charges make, and both sharing the younger child's joy of discovery at what he can read.

27. Provision for pupils' moral and social development is good. The code of conduct is known well. This, coupled with adults' high expectations of pupils' behaviour and the family atmosphere prevailing throughout the school, ensures that this is an orderly community. Children and pupils know the rules and why these should be kept. Lunch-time is a social occasion. Whilst links between assemblies and circle time sessions are tenuous, the latter are used well to discuss and resolve immediate problems. 'Golden Time' is only awarded in one class and, whilst this results in some inequality, it has been used successfully.
28. Provision for pupils awareness and knowledge of their own and other cultures and traditions is good as a result of the school's somewhat informal planning for their cultural development. They take part in village activities regularly, and have enjoyed performing at the Strode theatre. All pupils enjoy their singing in school and many have recently enjoyed a music concert. After half term, all pupils will participate in a festival of multi-cultural celebration together with other local small schools. Interesting, informative displays and pictures of the Chinese and East African creation stories decorate the main staircase walls and papier-mâché puppets, made by pupils with the help of a local sculptor, 'sit' in the small area outside the hall and up the stairs. Pupils are interested to learn about other religions, but unfortunately there are no dual-text language books in the library to show them how other cultures record ideas and information.

#### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

29. The school places a very high priority on ensuring the welfare, safety and well-being of children and pupils, and has very good procedures to ensure these. An evaluation of potential hazards is carried out regularly by the headteacher, caretaker and governors. The comprehensive health and safety policy was recently rewritten, and staff trained in first aid are on site at all times. Practice is good. The headteacher, as the designated teacher for child protection, has recently retrained and the policy and systems for ensuring child protection are very good.
30. The school has good procedures to promote and monitor pupils' attendance and punctuality. Names of persistent offenders, who are well known to the office, go in the late book, and registers are monitored closely by the education welfare officer on her monthly visits.
31. Procedures for promoting and supporting good behaviour are effective. The policy is very well written and pupils like the certificates and house points they can receive for their good attitudes as well as for their achievements. One pupil per class is named as star of Croscombe and nominations for the 'pro-social tree'<sup>4</sup> are eagerly sought. Pupils are proud to see their names hanging there. The five staged sanctions include the yellow cards and are used effectively, and the behaviour log is rarely needed.
32. All pupils enjoy taking responsibility, and the school procedures for recording and monitoring their personal development are satisfactory. Teaching staff know their children and pupils well, but although personal development is commented on in pupils' annual reports few other records are kept. Visits, such as the one to Osmington Bay, encourage pupils' self-reliance and develop their confidence and visitors include the local community police officer, who talks to pupils about the difficulties and possible problems they could encounter outside their school environment.

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<sup>4</sup> [A strategy within the VEAZ to promote awareness of social behaviour.](#)

33. The school has very good procedures for monitoring and assessing pupils' attainment from the time they start school. Children's attainment is assessed carefully when they enter the school and this is used effectively to identify those with additional educational needs at an early stage. These 'baseline' tests are followed by regular, systematic testing as pupils progress through the school. Results are used to track and record pupils' progress closely, and to predict their attainment each year and at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Tests are also analysed to show areas of weakness in the curriculum which require extra work, for example, in writing. Each pupil has a useful assessment book containing a collection of detailed, annotated work in English, science and mathematics, which show clearly the progress that has been made during a pupil's time in the school. Additionally, every English and mathematics book has a useful list of what pupils need to do to reach the appropriate level for their age, and detailed personal targets for mathematics and English, although pupils do not have the opportunity to make their own contributions to these. All of this provides a very good range of evidence for teachers about pupils' attainment and progress. However, there is little evidence of teachers' using the wealth of information available to plan work for pupils who are different ages, or for those who learn at different rates in the same class, especially those who are more able.
34. Assessment procedures are used well to identify pupils with additional educational needs. Their needs are identified clearly on their individual educational plans, and teachers then set sensible, achievable targets for each pupil which are reviewed and updated regularly. Targets are shared with pupils, but pupils are not always as involved in setting and monitoring their own targets as they could be. Good liaison exists between the school and external agencies, such as educational psychologists and speech therapists, and their advice is used well. Pupils receive good support from learning support assistants, who record pupils' achievements regularly. These notes, however, are not always used consistently by teachers to plan work in class for specific pupils. As a result, although pupils with additional educational needs make good progress throughout the school, they do not always make as much progress in class lessons as they do when withdrawn.

#### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

35. The school's partnership and relationships with parents have improved since the last inspection and are now very good. Parents value these very good links and strongly support the school's aims and ambitions for their children, demonstrating this through their excellent attendance at consultation meetings and their involvement in school activities. At school productions, the venue is filled to overflowing with proud parents, grandparents and siblings all eager to see children perform. However, this support does not extend to holidays taken in term time and too many parents are still taking their children out of school, which affects their education and mars the school's attendance record as a whole.
36. Whilst few parents have time to help teachers in the classrooms, they assist with the many extra-curricular activities and all try to help their children with work at home. Reading records are not used consistently as a dialogue or effective means of communication between home and school, but parents know they can speak to staff at any time if they have concerns and appreciate the school's 'open door' policy. They are consulted through regular questionnaires about their views.
37. Parents receive good information from the school about their children's progress through their regular meetings and the pupils' annual reports. Targets to help their children improve are included in the latter. The school brochure, governors' annual report, weekly news and other letters ensure that all parents are aware of what has taken place, is happening and future events planned. Useful topic information is given at the beginning of term. Parents of children with additional educational needs are kept well informed, and



are delighted with the support and individual attention their children receive. Much of the contact between school and these parents tends to be informal, and the co-ordinator has plans to increase more formal contacts to further improve the level of support for pupils.

38. The active and enthusiastic Friends of Croscombe School Association (FOCs) run successful social and fund-raising events, which are enjoyed by children, relatives and local residents; the latest venture was the 'Mouse Race'. Children help at the jumble sales and enjoy their discos, and parents 'steward' at the Glastonbury festival, to raise funds for the school. The money raised is used well to augment resources and for children's enjoyment, and FOCs has contributed considerable funds towards the new ICT-Suite. The support FOCs provides is very much appreciated and is indicative of parental involvement as a whole for the school.

## **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

39. The headteacher leads the school well, with the full support of staff, parents and governors. The school's aims and values are reflected well in practice, and it has a warm, family atmosphere in which children and pupils thrive. The headteacher has a clear vision for the future of the school, but has been hampered in her ability to realise this by a significant turnover of staff in recent years. As it is a very small school, each member of staff carries many responsibilities and these changes have resulted in a significant increase in the workload falling on the shoulders of the headteacher.
40. Management of the school is satisfactory, but the headteacher does not have enough time to maintain a clear, strategic overview of its work. In addition to managing the junior years and assessment, she takes responsibility for four subjects including English and mathematics. Staff changes mean that she is also caretaking responsibility for ICT and physical education. With a two-day teaching commitment, this leaves limited time for taking a longer-term view of school development. Other teaching staff with co-ordination roles fulfil these conscientiously, keeping an appropriate overview of the curriculum and standards in their areas of responsibility.
41. Co-ordination of additional educational needs is good. The part-time co-ordinator is knowledgeable, and has a very clear and appropriate action plan to further improve provision for these pupils. She maintains close links with other schools in the area and makes very effective use of sharing resources with them. Good use is made of information and communication technology to record and track their progress. Although not fully in place, the school is making good progress towards implementing the new Code of Practice for pupils with additional educational needs.
42. The headteacher monitors the quality of teaching and learning well, through regular formal and informal classroom visits. She receives valuable support for this from the local education authority, and has a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for development in teaching. Overall, however, there is too little monitoring of the curriculum and the outcomes of pupils' work. Staff do not regularly collect together pupils' work in different subjects to monitor standards and progress throughout the school. The school acknowledges the need to make improvements in these areas.
43. Governors are deeply committed to the school. The chair of governors is a frequent visitor and has a good relationship with the headteacher and school. Other governors have a clear understanding of its strengths and areas for development through regular visits. They bring a good degree of expertise to the school and attend regular training to keep up to date with educational developments. The governing body has an appropriate committee structure, and meets its statutory responsibilities satisfactorily. However, governors' close involvement in the strategic management and monitoring of the school's work is under-developed. The finance, premises and health and safety governors play a

valuable, active part in school management, but the curriculum committee and governor responsible for additional educational needs do not have sufficient knowledge and understanding of their roles. Whilst acknowledging that the headteacher and staff are the experts in education, governors do not provide much needed strategic support for the headteacher in monitoring the direction of the school.

44. The school improvement plan is a comprehensive document, containing detailed action plans for the development of different areas of the curriculum and aspects of the school. This is drawn up by the headteacher and staff. Governors play little part in its formulation, but receive regular reports on progress towards the targets from the headteacher. Several areas for development, however, are behind schedule, as a result of staff changes, and there is no indication of which areas have the highest priority.
45. Day-to-day administration is good and the school has sound procedures to ensure effective financial management and control. The annual budget, set by the headteacher with assistance from the local education authority finance officer, is discussed and adopted by the governors' finance committee. The finance committee plays an active role in monitoring the budget and spending decisions. Best value principles are applied consistently well to any purchases and decisions. The very recent auditor's report contains only minor recommendations, most of which have already been implemented.
46. Despite recent difficulties, the school now has sufficient, well-qualified and committed staff, some of whom work part-time, to teach all National Curriculum subjects. Teachers are very well supported by dedicated learning support assistants and voluntary helpers. Induction procedures for teachers new to the school and support for students are well planned and implemented. All of these appreciate the welcome they receive. Performance management interviews are on course and all staff, teaching and non-teaching, are encouraged to go on courses and to share what they have learnt. The school secretary, finance officer, caretaker and midday supervisors make an important contribution to the smooth running of the school.
47. The school has satisfactory accommodation for the number of pupils on roll and makes good use of the somewhat difficult layout. Two classrooms, one of which houses the new information and communication technology suite, have been created in the roof space of this Victorian building. As a result, however, the hall ceiling is now too low to allow any apparatus work in physical education lessons. However, it is well used for assemblies, dance and non-apparatus physical education lessons and for lunches, as well as for the local parish council and jubilee committee meetings. The small library is mainly used for group sessions for pupils with additional education needs, and is not easily accessible, which limits other pupils' opportunities for independent research.
48. The site, bounded by a fast-flowing stream and the main road, is well secured with stone walls, iron palings and padlocked gates, all in good condition. Most of the tarmac covered playground area is in reasonable condition although this is breaking up where *Woody*, the adventure-climbing frame, is situated. Markings for playground games are fading and the new play hut intended for use by children in the Foundation Stage obscures that corner of the playground. Whilst they do not have an enclosed play area of their own, these children have the opportunity to use the main playground when none of the other pupils is present. The school field, some five minutes' walk away, is used well when the weather permits for lunchtime and physical education, science and art lessons, and contains the valued environmental area and pond.
49. The school has sufficient resources to teach all subjects of the National Curriculum. These are good for physical education, for children in the Foundation Stage. They are very good for information and communication technology (ICT), although the siting of the ICT-Suite within a classroom is not ideal for all pupils to access easily. The school makes

excellent use of the facilities at two local secondary schools to extend pupils' physical education skills and for their lessons in design and technology. The quality of materials to assist those with additional educational or other needs, many of which are borrowed, is satisfactory and these are used well. The majority of the books in the library, however, are old and in poor condition and the range is too narrow. The school makes good use of the County library service to supplement its resources.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

The governors, headteacher and staff should now

- further strengthen the quality of teaching and learning by:
  - ensuring children in reception have access to appropriate opportunities for their physical and creative development,
  - providing sufficient time for geography, to enable pupils to reach expected standards,
  - maximising on individual teacher's expertise,
  - sharing lesson aims with pupils, improving the use of time and of sessions at the end of lessons to review and enhance these,
  - ensuring teachers make full use of comprehensive assessment information, to raise their understanding and expectations of what all pupils can achieve and provide work matched more closely to individual pupils' ages and abilities,
  - improving resources in the library, and making better use of this to develop pupils' knowledge and skills in research;

*(paragraphs 5-6, 15-17, 19-20, 28, 33-34, 49, subject sections)*

- review curriculum planning so that:
  - a whole-school overview of the curriculum shows appropriate subject coverage and balance,
  - the revised class structure is taken into account in planning,
  - the policy for gifted and talented pupils is put into practice fully,
  - topics are revisited without repetition;

*(paragraphs 21-23, subject sections)*

- review the management of the school in order to:
  - re-evaluate the work load of the headteacher,
  - strengthen the role of co-ordinators in monitoring pupils' work,
  - improve the role of the governing body in the strategic management and monitoring of its work.

*(paragraphs 39-40, 42-43, subject sections)*

In addition to the issues above, the school should:

- increase record keeping for pupils' personal development (32)
- make consistent use of reading records as a dialogue between home and school (36)
- identify priorities in the school improvement plan (44)
- review the use of the ICT-Suite (49)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	22
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	29

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	0	2	8	12	0	0	0
Percentage	0	9	36	55	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	72
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	3

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	12

#### English as an additional language

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

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	8
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	8

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.6
National comparative data	5.6

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

### 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	8	7	15

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	5		
	Girls			
	Total			
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	73 (100)	80 (100)	80 (100)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total			
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	67 (100)	80 (100)	93 (100)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001			10

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total			
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	60 (82)	80 (91)	90 (91)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total			
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	50 (64)	30 (73)	50 (73)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

<sup>5</sup> [The existing guidance from OFSTED is that test and examination data should be excluded from inspection reports if the year group is 10 or fewer. This also applies to year groups of boys and girls separately.](#)

### **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	65
Any other minority ethnic group	0

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### **Exclusions in the last school year**

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

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

### **Teachers and classes**

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	3.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19
Average class size	24

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	47

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2000 / 2001
	£
Total income	195 296
Total expenditure	198 008
Expenditure per pupil	2 641
Balance brought forward from previous year	10 359
Balance carried forward to next year	7 647

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2.6
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2.6
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	72
Number of questionnaires returned	43
Percentage returned	60

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	63	33	4	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	63	35	0	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	51	42	7	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	37	47	7	2	7
The teaching is good.	66	30	2	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	42	51	7	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	72	28	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	82	16	2	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	61	35	2	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	58	35	2	0	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	65	30	5	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	35	54	7	2	2

## **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**

#### **Personal, social and emotional development**

50. Children's personal, social and emotional development meets expectations for their age. Children in the reception age group are taught in a class with pupils in Years 1 and 2 and quickly become confident, eager learners. They concentrate well for good periods of time and are interested in all they do. They are supported well by the learning support assistant, who works closely with this age group, but occasionally lose concentration during long sessions with the whole class on the carpet. They have good relationships with adults and each other, co-operate well and are almost always considerate of the needs and feelings of others. They tidy up at the end of sessions conscientiously and enthusiastically. Good teaching supports development in this area of learning well. All adults share the same high expectations, and boys and girls, including those with additional educational needs, respond positively to these and try hard to please their teachers.

#### **Communication, language and literacy**

51. Standards in communication, language and literacy are above expectations for their age, for this group of reception children. They enjoy listening to stories and explanations told by adults, and show their understanding clearly, using mature and interesting vocabulary. They thoroughly enjoy talking about what they are doing to anyone who will listen, and develop their theme well when explaining their work. Boys and girls, including those with additional educational needs, handle books carefully and retell stories enthusiastically. They are very observant, noticing detail in pictures and joining in with repeating phrases confidently, for example, when following *Peace at Last* as a whole class. Many children are well launched into reading and writing. Their work shows good progress in developing an understanding of initial letter sounds and recognition of whole words, and in developing writing from mark making, through copy and trace writing to neat, legible and interesting sentences.
52. Teaching is satisfactory during whole-class sessions and good when the year group is taught separately. The teacher works hard to engage the interest of children and pupils during introductory and final sessions, but the wide age range makes it more difficult to provide appropriate challenge. Children listen closely but sometimes lose interest during long carpet sessions. When working in a small group, the learning support assistant questions children effectively to encourage them to think and talk about what they are doing, and a good quality of learning results.

#### **Mathematical development**

53. Children's mathematical development is above expectations for their age, with most working well within the first levels of the National Curriculum. Children count confidently to ten and beyond, and have a good mathematical vocabulary. Their work shows good development of understanding of number bonds to ten and the beginnings of addition and subtraction. Children recognise and name many shapes, and compare their relative sizes accurately. They have determined ideas about patterns, and use computers competently to create these.
54. Boys and girls, including those with additional educational needs, enjoy mathematical activities and make good progress. Teaching is good by the learning support assistant who works closely with children, encouraging them effectively to think about and explain



what they are doing. Teaching in whole-class sessions is satisfactory; and is particularly valuable in providing additional challenge, by giving children the opportunity to see what older pupils have achieved.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

55. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world meets expectations for their age. They benefit greatly from the wide range of interesting activities the class undertakes, such as visits to a sheep farm and the local ploughing competition, which develop their scientific and geographical understanding well. They use magnifying glasses carefully to examine objects closely, and understand life cycles, such as tadpoles growing into frogs, through visits to the environmental area. The computer-generated illustrations of this visit are impressive and show a good understanding and control of the program's functions. Boys and girls, including those with additional educational needs, enjoy studying old and new toys closely, and use a mature vocabulary to describe these and the differences they notice.
56. Teaching is satisfactory overall and often good, particularly when the learning support assistant works closely with the year group to develop their concentration and ability to explain what they are doing. However, the class structure means that children have limited opportunities to use large construction kits. This restricts development of their understanding in how things fit together, and impacts on their physical development.

### **Physical development**

57. Children's physical development meets expectations for their age. They are well co-ordinated as they move around the classroom and school, and use tools and equipment, such as scissors and pencils sensibly and safely. Their control over these is good. Although no direct teaching was seen, children clearly enjoy their physical education lessons in the hall, and arrive back in class bubbling with enthusiasm. The school has a reasonable range of wheeled toys, construction kits and climbing apparatus. Children use these at playtimes, and are well co-ordinated as they pedal enthusiastically around their small area; occasionally straying into the whole playground. However, the school is aware that it needs to provide more structured sessions with this equipment, to monitor and promote the development of children's gross motor co-ordination skills more closely.

### **Creative development**

58. Children's creative development meets expectations for their age. They use paint, pencil and computer graphics effectively to produce lively art-work, such as interesting charcoal self-portraits, and patterns using texture and tone. They handle and mould clay successfully. Teaching is good, with the enthusiasm and expertise of both teacher and learning support assistant providing good stimulation for children as they work. Children sing familiar songs enthusiastically and tunefully, with counting songs making a good contribution to their mathematical development. They have a good sense of rhythm, and enjoy a lively session with the music specialist. The class organisation, however, does not provide enough opportunities for boys and girls, including those with additional educational needs, to develop their own stories through role-play in imaginative situations. Although the home corner is set up with an optician's shop, no children used this area during observations. This aspect of their creative development is consequently under-developed.

## ENGLISH

59. Standards in English are average at the end of both the infants and juniors, with no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls. This maintains the position found by the last inspection. Trends over time show significant variations in results, but these are due to the varying number of pupils with additional educational needs in each year group, combined with the small number of pupils in each year group, which distort results. Pupils throughout the school make steady progress. Pupils with additional educational needs are fully included in all lessons and make good progress, particularly when withdrawn from class because of the awareness of their needs identified on their individual education plans. However, progress for more able pupils is more restricted, because teachers' expectations are not always high enough and work in class is not always well matched to their needs, especially in writing.
60. Throughout the school, standards in speaking and listening are average. Pupils listen carefully to their teachers and to one another in assemblies, story time and during lessons. Older pupils listen and talk well to younger pupils, encouraging them effectively during shared reading sessions. When asked to work together, they listen to one another's ideas with respect and without interrupting. Pupils express themselves clearly and grow in confidence when speaking in front of an audience. They are confident when greeting and speaking to visitors, willing to put forward their own ideas and explain them clearly. Teachers encourage them consistently to contribute to lessons across the curriculum, by expressing ideas and opinions, seen for example, during an effective plenary session at the end of a physical education lesson. As a result, by the time they leave school at the age of 11, they discuss their work sensibly by speaking in clear, well-constructed sentences with an appropriate range of vocabulary.
61. Standards in reading are average in both the infants and the juniors. Pupils in the infants read their own written-work fluently and with expression. They use satisfactory phonic skills to build words such as *slid* and to spell words such as *stand*, although they frequently need support and encouragement to do this. They are not always challenged sufficiently to look at and use more complex phonic blends, or to use sentence structure for expression when sharing books. As a result, when reading published books aloud, their reading is less fluent and expressive. In Year 6, pupils are all enthusiastic and independent readers. They read fluently and with satisfactory expression. They discuss their favourite books confidently and enjoy passing on their opinions about books to their friends. However, their library and research skills are significantly under-developed. Although older pupils know how to locate information in books using the contents and index, none of the pupils asked could tell how to find a non-fiction book in the library. Few pupils had ever visited the school library to research topics or choose their own books. This represents an unsatisfactory reliance on adults to provide books on topics in the classroom. Pupils, however, use the Internet confidently to research topics, such as rivers in geography and Vikings in history.
62. Standards in writing are average throughout the school but are the weakest area within the English curriculum. In Year 2, pupils use full stops and capital letters in their writing, but this is inconsistent, and the majority of pupils depend on the teacher for support when spelling. The small group of more able pupils use dictionaries independently, and use punctuation, such as speech marks, successfully to write with expression. Although opportunities exist for more extended writing, pupils are not challenged sufficiently to write at length, and teacher-directed tasks tend to limit the vocabulary that can be used. Handwriting is clear and legible but is not always joined. This restricts the ability of more able pupils to attain the higher levels in the statutory tests. In Year 6, pupils write for a wide range of purposes across the curriculum. They write interesting letters asking if they can have their ball back and equally interesting replies: 'Not until you mend my window!' They use persuasive arguments to debate whether fox hunting should be banned or not,

some of which are well expressed and argued. Pupils study famous poems, such as Kipling's *The Way through the Woods* and write their own versions. However, there is little evidence of good, sustained writing using lively and imaginative vocabulary. Handwriting is neat, although it is not always in pen. Pupils use information and communication technology competently to word process and edit their work, such as the lively debate on fox hunting.

63. Boys and girls, including those with additional educational needs, enjoy their work. They listen attentively, work hard and are keen to please, although interest sometimes wanes in classes where they are not given stimulating challenges.
64. Teaching is good in the majority of lessons and never less than satisfactory. As a result pupils make sound progress except in writing where progress is less satisfactory. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Assessment procedures are good and help to inform teachers about how pupils are progressing. A particularly good feature of assessment is the sharing of the requirements for achieving expected levels with pupils, so that they know what they need to do in their statutory tests. This is made even more relevant when individual pupils are given targets for improvement so that they know clearly what they have to do to improve their work. However, expectations of the standard of work are not always high enough. Work is not always planned sufficiently well for pupils who are in mixed-age classes or for groups of pupils who learn at different rates. This has a negative impact on the progress and attainment of some pupils, especially the older pupils in the infant class and the more able pupils throughout the school.
65. The co-ordinator is aware of these issues, and has plans to address them. Resources for English are satisfactory. Good use is made of facilities to borrow and share resources with other schools locally. Each class has an adequate collection of fiction books. However, the library is inaccessible to pupils and is not used sufficiently or efficiently. It does not have an adequate quantity of good quality books to enable pupils to develop good research and library skills.

## **MATHEMATICS**

66. Attainment in mathematics is average by the end of the current Year 2 and Year 6, which maintains the position found by the previous inspection. The school has successfully addressed the key issue, to provide better opportunities for mathematical investigations. Work in pupils' books shows they undertake a good range of these, and mathematics is used well in other subjects, such as accurate measuring in design and technology and data handling in science and geography. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used appropriately to support this work, for example, to produce bar graphs and pie charts from recorded data. ICT, however, is not used to provide extra support in mathematics for pupils with additional educational needs, by using specific software designed to reinforce particular basic skills.
67. Work covers the full range of mathematical activities. By the end of the infants, for example, pupils count, add and subtract two-digit numbers correctly and know their times tables in 2s, 5s, 3s and 10s. They tell the time accurately to the hour and half past, and more able pupils recognise digital and analogue times. They use standard and non-standard measurements competently in problem solving, as when comparing the weights of different sorts of apples. They record their results neatly, using tally charts and bar graphs, which are carefully coloured.
68. By the end of the juniors, pupils in Year 6 confidently calculate using large numbers and all four operations. They use a good range of strategies to double, halve and approximate numbers and convert fractions to decimals and percentages competently.

Pupils recognise positive and negative numbers when plotting co-ordinates for shapes on an axis, and use measurement confidently to calculate the perimeters of shapes.

69. Boys and girls, including those with additional educational needs, make satisfactory progress in lessons and over time in improving their mathematical skills, knowledge and understanding. The school has implemented the National Numeracy Strategy successfully, and lessons begin with appropriate mental arithmetic sessions, which develop pupils' thinking and reasoning skills effectively. In Class 3, for example, pupils rounded up or down numbers with decimals to whole numbers competently, and then passed on their own questions to another member of the class.
70. Teaching is sound. In most lessons, teachers provide work which is matched well to the age and abilities of the pupils, including those who have a particular gift for mathematics. They give clear introductions to lessons, so that pupils are clear about what they have to do. Occasionally, however, these explanations take up too much time, so that pupils do not have sufficient time for practical work. Pupils settle quickly and confidently to their tasks and teachers and assistants provide effective support as pupils work. Time at the end of lessons is used to review what pupils have achieved, but these sessions are often curtailed and teachers do not take the opportunity to revisit the aims of the lesson or evaluate pupils' success in achieving these.
71. The headteacher co-ordinates mathematics and manages provision well. All pupils are set individual targets in the subject, and these are reviewed regularly. Comprehensive assessment gives the school a clear picture of individual attainment and progress in the subject. Resources are adequate to enable the full curriculum to be taught.

## **SCIENCE**

72. Timetable arrangements meant that only one science lesson was seen in a junior class and none were observed in the infants. However, evidence shows that standards in science are average by the time pupils leave the school. Pupils with additional educational needs are fully included in all lessons. They make satisfactory progress and achieve standards in line with their abilities. This maintains the position at the previous inspection report.
73. Pupils in the infants experience a satisfactory range of science activities and topics. They learn, for example, about life cycles and how animals grow and change. They clearly enjoy looking at how plants grow when they measure themselves against sunflower stems. They label parts of flowers and plants carefully and accurately, and keep diaries to show how they grow. They successfully learn about the forces of floating sinking, pulling and pushing. The school makes good use of the environmental area to observe, examine and group materials. Good links are made with art, when pupils look at how clay changes when it is fired. Visitors stimulate pupils' interest in how wool changes when it is spun. Pupils show great perseverance when they knit successfully, to show a further change in the use of materials. They begin to set out experiments in a methodical manner, and learn how to label diagrams neatly and accurately, making a useful contribution to their literacy skills. Pupils' books clearly show that they make sound progress in science and enjoy their work.
74. By the time pupils leave the school at the age of 11, they understand the need for fair tests and have good ideas about how to ensure fairness in experiments. Pupils' books show steady progress in understanding scientific processes and concepts, and how to record them systematically. Older pupils design their own experiments to find out how they can grow the most mould on bread, but with varied success. They have a good knowledge about the structure of teeth, what different teeth are used for and the importance of dental hygiene. Again, good use is made of the environmental area and

the walk to it, when pupils study habitats with interest. Pupils successfully study a range of scientific topics, such as how insects pollinate plants, the effect of gravity and what it might feel like to walk on the moon, and how substances change states when they evaporate or dissolve. Numeracy skills and information and communication technology are used effectively to draw graphs measuring evaporation and the stretch of rubber bands.

75. Boys and girls, including those with additional educational needs, enjoy work in science, especially when carrying out practical work in the environmental area. Their high level of interest in the natural world that surrounds them is evident from their work and when talking to them.
76. Insufficient teaching was seen during the inspection to make a firm judgement on its quality, although that seen was satisfactory. The science curriculum is planned to include a balance of activities, although throughout the school there is insufficient emphasis on work about electricity and light. Teachers plan work in science carefully. However, there is insufficient difference in the challenge posed to pupils who are of different ages in the same class, or pupils who are more able. Additionally, in the juniors, the links between science and other areas of the curriculum are under developed. Teachers' marking tends to be minimal, and often concentrates on presentation rather than posing questions about the science carried out. The science co-ordinator is knowledgeable and enthusiastic. She is aware of the deficiencies in the subject and has a clear action plan to further improve science in the future. Resources are sound, with sufficient apparatus to undertake all topics other than electricity and there are insufficient good-quality books available for the pupils to use for independent research in the library. The environmental area is a very good resource, which is used well.

## **ART AND DESIGN and DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

77. Standards in art and design and design and technology meet expectations for pupils' ages, which maintains the position found by the previous inspection. No lessons in design and technology took place during the inspection, but evidence shows pupils take part in a full range of interesting activities. In Class 3, for example, pupils are currently working in close collaboration with a local secondary school to design and make moving toys. They are thoroughly enjoying the project, and have produced detailed designs, which they amend appropriately as difficulties emerge. The dedicated computer for design and technology has been delivered, and the school is eagerly awaiting the software, which will provide an interesting additional dimension to the subject. Pupils throughout the school have been involved in a variety of projects to design and make mosaics for a variety of purposes. The millennium mosaic is proudly displayed in the school and the dragon mosaic is to be found in the grounds of Wells Cathedral.
78. In art and design, pupils work with a wide range of media in both two and three dimensions. Lively large-scale sculptures, for example, grace the staircases. They were made by Class 2 together with a visiting sculptress in response to an African Creation story, making a valuable contribution to pupils' cultural development. Interesting and well-executed artwork following a visit to the environmental area shows pupils using rubbing techniques and a graphics program on the computer. Well-observed charcoal self-portraits in Class 1 show pupils have a good understanding of proportion.
79. Boys and girls, including those with additional educational needs, enjoy art and make satisfactory progress. They work hard to complete their projects and take pride in their finished results. Teaching by the enthusiastic and expert co-ordinator is good. She shares her enthusiasm effectively with the pupils, teaching in two of the three classes, and pupils make steady progress in gaining skills, knowledge and understanding as a result. In a lesson in Class 1, for example, pupils worked with intense concentration to

model in clay. They were very pleased with their efforts, which were praised extensively by the teacher, who also offered helpful advice on how they could be improved. During the final session, pupils greeted the idea that they could make up a story to involve their models with great enthusiasm, making an important contribution to their literacy skills. Pupils in Class 2 approached their weaving project with equal enthusiasm and concentration. They made good progress in completing this work through effective adult support, and chose their colours and materials with great care and determination.

80. The co-ordinator for the two subjects manages provision well. She is developing a very useful and attractive portfolio of pupils' work to illustrate the different strands of the subject, show what should be expected from pupils of different ages, and demonstrate the progressive development of skills throughout the school. Pupils use sketchbooks in all classes, and the co-ordinator is keen to improve and extend this so that they become a useful tool for individual assessment. Resources are satisfactory to deliver all elements of the subject and are used well.

## **GEOGRAPHY and HISTORY**

81. By the ages of 7 and 11, pupils attain expected standards in history and their achievement and progress are satisfactory. However, whilst attainment in geography is just in line with expectations by the time pupils leave the school at 11, it is below expectations in the infants and lower juniors and pupils' progress is unsatisfactory. In lessons, both boys and girls participate equally in learning and make similar progress. Pupils with additional educational needs are fully included in all activities and make appropriate progress in history, but unsatisfactory progress in geography. This maintains the same position for history as reported at the last inspection, but represents a decline in standards of geography.
82. The unsatisfactory nature of geography is due almost entirely to the implementation of curriculum planning. Both geography and history are planned in topics on a two-year cycle, taught in alternate half-term blocks. However, history has been allowed to dominate the allocated time for both subjects in two of the three classes over the last year. In one case, a history topic that was proving popular and successful was allowed to over run its allocated time. In another example, the topic title was interpreted in an historical rather than geographical sense. The recent reorganisation of year groups into different classes without reorganising the curriculum topics has led to some of the confusion. In addition, the very recent staff changes have meant that the headteacher has been unable to spend as much time monitoring the curriculum as before, due to a heavy teaching commitment. All of these reasons have compounded to limit the development of pupils' geographical skills, knowledge and understanding.
83. Pupils in the infant class identify similarities and differences between old and new toys, and develop a good sense of the past when they make time lines of toys. However, although there are examples of good writing about toys, they tend to be descriptive rather than relating them to toys in the past. They understand how people lived in Victorian times by comparing their own lives with lives of children in the past, for example, during bath time and comparing items around the home. They know how famous people in the past affected the lives of men and women when they hear the story of Florence Nightingale, but do not develop a full understanding of how such advances in medical care have affected their own lives.
84. Junior pupils develop a satisfactory range of historical skills. For example, they visit museums and explore artefacts and reconstructions of Roman houses which effectively deepens their understanding of the Romans in Britain. They enjoy learning about everyday life during World War 2. They understand and explain how this war began and its effect on the everyday lives of people. Pupils become quite engrossed in research into

Viking longships and make good links with literacy when they write advertisements for longships, which demonstrate their knowledge and understanding about how Viking ships were built and used. Lively discussions are generated about the cost of building a ship and pupils take great delight in sharing their work with visitors.

85. In geography, pupils in the infants learn about employment in the locality, carry out a traffic survey and relate this to their route from home to school and to road safety. This makes a useful contribution to their numeracy skills. However, the emphasis is on writing about what they already know rather than developing geographical skills appropriate to their age, such as identifying local geographical features or discussing how these features affect their lives. As a result, they develop insufficient geographical skills. Junior pupils study the physical features of rivers and consider the environmental issues concerned with clean and dirty rivers, but find it hard to express any views about this. They research river systems using the Internet, but tend to print out sections rather than reading and selecting appropriate information. A short study of the local area is carried out but without developing skills linked to wider geographical issues, especially when considering the wider world and factors that affect the way we live. Younger pupils found it very hard to remember or talk about any work that they had carried out in geography. Older pupils were able to discuss some of their current work on rivers but had little awareness of other topics that they had studied.
86. Pupils clearly enjoy their work and are interested in the world about them. However, they have insufficient time to spend on the acquisition of geographical skills and knowledge, and as a result make limited progress. Satisfactory progress is made in developing historical skills, through first-hand experience of handling artefacts and visiting museums. Insufficient teaching was seen in either history or geography to make a secure judgement about its quality. However, an analysis of work indicates a tendency towards giving all the pupils in the mixed-age classes exactly the same work. This restricts progress for some pupils, especially the more able. The co-ordinator is aware of the problems with the geography curriculum and has plans to review the topics to ensure that it is given sufficient emphasis.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

87. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) broadly meet national expectations, which represents a significant improvement since the last inspection. The key issue, to improve attainment, ensure National Curriculum requirements are met and improve resources and teacher expertise, has been successfully addressed. The school's partnership with schools in the VEAZ makes an important and valuable contribution to work in ICT.
88. The school has a very good level of resources and these are used well to support both the development of skills in the subject and learning in subjects across the curriculum. Pupils, for example, use data handling to produce graphs in mathematics and science and word processing in English and other subjects to publish their work, such as the well-argued work in Class 3 on fox hunting. Pupils research information on the Internet competently in history and geography. They experiment with a graphics program to produce their designs for moving toys. Boys and girls work sensibly and collaboratively, make steady progress, and fully appreciate the value of ICT in supporting their work. Each classroom has several systems, and the computer suite in Class 3 enables whole-class teaching to take place effectively. The school's excellent link with a local secondary school provides valuable additional opportunities to investigate the value of ICT in supporting work across the curriculum, for example, when they borrowed light and sound sensors to support a scientific investigation. The school is eagerly awaiting appropriate software to run the recently acquired computer to support work in design and technology. Pupils also enjoy the opportunity to visit the much larger computer suite this school has.

89. Teaching is satisfactory. Teachers have a sound knowledge and understanding of the subject, and provide regular opportunities for boys and girls, including those with additional educational needs, to use ICT to support their work. The school regularly uses computer programs to support learning for pupils with additional educational needs. Whilst the digital camera is used well to record lessons and activities, teachers do not allow pupils to use this. Some very effective work using the facilities of a scanner was done by the teacher at home, as the school does not possess this equipment. Lessons in the ICT suite are timetabled to ensure all pupils are included in using this valuable facility. Its location in a classroom, however, means that it is not always used to full capacity, and the school is aware that more could be done to address this issue. Lessons in the suite are satisfactory. Year 2 pupils access the Internet to search for information on teddy bears competently, with effective support from the teacher. This lesson, however, is much too short to enable pupils to make best use of the resources, and the choice of sites is limited. Pupils in Class 3 also use the Internet confidently to find information on rivers. Sound teaching and pupils own skills gained from home ensure the session is productive.
90. The subject lacks a co-ordinator because of staff changes, but teachers are ensuring it plays a full part in the curriculum. Useful *I can do* assessment booklets were introduced before the co-ordinator left the school but these are not being completed consistently at present. The headteacher is caretaking the subject but hopes to appoint an ICT specialist to start in September, to continue developing the subject.

## MUSIC

91. Standards in music meet expectations for pupils' ages, which maintains the position found by the previous inspection. Boys and girls, including those with additional educational needs, enjoy music and make satisfactory, and often good progress in improving their skills, knowledge and understanding in the subject. This is due in very large part to the enthusiasm of the co-ordinator who teaches all three classes, and shares her own love of music effectively. Teaching was good in one session seen and very good in the other. The youngest pupils have a good sense of time as they clap different rhythmic patterns and sing enthusiastically whilst playing a circle game. The teacher's good relationships with the pupils, and her high expectations, result in a good quality of learning in which pupils make evident progress.
92. The quality of singing is good. Pupils throughout the school sing tunefully and expressively. They take part enthusiastically in the warm-up session, and learn new songs with consummate ease. They understand the need for correct posture and breathing, and sustain their part in two-part singing very successfully. In this session, very good teaching is supported very well by other staff, who automatically and naturally take part in leading the singing, to encourage a high level of performance and ensure all pupils are included fully.
93. The co-ordinator leads and manages the subject well. Photographic evidence shows pupils cover the full programme of study in the subject, including composition and appreciation of music, and the use of information and communication technology to support their work. Through teaching all classes, the co-ordinator has a clear understanding of the progress each pupil is making, and ensures skills are developed progressively. Incidental music in assembly plays an important part in pupils' appreciation of music, and the use of visual stimuli whilst they listen to music makes an important contribution to pupils' spiritual development. The music and two recorder clubs are well attended and pupils enjoy the many visitors and opportunities to perform to an audience which all contribute to their skills, knowledge and understanding in music. The recent *Christmas Snapshots* production, for example, involved all pupils in performing



traditional, Victorian and wartime Christmas music. All pupils were fascinated by a *Music Technology* workshop and a small group of pupils is extending their skills in this with a peripatetic music teacher. Older pupils recall their participation in *Action Track* with great enthusiasm.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

94. Timetabling arrangements meant that no physical education lessons were seen in the infant class during the inspection. Evidence shows clearly, however, that pupils have full access to the physical education curriculum and all are included fully. They develop satisfactory skills, such as throwing and catching, and are confident when participating in physical activities. Junior pupils have access to a good range of activities across the physical education curriculum, and both boys and girls, including those with additional educational needs, reach standards above expectations for their age by the time they leave the school at 11 years. This is an improvement on the findings of the last inspection report, and is the result of the excellent links with the local secondary school.
95. Accommodation for physical education at the school is very limited, but all pupils in junior classes have physical education lessons each week in the local secondary school. Expert coaches, in areas such as football and hockey, lead these lessons. As a result, pupils' skills develop very well and exceed expectations for their age. They control footballs with skill and accuracy when dribbling and passing. They hold and use hockey sticks correctly, controlling the ball, passing and tackling accurately and well. Pupils develop a good awareness of the need to co-operate in team games and learn the rules for games, such as hockey. All pupils in the juniors go swimming and 92 per cent can swim 25 metres by the time they leave the school. The activities provided by the secondary school are changed regularly to provide pupils with a range of physical activities in specialist facilities, such as modern dance in the dance studio. They also join in activities such as gymnastics, indoor athletics and short tennis. All pupils enjoy dancing and older pupils participate in a local fair each year by performing country dancing. Older pupils thoroughly enjoy their stay at a centre for adventurous activities which includes abseiling and climbing, which makes a very good contribution to pupils' physical, personal and social development.
96. Teaching by coaches at the local secondary school is very good. Expectations of behaviour and learning are very high, and pupils respond by applying themselves to tasks very well. Very good relationships contribute to their keen and enthusiastic attitudes during lessons. All pupils, including those with additional educational needs, are fully included in the physical education activities. All learn the value of co-operation and develop a good team spirit during lessons.
97. The resources for physical education are good and include a wide range of apparatus for activities for all ages throughout the year. However, the school hall can only be used by younger pupils, as the ceiling is so low that older pupils cannot jump or take part in any strenuous activity in it safely. The school field is a short distance from the school along a busy road and is inaccessible for much of the year, which is a great disadvantage. However, the outstanding links with the secondary school result in very good provision of alternative and very popular facilities. They also contribute well to liaison between the schools and provide pupils with a valuable insight into their future secondary education. There is currently no co-ordinator for physical education, which is being looked after temporarily by the headteacher.