

INSPECTION REPORT

ST MICHAEL'S CE FIRST SCHOOL

Minehead

LEA area: Somerset

Unique reference number: 123768

Headteacher: Mr Martin Blazey

Reporting inspector: Dr T Simpson
10428

Dates of inspection: 10th to 13th September 2001

Inspection number: 230695

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: First
School category: Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils: 4 to 9
Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Watery Lane
Minehead
Somerset

Postcode: TA24 5NY

Telephone number: 01643 702759

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Jeremy White

Date of previous inspection: December 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
10428	Dr T Simpson	Registered inspector	English Art and design History Music Religious education The foundation stage Special educational needs Equal opportunities	The school's results and pupils' achievements How well is the school led and managed?
9756	Mr K Parsons	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
24891	Mrs J Johnson	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Information and communication technology Design and technology Geography Physical Education	How well are pupils taught? How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? How well does the school care for its pupils?

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7
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	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	13
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	16
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	18
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	21
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	23
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	24
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	26
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	27
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	32

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Michael's is a small Church of England first school serving part of the coastal town of Minehead in West Somerset. There are 144 pupils on roll, including 25 who are in the reception class. This latter group is described as being in the foundation stage. There are very few pupils on roll who come from ethnic minority backgrounds and none who speak English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is around average, but the percentage with statements of special educational need is above average. The percentage of pupils who are entitled to free school meals is above average. Attainment on entry is wide ranging, but overall is slightly below average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school's effectiveness is good. Standards are at least average in all areas, and are above average in some key subjects in comparison with similar schools. Pupils' rates of learning are good and most make good progress as they proceed through the school. Teaching is good and frequently very good. Pupils are very well supported by staff, have very positive attitudes and generally behave very well. Provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good. The headteacher and staff have a strong vision for taking the school further forward and overall management is very good. Good improvement has been made since the last inspection. Income is above average, but the school still provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- High attaining pupils achieve well in literacy and numeracy, while overall standards in art are above expected levels.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and these pupils achieve well.
- Teaching is good and is frequently very good. As a result pupils learn well.
- Provision for moral and social development is very good and consequently pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good overall.
- There is a high level of care for pupils in the school.
- Management at the school is very good.

What could be improved

- Standards in investigative science are not high enough and pupils do not have enough say over the planning of their own investigations.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in December 1997. Since then it has made good progress in addressing all the issues raised. Its trend in improvement of statutory assessment results is higher than the national trend. Teaching and behaviour are both better. There has been an improvement in subject planning and the care of pupils is even better. The annual report to parents and the overall quality of management at the school have both improved significantly.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
Reading	E	E	C	A	well above A average above B average C below average D well below E average
Writing	E	C	B	A	
Mathematics	E*	E	C	B	

Standards in the more recent Year 2001 tests are lower as the result of a higher proportion of pupils in that year's cohort having special educational needs. The judgement of the inspection is that standards in English (including literacy), mathematics (including numeracy) and science are currently at the national average at the end of Key Stage 1 and at the end of Year 4. The school's trend in improvement in all three subjects is above the national trend. In most other subjects standards are at the expected levels. Standards in art and design are above the expected levels, but it was not possible to make concise judgements about standards in physical education at Key Stage 1 or in information and communication technology at either key stage, as there was not enough evidence available during the inspection. Overall achievement – including that made by pupils with special educational needs and those with higher attainment – is good. The school has set appropriate targets for individual pupils to achieve higher standards in literacy and numeracy and most are on course to reach these.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good – pupils are enthusiastic about school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Mostly very good – in a small minority of lessons, pupils lose concentration.
Personal development and relationships	Good – pupils relate well to adults and to one another and enjoy taking responsibility.
Attendance	Satisfactory.

In most lessons, pupils are attentive, behave well and are keen to learn. The school site is well respected by the pupils and there is no litter. Relationships at all levels are good and are based on mutual respect. Attendance is broadly line with the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 4
Quality of teaching	Very good.	Good.	Good.

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

Teaching overall is good and is frequently very good, and this has a positive effect on the quality of pupils' learning. English - including literacy - is taught well. The teaching of mathematics - including numeracy - is at least satisfactory, and there are examples where it is very good. There are strengths in the teaching of religious education and of children in the foundation stage, and no significant weaknesses in any of the other subjects. Expectations are generally high, which has a positive effect on pupils' rates of learning. Methods are suitably varied. As a result pupils are interested in their work and well motivated. Pupil management is a particular strength. It is positive and friendly and results in very good behaviour and relationships in most lessons. Pupils with special educational needs and those of above average ability are taught well and consequently make good progress. In some investigative science lessons, however, assessment information is not used enough to plan work for pupils of different levels of ability. This has an adverse effect on the achievement of pupils of all levels of attainment. Overall, however, the quality of the teaching at the school meets the needs of the pupils well.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good - the curriculum is broad and balanced and covers all the required areas. Planning – particularly for literacy and numeracy – is good and a good range of visitors to the school support learning in a range of subjects.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good – and as a result most of these pupils make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall – provision for spiritual and cultural development is good, and provision for moral and social development is very good.
How well the school	There is a good range of assessment procedures in place

cares for its pupils	for English and mathematics, but assessment is more informal in the other subjects. Assessment is used well at a strategic level to inform planning and grouping for literacy and numeracy. The level of staff care for the pupils at the school is very high.
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The school works very well with the parents and virtually all are very satisfied with the provision it makes for their children. Child protection arrangements are very good.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Overall management at the school is very good. The headteacher provides good quality, committed leadership. The deputy head has a clear complementary role. Together they form a strong senior management team. All curriculum leaders have a clear idea of the strengths and weaknesses in their subjects and a strong commitment to further improvement. Co-ordinators of key subjects regularly monitor planning and have made a good beginning to monitoring teaching in their areas of responsibility.

How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body is supportive and fulfils its statutory responsibilities well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good – the school has successfully evaluated its strengths and weaknesses, and has taken appropriate action.
The strategic use of resources	Resources are mostly used efficiently and the budget is constructed in response to the school's needs.

Resources are sufficient overall. The accommodation is clean and well looked after, and is enhanced by the provision of a swimming pool. The pupil/teacher ratio is around average but overall staffing is greatly enhanced by a good number of committed support staff. Overall management is very good. The school has carried out some analysis of its cost effectiveness and makes purchases in relation to the best value it can get.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teaching is good. • The school expects their children to work hard and achieve of their best. • Their children are making good progress. • The school works closely with parents. • Their children like school. • Behaviour is good. • They are kept well informed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school does not provide an interesting range of activities outside lessons.

The parents' meeting was very positive about all aspects of school life. The inspection team agreed with the positive views expressed at the meeting and on the questionnaires. It judged that extra-curricular provision was good for a school of this size and type.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The school received an Achievement Award from the Department for Education and Employment for its improved statutory assessment results (SATs) in Year 2000. Results of the 2001 SATs were lower than those of the previous year. This was because of a significantly greater number of pupils with special educational needs in the latter group of pupils. However, no comparative national data is yet available for 2001. It is the judgement of the inspection that current standards in all three subjects are around the national average at the end of Key Stage 1 and the end of Year 4. Most children in the foundation stage are likely to reach the early learning goals in all areas by the time they reach Year 1, and some will exceed these. The school has analysed its assessment results, compared them with other schools in the area, and has put in place a number of strategies for further improvement. These include the focused support of extra classroom assistants. Standards in most of the other subjects are in line with the national expectation, except for art and design where they are higher than the expected levels and in information and communication technology and in physical education at Key Stage 1, where there was not enough evidence to make an accurate judgement.
2. Although children enter the school with a wide range of skills, ability on entry is below average overall. As their standards on leaving have reached at least average, this indicates that their achievement is good. This finding is substantiated by the good progress that most pupils were noted to make in lessons seen at all stages of education in the school. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported and most make good progress in relation to their prior attainment. This finding is substantiated by the progress most make between their Key Stage 1 SATs and non-statutory national tests taken in Year 4. Higher attaining pupils also do well, as shown by the proportion gaining the higher Level 3 in statutory assessment. This is a significant improvement since the time of the last inspection. The school sets appropriate targets for groups of pupils – with specific targets for pupils with special educational needs which are regularly reviewed and updated. The school has identified that girls are achieving better than boys in some subjects and has put in place a number of strategies to ameliorate this. These strategies are proving successful and little gender difference in standards was noted during the inspection.
3. Standards in each element of English are all broadly average. Children enter the school with a wide range of speaking and listening skills. However, they have many opportunities to practice and develop these throughout the school, and they gain in confidence in using spoken language as they proceed through the school. Younger pupils, for example,

successfully use role play situations to act out their thoughts and feelings, while older ones successfully discuss quite deep concepts in, for example, religious education lessons. By the time they leave the school, standards of speaking are frequently high. Listening skills, however, are less well developed. A wide range of strategies is employed to teach reading and, as a result, by the time they reach the end of Key Stage 1, phonic skills and word-building strategies are well developed. By the time they leave the school, most pupils are fluent and confident readers who enjoy books. Writing skills are appropriately developed at Key Stage 1, with many pupils communicating successfully through well-punctuated sentences, sometimes including commas and speech marks. At Key Stage 2, sentences are more complex and at times structured into paragraphs. Pupils throughout the school write successfully for a wide range of purposes and audiences. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils have a good understanding of mathematical language and are able to add and subtract within ten. Most pupils can identify numbers up to a hundred and recognise that multiplication is a process of repeated addition. They record data on tally charts and can use fractions in simple calculations. By the end of Year 4 most pupils can add and subtract two digit numbers. They successfully use bar charts. Year 2 pupils successfully categorise a range of food samples. They also appreciate that simple forces such as push and pull can change the position of an object. Pupils in Key Stage 2 understand the different ways that an animal is suited to its environment. They can explain different electrical circuits and appreciate magnetic properties. Standards in investigative science, however, are not as well developed as those in the more knowledge based aspects.

4. Year 1 pupils examine the techniques of Vincent Van Gogh and learn how to produce a range of marks that replicate his style. Year 2 pupils create fine pencil and felt tip drawings of different leaves after exploring their shape and pattern, while pupils in Key Stage 2 use watercolour successfully to produce their own interpretations of the work of another famous artist. Key Stage 1 pupils make houses with cardboard boxes. Pupils in Year 2 understand how wheels and axes can be used to make moving vehicles. By the end of Year 4, pupils have engaged in a number of appropriately challenging design and technology tasks making, for example, model Tudor houses in connection with their history topic. Year 2 pupils learn about their own seaside town of Minehead, and use secondary sources to help them understand similarities and differences between it and a village in India. Key Stage 1 pupils successfully compare the lives and work of 19th century lifeboatmen with those of today, while Key Stage 2 pupils have a wide range of knowledge about several eras of the past including Ancient Egypt and the Tudor period in England. Key Stage 1 pupils can use simple word processing programs and are able to program a moving object. Year 3 pupils appreciate that data can be organised through an appropriate programme and can control a screen turtle to produce shapes and routes. Key Stage 1 pupils successfully distinguish between long and short notes and can reproduce these. They are also able to interpret an excerpt from a piece of well-known music. Year 4 pupils are

able to recognise the number of beats in a piece of music and can keep time with a range of tuned and untuned percussion instruments. Pupils in Year 3 have sound ball skills, while those in Year 4 create and perform short movement sequences successfully. Year 3 pupils mostly swim with various degrees of expertise. In religious education lessons, Key Stage 1 pupils provide a range of characteristics that distinguish individuals from one another, while Key Stage 2 pupils have an emerging understanding of difficult elements of Christian theology.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

5. The pupils have a very good attitude to their education. Virtually all parents think that their children like coming to school, and the vast majority of pupils are happy coming to school in the morning. They are unconcerned at parting from their parents and are ready to start work at the start of the school day. When teaching is good, pupils are prepared to learn and are attentive and conscientious in their lessons. Their attitudes to school are encouraged by the value the school places on each of them as an individual. Children in the reception class, in their second week of school at the time of the inspection, had a very positive attitude to their activities and were participating well in their lessons. The level of support received by pupils with special educational needs contributes to the way they participate in class work. Pupils are proud of their achievements and are keen to show them to visitors.
6. Pupils behave very well and are very aware of the school's expectations of them. This does not come naturally to all of them and it often reflects the school's good behaviour management policy and the skills and professionalism of teachers in maintaining order and ensuring that time is used productively to further learning. In a small minority of lessons, pupils do lose concentration and behaviour is less good as a result. Pupils behave well in the dining hall and when moving around the school. The very good control of pupils in lessons can have a consequence insofar as pupils feel the need to 'let off steam' at lunchtime. There is a level of robust behaviour in the playground or on the field, although it is not a threatening environment. Lunchtime supervisors could be more pro-active in encouraging co-operative games and more play equipment would also prevent boredom. The same need to release tension was also seen in an assembly, when links between different parts of the act of worship, such as pupils rising to their feet to sing a hymn, were accompanied by an outbreak of chatter. One incident of bullying has been recorded in the last year and there have been no exclusions. No sexist or racist incidents were seen during the inspection and they are not common in the school. Boys and girls work well together in classrooms, although in the playground it was noticeable that only boys played football, with a group of girls watching. Virtually all parents agree that the school maintains good standards of behaviour.

7. Similarly, most parents think that the school is successful in helping pupils become mature and responsible individuals, and in fact their children's personal development is good. The close links with the pre-school group on the same site ensure that pupils are confident when they start school, and the reception class is effective in building on this. These children relate well to adults, conversing sensibly with the teacher during their morning break, for example. They also relate well to each other – four boys co-operated well with each other in running their Brio trains over the same length of track. Older pupils respond well when directed to do something by an adult. On occasions, pupils do take the initiative. The school provides opportunities for pupils to take responsibility, both in lessons and around the school, and pupils respond appropriately. In a design and technology lesson, pupils were able to decide whether to taste exotic vegetables – most were confident enough to have a try. Year 4 pupils set up the hall for collective worship and chose the music to be played. The school has a fun afternoon instead of a sports day, structured in such a way that fifteen teams, drawn from across the school, have to carry out activities. This encourages older pupils to look after and encourage the younger ones. The school residential visit to Exmoor in particular encourages pupils to mature and helps to foster self-reliance. Pupils respect the school's property and there is no litter or graffiti.
8. Relationships in the school are good. Pupils' relationships with the teachers are based on mutual respect and the teachers know pupils well, even those not currently in their own class. Pupils are friendly and polite. They value each other as individuals and they understand the impact of their actions on others. In group work, they can share resources and co-operate with each other. They can work collaboratively in pairs or small groups when called upon to do so.
9. Pupils' attendance is satisfactory, being broadly in line with the national average for a school of this type. A small number of pupils show attendance records with a significant level of absences; these pupils are not drawn from any particular group. Conversely, some pupils achieved one hundred percent attendance in the last school year. The level of unauthorised absence is broadly in line with the national average. There are a few parents who are less good at getting their children to school on time. Most pupils do arrive on time and latecomers do not usually affect the efficient start of the school day.
10. The standards of pupils' attitudes and behaviour have improved compared with those recorded at the last inspection of the school, whilst levels of pupil attendance have been maintained over the intervening period.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

11. The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection when it was satisfactory. During the current inspection, teaching was

judged to be satisfactory or better in nearly all the lessons. It was good or better in over eight out of ten and very good or better in over three out of ten. One lesson was judged to be excellent. The majority of lessons were good or very good, with little difference between Key Stage 1 and Years 3 and 4. In the foundation stage all teaching is good or better and three quarters very good. There are strengths in the teaching of religious education and the foundation stage and no particular weaknesses in other subject areas. Teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good and as a result these pupils learn well. Individual education plans contain clear targets and are practical working documents for both teachers and support staff to implement well.

12. Teachers' knowledge and understanding are good overall. This is particularly evident in English and mathematics but was the case even in information and communication technology, where whole staff training takes place late this term. Teachers were well prepared and no lack of knowledge of subject matter was evident in the lessons observed. In an excellent Year 3 music lesson, the teacher's good subject knowledge successfully informed an effective, very well delivered introduction and a lesson which had a good variety of content, which helped the pupils to extend their learning about pulse and tempo.
13. Planning is good overall and the individual needs of the pupils are generally addressed well. In literacy and numeracy this includes appropriate work for the range of abilities within a class and this can include appropriate and relevant work aimed towards just one pupil. In science, however, planning for scientific inquiry is not as effective as it does not use pupil assessment enough to inform the provision of appropriate work for the range of pupils in a class and this adversely affects the progress made by pupils across the ability range. Overall, however, teachers respond appropriately to their day-to-day evaluation of pupils' achievement and examples of planning which were appropriately changed for the next lesson were evident during the inspection. In a Year 1 literacy lesson, for example, the teacher had upgraded the level of task in the light of the pupils' achievement in previous lessons.
14. A feature of the good and very good teaching is the high level of expectation and this is particularly evident in Key Stage 1 where it is generally very high. This has a positive effect on the learning process and the rate of acquisition of skills and knowledge by the pupils. In the small percentage of lessons where expectations were not high enough, pupils' motivation dropped and the pace of the lessons decreased, having a negative effect on learning. In a small number of lessons, teachers' expectations were too high because of lack of knowledge of classes three days into the new academic year. High expectations of pupils' behaviour are also evident in lessons and a minority of pupils who found concentration difficult at the start of this academic year were responding more positively by the end of the inspection week as the teachers' skills of pupil management took effect.

15. Teachers work hard to motivate and involve pupils in their work, employing a variety of methods and different tasks within each lesson. This is further enhanced by the good cross-curricular links planned. In a Year 4 dance lesson the teacher used short routines devised by two of the pupils earlier in the lesson to help the class explore an eight-pulse beat. This promoted good enthusiasm and learning within the class. In a Year 2 religious education lesson, the teacher gave each of the children a pebble, which they had to examine and describe when dry and wet. This was effective in helping the pupils to understand the concept of uniqueness, which the teacher then related to people. Teachers' questioning of pupils is always at least sound and is often better than this, which helps to extend the depth of pupils' thinking. Teachers use homework well in the support of learning.
16. In some satisfactory, but relatively less effective lessons, the lack of use of appropriate resources meant that the lessons did not 'come alive' for the pupils. The use that teachers make of their teaching assistants is also variable. In some lessons they give active support throughout by making notes on pupils' answers during whole class question and answer sessions, preparing books and resources, helping with pupil management or interpreting teachers' questions for lower attaining pupils - as well as working with groups of pupils when they are engaged with individual tasks. In a minority of lessons, however, they are not as involved.
17. Management of pupils is good and often very good. Relationships within the classroom are also good and consequently pupils behave well and respond positively in lessons. Pupils are given clear guidelines and are reminded quietly and firmly if their behaviour deviates from the acceptable. Teachers use praise appropriately and their enjoyment and pleasure in the pupils' achievements are evident.

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

18. The curriculum provision in Key Stage 1 and in Years 3 and 4 of Key Stage 2 is good and has improved since the last inspection when it was noted that the school's monitoring and evaluation of the curriculum quality at subject level was insufficient to detect inconsistencies in practice. It was also judged then that the overall links between the curriculum framework and the topics were not sufficiently substantial to enable time specifications to be reliably monitored. These issues have been addressed thoroughly. Planning is now very good, with strong links between its various facets. The curriculum overall is broad, balanced and fulfils the requirements of the National Curriculum for the relevant subjects and the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. Its quality and range contribute well to the good achievement of the pupils. Planning and provision for pupils in the foundation stage is very good and fully meets the recommendations of the Foundation Stage Curriculum. The school makes

very good provision for pupils with special educational needs. All staff are fully aware of the particular needs of the pupils they teach. Individual education plans are well constructed and include a sufficient amount of detail. Review of these plans is carried out at suitably regular intervals. All pupils have full access to the curriculum.

19. The school has established the literacy and numeracy strategies well. Literacy is supported very well in other curriculum areas. In religious education, for example, pupils in Year 1 accompany their teacher and read the class rules they have devised together. Numeracy is promoted well, not only in other curriculum areas, particularly science and design and technology, but also through references in registrations and assemblies. In an assembly based on the Parable of the Widow's Mite, for example, the pupils work out how much money each of the four people have left after they have made their donations.
20. The school has reviewed most of the policies and schemes of work for all the other subjects in the light of Curriculum 2000. National guidelines have been adopted and implemented in all subjects except music and art where it was felt that provision was already effective. The good cross-curricular links that have been set up are a strength of the curriculum. They provide a richness that enhances learning very well. A good example of this is found in the Year 1 design and technology syllabus where pupils design and make a picture with moving parts that represents a scene from their literacy text 'The Lighthouse Keeper's Lunch'. The use of information and communication technology is under utilised to support learning in other areas of the curriculum, but is developing further now that an up-to-date computer area has been established in each classroom, and is now beginning to have a positive impact on overall standards.
21. The provision for personal, social and health education is good. There is a policy but no formal scheme. However, coverage has been the focus of whole school discussions and religious education, circle time, assemblies and science provide effective vehicles for the provision. Diet and health are addressed effectively and issues related to sex and substance abuse are addressed in line with the governors' policy. There is a good range of extra curricular activities, which are well attended by the pupils. These provide for a range of interests and include chess, nature, choir, country dancing, football and hockey.
22. The school's overall provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. There are particular strengths in moral and social development. The themes for assemblies are well planned and collective worship contributes well to pupils' spiritual development. Recorded music plays as the pupils enter and leave the hall, which promotes a calm atmosphere that allows the pupils good opportunities for reflection. The lighting of a candle provides a focal point in the hall and promotes a sense of occasion. In a few lessons, a good contribution is made to developing pupils' spiritual development. The school residential trip to Exmoor is used

to develop spiritual awareness, particularly exploring the wonder of a sunset in an isolated and quiet environment. There is scope for spiritual values to be planned more into lessons.

23. The provision for moral development is very good. The school provides a moral code as a basis for behaviour. This is promoted through the example of the staff and the ethos they promote. The members of the school community try to live the ethos and to treat each other well. Pupils have a good understanding of right and wrong, and are encouraged to be truthful and honest. Older pupils are encouraged to consider their own views on behaviour when they are involved in drawing up their individual classroom rules. Circle times are used effectively to help pupils consider moral issues and to debate them sensibly. Pupils are confident that their views are valued. The good relationships between pupils and staff help to promote concern for others.
24. The school's provision for social development is also very good. The school's charter reflects the emphasis it places on relationships, and how members of the school community relate to each other. The school is generally an ordered community. All adults provide good role models and take appropriate opportunities to develop the self-esteem and confidence of the pupils. In lessons, pupils are given opportunities to work together in pairs or small groups. The value of each child is emphasised. The school also fosters social development through the range of clubs it provides and through visits to places of interest. The residential visit to Exmoor is particularly effective in helping pupils' social development.
25. Provision for cultural development is good. The school ensures that pupils gain a good knowledge of aspects of culture through its music and art syllabuses. Pupils have the opportunity to perform country dancing in the summer term, and join other schools to perform at Cleeve Abbey. There is a school choir, which also performs with other schools in a local event. In addition to Christianity, the religious education syllabus includes appropriate study of another major world religion, Judaism. Year 3 has carried out work on Japanese watercolours. Year 2 carry out a project on India and the school celebrates the festivals of other cultures. Although there are very few examples of multicultural books in the library, the school does provide the pupils with an environment that does reflect positive attitudes towards other cultures. For example, in an art lesson on repeat patterns, many of the examples used were from Egyptian, Indian or Aztec cultures.
26. The local community contributes well to pupils' learning. St Michael's takes its status as a church school very seriously and ministers from local churches regularly conduct acts of collective worship. Pupils also attend local churches for special occasions or as part of their local studies. They perform at various town events. Local emergency services – police, fire and lifeboat – all come into school to speak with the pupils. "Grannies"

recruited through the parish magazine come into school to help hear pupils read.

27. There are very good links with partner institutions, including other phases of education. The school has very close liaison with the pre-school group on the site, and has a very good induction programme to help children transfer into formal education without stress. Visits to the school are carefully planned to provide a phased experience, whilst the reception teacher often visits the pre-school group so that children can get to know her. At the other end of the school, there are good transfer arrangements for Year 4 pupils moving to middle schools. Pupils benefit from activities carried out with other schools, such as sporting and musical events. Of particular note is the dance week held at the middle school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

28. Procedures for the assessment of pupils' attainment and achievement are good overall and have improved since the last inspection. In the key areas of literacy and numeracy they are very good. All pupils undertake the standard assessment tasks in English and mathematics and teacher assessments in science at the end of the Key Stage 1. The senior management team analyses these thoroughly and takes appropriate action where necessary. Key Stage 2 test results in English, for example, showed that the pupils' use of complex sentences was limited. The school responded by providing more specific teaching on this aspect for Year 2 pupils. In mathematics and science, the analysis has produced an increased emphasis on pupils using and applying mathematics and, after input from a local education authority science advisor, a greater emphasis on developing the pupils' skills of scientific inquiry – although the latter has yet to impact fully on standards.
29. In English and mathematics, pupils' work is assessed and tracked very well throughout Key Stage 1 and in Years 3 and 4, where optional national tests are also completed. This helps to identify specific ability groups within a class. Pupils are given individual targets in these subjects and details of these are included in the school's reports to parents. Class targets are also used within the classroom. Spelling and reading tests are also carried out. The school is waiting for the local education authority to inform them of the effectiveness of a new science assessment procedure for Year 4 pupils, which is being trialled in another school at present. Assessment procedures in science are not at the same high standard as in English and mathematics. Consequently assessment information is not used enough to inform planning for investigative science. Teacher assessments in English, mathematics and science are appropriately completed for Year 4 pupils, prior to their transfer to the middle school.
30. Identification procedures for pupils with special educational needs are effective and there is appropriate liaison with relevant outside agencies.

The school fully complies with the requirements of the national Code of Practice. In the foundation stage, baseline assessment procedures are fully implemented and used very well to inform the tasks given to the children and individual progress towards the early learning goals is fully assessed and recorded.

31. Assessment procedures in the other subjects are less well developed. They consist of teachers' own individual record system and annual reports to parents. In addition to these, however, there is an information and communication technology skills checklist, which has been introduced this term. There is a clear marking policy that is used consistently throughout the school. Each subject leader is compiling a portfolio containing samples of pupils' work. Some examples are annotated with National Curriculum levels.
32. The school provides a very caring environment for its pupils, in which they can feel valued and emotionally secure. This is an important aspect of the school's provision for most of its pupils and is an achievement in which staff can take pride. Staff throughout the school are sensitive to pupils' needs and put considerable effort into meeting them. The development of life skills is given appropriate priority in the school's work to meet the needs of individual pupils. Parents believe that the ethos of St. Michael's as a church school is very much in evidence and that their children benefit from it.
33. Procedures for child protection and pupils' welfare are very good. The headteacher has received appropriate training and liaises with the local social services department as necessary. The staff are reminded of their child protection responsibilities on a regular basis and appropriate records are kept. The school helps pupils take responsibility for their own safety. The school has an appropriate health and safety policy. The governors are active in carrying out risk assessments at regular intervals and are involved with the staff in ensuring that the school provides a safe environment. Routine safety procedures are in place. No unsafe practice was seen in lessons during the inspection.
34. The school's procedures for monitoring pupils' attendance are very good. The school operates the local Record of Attendance Concern (TRAC) system, which has a five-stage procedure to flag up and deal with potential attendance problems. Senior management is active in using the computerised attendance data and working in conjunction with the educational social worker to resolve any problems through TRAC.
35. The school's procedures to monitor and promote pupil behaviour are very good. There is an appropriate behaviour policy and guidelines, with a positive approach. The school has a clear set of expectations, which are well known to pupils. There is a good system of rewards and sanctions, which are effectively implemented throughout the school. The school keeps appropriate records of bullying. The school has an effective and committed team of teachers and their skills are instrumental in keeping control of their pupils through skilful techniques, limiting the number of times it is necessary to use formal sanctions.

Friday assemblies are used to provide sticker rewards for good individual performances and also to give out a class award. Support for children in the foundation stage is good, with the development of their social and personal skills being well managed, and appropriate records are kept to monitor progress against early learning goals. The school is effective in monitoring and supporting all pupils' personal development. Pupils feel valued and think that any problems they may report will be taken seriously. The comments on pupils' personal development in the annual reports to parents are perceptive and indicate that teachers do know and understand their charges well as individuals. The strength of the school's provision lies particularly in the experience and commitment of its staff. Staff are very aware of the importance of a child's self image, and they help pupils find things in which they can excel. Written records are used to keep track of any problems but also to record successes, including those out of school.

36. The high quality of the school's provision for the care of its pupils has been maintained since the last inspection of the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

37. Parents are very pleased with the quality and effectiveness of the education the school provides for their children. They appreciate the school's church ethos and the way the staff encourage pupils to "do that bit more". Overall, parents' views of the school are very positive.
38. The information the school provides for parents is very good. There are frequent letters home to keep parents involved in the life of the school. Parents are given advanced notice of termly topics and encouraged to send in relevant materials to support them. Teachers are accessible to meet parents, and a number of parents come into school in the mornings to settle their children or to see the teacher informally. The written reports on pupils' progress are very good documents that provide sufficient information on pupils' attainment and progress, and contain comments from teachers that are personal, and reflect the individual pupil well. There are two formal meetings for parents each year, with an additional opportunity to discuss the annual report if requested.
39. Links with parents contribute very well to pupils' progress. The home school agreement has been signed by about three quarters of parents. Most parents do support their children by helping with formal homework or hearing them read on a regular basis. A number of parents and grandparents help in school regularly, and more help on school trips, assist pupils to change for swimming, or go on the residential visit with the school. There is an active friends, parents and teachers association that organises social and fundraising events. It is particularly appreciated for the help it provides to keep the swimming pool operational. A number of parents help decorate the school, the most recent example being their valuable work renovating the library area in the summer holidays. Parents feel happy about approaching the school with questions or comments and think that they will be listened to. There is provision for parents of pupils with special educational needs to get involved in reviews and target setting at appropriate stages. The school is active in helping parents facing problems through local initiatives such as the family advice liaison worker and the family support forum. The school helps to provide basic skills courses for parents, and play to learn sessions for parents of reception children. The school governors see links with parents as an area they wish to develop even further. The partnership with parents has improved since the last inspection of the school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

40. Overall management at the school is very good and this is a significant factor in the overall trend of improvement in standards in the nationally assessed subjects over the past few years. This is a significant improvement on the findings of the last inspection. The headteacher provides good quality leadership. He is very committed to the school and is a very good facilitator, enabling all members of staff to fully develop their skills and roles. The deputy head has a clear complementary role. In addition to providing high quality leadership of the key subject of English, she successfully manages the school's assessment strategy, its deployment of specific grants and is line manager for support staff. The headteacher and deputy head together form a strong senior management team which meets regularly to review standards, the forward development of the school and emerging issues. The co-ordinators of other key subjects regularly monitor planning and have made a good beginning to monitoring teaching in their areas of responsibility. All curriculum leaders have a clear idea of strengths and weaknesses in their subjects and a very strong commitment to further improvement. The headteacher also monitors planning and teaching. Both the provision for pupils in the foundation stage and for those with special educational needs are well co-ordinated. The co-ordinator for special educational needs had only just taken up her post at the time of the inspection, but she had already audited her area of responsibility and had constructed a programme for even further improving the already very good provision. Funding available to support pupils with special educational needs is allocated well to provide extra resources and additional staffing. All statutory requirements in respect of pupils with special educational needs – including the requirements of statements – are fully met. Routine administration is effective.
41. The governing body is supportive of the school and fulfils its statutory responsibilities well. Committees of the governing body take responsibility for specific areas of the school's operation and report back to full governors' meetings. There are named governors for special educational needs, literacy and numeracy. The latter have carried out monitoring of their areas of responsibility. Other governors have also visited the school to observe lessons and to help teachers in class. There is, however, no named governor as yet for the key subject of information and communication technology. The governing body as a whole has a significant role in the strategic oversight of the school's overall provision and a good understanding of its strengths and areas for further improvement, and has a relevant role in school improvement. The school development plan is a practical working document. Its construction involves staff and governors at relevant points and its progress is regularly reviewed by all concerned. The current plan is an improvement on that in place at the time of the last inspection.

42. The school makes very good use of the resources available to it, including specific grants. Spending is directly related to the aspirations of the development plan and competitive tendering is applied whenever possible. Principles of best value are applied well. The school, for example, compares its results and costs against those of similar sized schools in the area, and examines the improvement in standards in classes which have been provided with extra adult help. Financial planning and monitoring are good and support the school's educational priorities very well. A recent local authority audit of the school's budgetary systems was complimentary about the financial controls in place. The school has an above average carry forward of funds. This is largely historical, being related to savings for recently completed building projects which have not been fully paid for yet, and to the fact that last year the headteacher taught for twice the time that he now does. Performance management procedures are fully in place and there are good procedures for the induction of new staff.
43. The pupil teacher ratio is around average and there is a very good number of committed support staff who have a significant influence on raising pupils' standards and providing them with good quality extra personal support. Resources to support learning are sufficient overall. The accommodation is enhanced by the provision of a swimming pool and is clean and well looked after. Issues raised at the time of the last inspection have been addressed well. The school's effectiveness is good and its aims and values are very well reflected in its work.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

The governors and staff should address the following matters in writing the action plan, in order to raise standards and improve the provision the school makes further:

Raise standards in investigative science by

- a) using the results of assessment more effectively to inform planning for lessons;
- b) enabling pupils to be more proactive in planning their own investigations.

(paragraphs 3, 13, 64)

In addition to this key issue, there is a number of less important weaknesses that the school should consider for the action plan. These involve further raising and consolidating standards in information and communication technology in order to more effectively support other curriculum areas, and improving the standard of presentation of written work. (paragraphs 62, 66, 71, 79, 81, 86, 90, 55)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	37
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	16

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	11	18	6	1	0	0
Percentage	3	30	49	16	3	0	0

Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than two percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		144
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		21

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		19

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	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.1
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
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)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2000	11	19	30

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	8	8	10
	Girls	18	18	18
	Total	26	26	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	87 (61)	87 (81)	93 (74)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	8	9	10
	Girls	18	18	18
	Total	26	27	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	87 (71)	90 (81)	93 (84)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	143
Any other minority ethnic group	1

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes**Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y4**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	6.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.4
Average class size	28.6

Education support staff: YR – Y4

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	146

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Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	339003
Total expenditure	324202
Expenditure per pupil	2252
Balance brought forward from previous year	16901
Balance carried forward to next year	31702

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	0.8
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	0.6
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	149
Number of questionnaires returned	48

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	69	27	2	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	60	38	2	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	42	54	2	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	56	36	6	2	0
The teaching is good.	75	25	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	54	42	2	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	77	17	2	0	4
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	65	33	0	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	44	54	0	2	0
The school is well led and managed.	48	46	2	2	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	63	29	2	2	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	40	35	10	2	13

Other issues raised by parents

There were few comments on the questionnaires. These were positive. Teachers were described as very approachable. There is a very strong ethos and children have a very good start to their schooling. With regard to the major concern expressed as a percentage on the questionnaire, the inspection team judged that extra-curricular provision was good for the size and type of the school.

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

44. At the time of the inspection, the children had only been in the school for a few days, one group in the morning and one in the afternoon, and the staff were largely concentrating on their personal, social and emotional development. Overall, however, they are provided with a well-balanced practical curriculum, which meets their needs well. The teaching is very good in most areas, which has a positive impact on the rate of the children's learning. The quality of teaching has improved since the time of the last inspection. Procedures for planning and assessment are very good.
45. After a good range of induction procedures, the children enter the reception class at the beginning of the academic year in which they become five, part time at first. Attainment on entry is wide ranging, but is overall below the expected levels. As a result of the good teaching, however, and the attractive learning environment, most reach the early learning goals in all areas by the time they reach Year 1, and several exceed these. Most achieve well in all the areas of learning.

Personal, social and emotional development

46. Because of the good teaching and the quality of adult support, children make good gains in this area of learning. The adults all provide very good role models and the children are systematically taught the norms of good social behaviour. For example, the class has one simple 'Golden Rule', which is 'to be kind to one another', and this is rigorously re-enforced. They are taught to follow simple routines involving personal hygiene and encouraged to be independent learners. Circle time is used effectively to enable the young children to explore their own feelings about their new experience of being in school. During the period of the inspection, the young children were already developing an awareness of other people and were able to work and play well together in pairs and groups as they carried out a range of practical activities. They were already appreciating the need to take turns and to listen to others during class and group discussions.

Communication, language and literacy

47. The children in the reception class enjoy listening to stories. Most are able to comment on characters and themes. Nearly all are aware that print carries meaning. They hold books the correct way and turn pages appropriately. Some already recognise key words and read these. Others use picture clues to retell familiar stories. Some higher attaining children

recognise initial letter sounds. Every opportunity is taken by the adults in the class to develop literacy skills, regardless of the main focus of an activity. Computer programs such as 'Nursery Rhyme Time' are also used successfully to develop skills, including phonological awareness. In one session seen during the inspection, the children successfully predicted the likely theme of a book by using the clues of illustration and title. By the end of the year, most can write their own name and some are already writing simple stories and maintaining diaries. They are able to label diagrams, use full stops and provide missing words from sentences. They have a sound level of phonic awareness.

Mathematical development

48. The children have regular opportunities to develop their mathematical skills. During the inspection, for example, they compared their own size with that of a sunflower, accurately using terms such as 'taller' and 'shorter'. They sang songs such as 'Five Little Speckled Frogs' and counted down from ten, pretending that they were at a rocket 'blast off'. Most of the children are able to count to ten, with some being able to count well beyond this. They successfully count a given number of sounds and bubbles. Many recognise simple numerals. Their knowledge of regular two-dimensional shapes is well developed. They are able to order numbers. Questions from the adults challenge the higher attaining pupils to think at a higher level.

Knowledge and understanding of the world.

49. The children have regular opportunities to identify and find out about the characteristics of various living things. For example, they discuss the colour and size of sunflowers. They examine seed heads, fresh and dried, with a magnifying glass. They taste the seeds and grind them with a pestle and mortar before comparing them with the seeds from other plants. Opportunities are provided for them to explore the concept of senses, to visit a local bakery and to construct maps of their routes to school. Most have already developed sound computer skills, using a mouse successfully, for instance, to manipulate a program where they dress a teddy. The latter activity provides a valuable opportunity for their progress to be assessed and recorded.

Physical development.

50. The children regularly use a recently established outdoor play area to develop their physical skills. They safely ride a number of wheeled vehicles, learning in the process which part of the area is designated for their use and which is not. Through these experiences they develop an increased awareness of space for themselves and others and learn about safety. They also have a good range of opportunities to develop their fine motor skills, using a sand tray, for example, to move model dinosaurs, pebbles and rocks. They are also provided with well-structured activities

involving playdough and construction apparatus. They use scissors successfully to cut out shapes and stick these onto paper. The absence of large scale climbing apparatus, however, restricts some aspects of their physical development.

Creative development.

51. The children use a variety of materials such as paint, playdough and collage to develop this area of their learning. They explore colour mixing using handprints and create green 'pizzas' with playdough. They experiment with a range of natural objects such as seeds to investigate texture and create lively patterns. They are mostly able to predict what will happen when two colours are mixed together. They sing a variety of songs with a satisfactory control of rhythm and dynamics. Role-play is used successfully for the children to act out situations and to communicate their thoughts and feelings. Good support from adults helps the children's imaginative development considerably.

ENGLISH

52. The judgement of the inspection is that current standards in English are broadly average at the end of Key Stage 1 and at the end of Year 4. This finding is broadly similar to that of the last inspection – except that higher attaining pupils now achieve better. The results of tests carried out in the reception class indicate that attainment on entry is often below the county average. As pupils leave the school with at least average attainment, this indicates that overall achievement is good. This finding is substantiated by the good progress pupils at all stages in the school were noted to make in the majority of lessons seen during the inspection. In the Year 2000 tests of seven year olds (SATs), standards in reading were at the national average. In writing, they were above this. The percentage of pupils reaching the higher Level 3 was above the national average in reading and well above average in writing. Results of the more recent 2001 SATs were lower, but no national comparative data is yet available. The reason for the lower results in 2001 is that that year's cohort of pupils included a much higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Higher attaining pupils, however, achieved relatively well – particularly in writing. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported and most achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. The recommendations of the National Literacy Strategy are well established and provision for literacy within the school is good. This has a positive impact on the standards being achieved.
53. Standards in each of the elements of English are all broadly average. Pupils throughout the school have regular opportunities to discuss issues at different levels across the curriculum. The plenary session of the Literacy Hour is often used to give pupils across the ability range the chance to explain what they have achieved during the course of the lesson. As a result, the pupils gain confidence in using spoken language as they

proceed through the school. Younger pupils successfully use role play situations to act out their thoughts and feelings, while older pupils, for example, successfully discuss fairly deep theological issues during a religious education lesson. However, there was little evidence of structured drama or formal debate during the inspection, although planning documentation indicates that this does take place during the course of the year and there is photographic evidence of visits to the school by a puppet theatre and a drama workshop focusing on Tudor times. By the time pupils reach the upper end of the school, their standards of speaking are frequently high. Listening skills, however, are less well developed, with some older pupils being more enthusiastic about expressing their own views than being prepared to listen to those of others.

54. Pupils are well supported in the early stages of learning to read. A wide range of strategies is employed, including reading schemes and non-fiction texts at various appropriate stages. By the end of Key Stage 1 phonic skills and word building strategies are well established. In a Year 2 literacy lesson seen during the inspection, pupils used their phonic skills to decipher unfamiliar words in a piece of shared text. As the lesson progressed, they greatly improved their ability to read with good expression and clarity, successfully adjusting voice and tone to the meaning of the words. Year 3 pupils, studying Jan Mark's 'Taking the Cat's Way Home', understood aspects of the language and structure of the book and used terms such as author, illustrator and blurb in an informed way. Year 4 pupils successfully gain information about the context and origins of WH Davies' poem 'Out of School' through their good understanding of the text. They also link their work to science by analysing a non-fiction text on the human body. By the time they leave the school, most pupils are confident and fluent readers who enjoy books. The school library has recently been refurbished with the considerable support of parents, and teachers have already begun using this new resource to introduce pupils to cataloguing and other library skills. Reading records are frequently supportive of the further development of pupils' skills.
55. Writing skills are appropriately developed at Key Stage 1, with many pupils communicating successfully through well-punctuated sentences, sometimes including commas and speech marks. At Key Stage 2, sentences are more complex and at times structured into paragraphs. Pupils throughout the school write for a wide range of purposes and audiences. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 1, for example, write factual reports on events in their own lives, imaginative stories, such as one about bringing a cheetah to school, poems about the sea and other themes. They also write book reviews. Year 3 pupils successfully use planning sheets to brainstorm their ideas for writing stories such as one about smugglers, effectively linking their work in literacy with that on a topic on the history of Minehead. They also write sets of instructions on how to make Christmas cards in connection with a design and technology task and stories related to their topic on Ancient Greece. The use of planning techniques to structure stories is, however, under developed in the school as a whole.

Year 4 pupils also successfully develop their writing skills in a range of ways that supports other areas of the curriculum. For example, they write arguments from the different perspectives of scientists and Eskimos on the issue of killing whales. They produce instructional writing about making biscuits, constructing model aeroplanes and pumping up a bicycle tyre, retell the story of Ted Hughes' 'Iron Man' in their own words and write letters. Spelling is taught systematically and standards in this aspect of writing are broadly sound. However, there is little evidence of extended writing, and standards of presentation are too often unsatisfactory.

56. Pupils' attitudes in English lessons range from satisfactory to very good, but are good overall. In most lessons, they are attentive during whole class discussions, being keen to make their own sensible contributions. They settle quickly to group tasks and concentrate well on these. They co-operate well with one another. Behaviour overall is good. In the most successful lessons, the pupils are enthusiastic about their work and keen to learn. Conversely, in a minority of lessons, some pupils find it difficult to listen to others and are slow to settle to their tasks. Teaching is consistently good. Material is presented crisply during whole class sessions. Questions are suitably challenging, keep the pupils alert and extend the depth of their thinking. Group work is well matched to the needs of pupils with different levels of attainment. Good humoured and positive discipline successfully encourages good behaviour and relationships. Methods are suitably based on the National Literacy Strategy – which provides structure and pace to lessons. Teaching points are regularly and consistently reinforced.
57. There are good structures in place for planning. Assessment procedures are extensive and also effective. They include a range of relevant tests – including non-statutory SATs at Key Stage 2 - and target setting in reading and writing. The co-ordinator for English provides high quality leadership. She regularly monitors planning and has monitored the quality of teaching throughout the school. She is a leading literacy teacher for the local authority.

MATHEMATICS

58. The attainment of pupils overall is broadly in line with that expected nationally and pupils' achievement over the five years they are in the school is good. National test results for Year 2000 indicate that at the end of Key Stage 1, the percentage of pupils reaching level 2 or above, was close to the national average, while the percentage of pupils reaching the higher level 3 or above is above the national figures. (This is an improvement since the time of the last inspection when the overall results were broadly average but the proportion of pupils achieving the higher grades was quoted as low.) Using and applying mathematics was the weakest area at Level 2, and shape, space and measures at both Level 2 and Level 3. The school has responded to this and pupils' achievement in these areas is improving. Taking the performance of pupils over the last

three years, girls perform better than boys. However, this was not evident at the time of the inspection. Results from the 2001 tests indicate lower percentages of pupils at both Levels 2 and 3 but no national figures are yet available for comparison.

59. From the lessons observed, pupils now at the very beginning of Years 2 and 4 look set to achieve the expected levels by the end of the year. An examination of the work of last year's pupils indicates that by the end of the Key Stage 1, most pupils have a good knowledge of the appropriate language of mathematics and are able to use the number bonds of ten in addition and subtraction calculations. Pupils of average attainment can identify numbers up to a hundred, understanding the relative sizes of these. They are beginning to recognise that multiplication is a process of repeated addition. They name the common two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional solids and identify some of the properties of these. They record data in tally charts and can record this in the form of a bar chart. Higher attaining pupils understand the operations of multiplication and division and can use fractions simple calculations. Pupils at the beginning of Year 2 work on addition questions appropriate to their level of attainment. For example, higher attaining pupils are working towards competency of the addition of two digit numbers, middle attainers on the addition of one digit numbers and lower attainers, with the guidance of a teaching assistant, using counters to do additions where the numbers are represented as dots in circles. Lower attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress throughout the key stage, as they did at the time of the last inspection.
60. At the end of Year 4, attainment is in line with that expected nationally. By the end of the year, most pupils can add and subtract two digit numbers, for example. Present Year 4 pupils at the start of the year are working towards this level of competency by partitioning two two-digit numbers and then adding together the units and the groups of ten and consequently producing the complete answer. They use bar charts where one block on the frequency axis represents more than one unit, and higher attainers draw hexominoes, understanding that some of them will fold up to produce a cube. Pupils of average attainment are not accurate in their use of the symbols for 'greater than' and 'less than'. Higher attainers use these symbols more confidently. At the time of the last inspection it was noted that during Years 3 and 4 pupils progress in numeracy was poor. The school has addressed this and it is now sound. Numeracy skills support pupils' learning well in other curriculum areas. A good example of this was found in design and technology where pupils in Year 4 designed, measured out and constructed models of Tudor houses. The use of information and communication technology to support learning in mathematics is, however, underdeveloped.
61. The quality of teaching is never less than satisfactory and is sometimes very good. It is good overall and has improved since the last inspection. Teachers have very positive relationships with pupils encouraging a good

response from them in lessons. They plan lessons well and ensure that pupils of all abilities have tasks that are appropriate for their needs, thus enabling all pupils to gain success from their endeavours. In Year 2, for example, pupils were provided with a range of numbers suitable for their individual levels of achievement when practising addition. In a lesson seen in Year 3, the teacher successfully ran a mental arithmetic session for two levels of ability by asking questions consecutively thus enabling all pupils to respond with answers on their white boards. In some lessons, however, tasks were not totally matched to pupils needs, but as the inspection began three days after the start of the academic year teachers were still getting to know their new classes. This too had an impact on class management in those classes where there were groups of pupils with lower levels of concentration. Management of these pupils improved over the time of the inspection as class teachers assimilated pupils' strengths and weaknesses. The school's strategies for improving pupils' skills in using and applying mathematics were evident in Year 1 where, as part of a mental arithmetic session, the teacher gave pupils simple additions in the form of word problems to solve. In general teachers' expositions are clear and concise and their questioning of pupils is wide-ranging and perceptive. They work hard to support the pupils - as do the teaching assistants in each class. Homework is used well to support learning.

62. The curriculum complies with national guidelines and the National Numeracy Strategy has been established well. Assessment procedures are very good and the results are used to good effect in forward planning. The subject leader is enthusiastic, very well organised and regularly monitors teaching and learning. She has a clear view of the strengths of the mathematics provision and has rightly identified the further development of target setting, the improvement of pupils' skills in the area of using and applying mathematics, and the support of mathematics by information and communication technology as the key areas upon which to focus.

SCIENCE

63. Teacher assessment results for the year 2000 indicate that at the end of Key Stage 1 the percentage of pupils reaching the expected Level 2 was in line with national figures. The percentage of pupils reaching the higher Level 3 or above was well above national results. Assessments indicate that the attainment targets life and living processes and materials and their properties are the strongest areas at Level 2 and experimental and investigative science is the weakest area. Conversely, at Level 3 experimental and investigative science was the one strong area. The year 2001 results indicate that fewer pupils reached Levels 2 and 3 than did last year, but at present no national data is available for comparison. In 2001, experimental and investigative science was the weakest element of the subject at both Level 2 and Level 3. No optional assessment tests are done in Years 3 and 4 but the school is waiting for the local education authority to inform them of the results of one that is being piloted at the moment before they make any decisions in this respect. Teacher assessment is

completed appropriately before pupils enter middle school.

64. The current standard of work of pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 and Year 4 is broadly in line with that expected nationally and their achievement is good. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. By the end of the key stage most pupils recognise that living things require certain conditions in order to grow and be healthy. In a Year 2 lesson for example, the pupils categorized a range of food samples into meat, fish, vegetables, dairy and grain in the process of learning the needs of healthy growth in humans. They understand that materials can be natural or man-made and that natural materials can be changed. For example, the heating process changes sand into glass. They appreciate that simple forces like pull and push can change the position of an object and with support have investigated the distance travelled by a toy car down ramps of different inclinations. They understand the link between a power station and a lit lamp in the home.
65. The current standard of work at the end of Year 4 is also broadly in line with that expected nationally and has been maintained since the last inspection. Achievement is good. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress related to their prior attainment. Most of the oldest pupils understand the different ways that an animal is suited to its habitat, the school grounds being well used for this research. They understand why certain materials are used to make particular items, for example disposable nappies and tea-cosies. They investigate the differences in circuits that contain two batteries or two light bulbs instead of one, and can explain in appropriate terms what occurs. They understand that materials have different properties. In a Year 3 lesson, for example, pupils examine a variety of metals before concluding that some, but not all, are magnetic. By the end of Year 4 most pupils have gained appropriate knowledge across the programmes of study. The school has now raised the profile of experimental and investigative work in order to enhance the pupils' skills of inquiry. However, although pupils are encouraged to discuss aspects of an investigation when the parameters have been set by the teacher, there is little evidence that they are engaged in putting forward ideas of how something can be found out in the first place. At present assessment procedures are not used enough to inform planning in order to ensure that pupils of differing abilities are catered for in this area of the science curriculum.
66. The quality of teaching is good overall, with little difference between the key stages. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. Teachers' planning is good overall and lesson objectives are clear. In the most effective lessons teachers ensure that the learning objectives are communicated to the pupils at the start of the lesson and that there is a review session at the end, which includes an evaluation. In some lessons these aspects are not clearly identified, however, leaving some pupils unsure about what they have achieved. Most lessons are well organized and resourced and this enables teachers to include a good variety of

interesting and relevant activities to support learning. In a Year 2 lesson the teacher provided a good range of various types of food for the pupils to categorize, and this focused the pupils well during the whole class session. In lessons where suitable resources are not used the pupils lack motivation and the lessons do not 'come alive' for them. The very good relationships that exist between class teachers and pupils, and effective class management by teachers, however, ensure that pupils maintain concentration and complete the set tasks at all times. In the most effective lessons teachers ensure that there is good pupil input to all parts of the lesson. In a Year 3 lesson for example, pupils were very animated during the whole class discussion on planning a test to find out about the hardness of certain floors because of the teacher's obvious enthusiasm and appreciation of individual pupils' suggestions. In a minority of lessons, however, teachers do not provide suitably demanding work for the range of abilities within a class. Many teachers support literacy by providing lists of relevant words that aid pupils' recall, extend use of language and help with spellings. Teachers mark pupils work regularly and appropriately. The use of information technology to support learning is limited, however.

67. The curriculum complies with national guidelines. Whilst not deemed unsatisfactory at the time of the last inspection, it has been improved and is now good. Close liaison with the middle school ensures that continuity of the curriculum is ensured. Good whole school assessment procedures consist of the required national assessments at the end of Year 2, teacher assessment before transfer to middle school and the annual report to parents. Teachers keep individually devised records but these do not adequately inform the planning of appropriate work for the range of abilities of pupils with respect to enhancing their skills of inquiry. The subject co-ordinator is well organised and monitors planning and teaching. This has a positive effect on the standards being attained.

ART AND DESIGN

68. Art has a high status in the school and standards are above expected levels at the end of Key Stage 1 and at the end of Year 4. The high standards found at the time of the last inspection have been maintained and pupils achieve well.
69. Year 1 pupils, for example, examine the techniques of Vincent Van Gogh and learn to produce a range of marks that replicate his style. Higher attaining pupils construct effective pencil drawings of a street scene that demonstrate perspective, while others produce acceptable paintings of scenes from their summer holidays. Year 2 pupils create fine pencil and felt tip drawings of different leaves after exploring their shape and pattern. They also use watercolour successfully to produce their own interpretations of Georgia O'Keefe's painting 'Blue and Green Music' and construct various collages based, for example, on the shapes of seed heads. Year 3 pupils create very effective still life drawings of various fruits, and patterns of colour suggesting the movement of water. Work produced by pupils in

Year 4 includes willow pattern drawings in pastel and drawings of chairs from different aspects. During the inspection, there was little evidence of three-dimensional work in art or of the use of textiles. Planning documentation and photographic evidence, however, indicates that this does take place at other times of the year. During the last academic year, for example, Year 2 pupils made paper sculptures inspired by Henri Rousseau's 'Tiger in a Tropical Storm' and clay models based on 'The Owl who was Afraid of the Dark', while Year 4 pupils made clay tiles and Year 1 pupils papier-mâché fish.

70. Most pupils enjoy art lessons. They work well without direct adult supervision, concentrate on their pictures and share materials successfully with others when this is appropriate. In an occasional lesson, however, some pupils rush their work and their behaviour is unsatisfactory. Teaching was unsatisfactory in one of the three lessons seen during the inspection. In one of the other two it was good and in the final one it was very good. In the best lesson, pupils were encouraged successfully to practise until they had perfected their work. Skills were directly taught, which had a very positive outcome in terms of the standards being achieved by the pupils. The teacher had very high expectations of both behaviour and the standard of finished work. In the unsatisfactory lesson, too many pupils were off task for too long, which adversely affected the pace of their learning.
71. Planning structures are appropriate and are founded on national and local authority guidelines. A wide-ranging curriculum is provided for art, but there are limited opportunities for pupils to develop some higher order skills. Information and communication technology is also under-used to support the subject. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and enthusiastic and has a very positive influence on the standards being achieved.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

72. The attainment of pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 and Year 4 is in line with national expectations. Standards have been maintained in both key stages since the last inspection. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are well aware of the stages of 'plan, do and review'. Pupils in Year 1 plan and make houses within cardboard boxes and illustrate scenes from their literacy text, 'The Lighthouse Keeper's Lunch', using a variety of materials like tabs, rivets and string to produce moving parts. They develop skills in handling equipment and an awareness of safety. Pupils in Year 2 work with a range of materials by, for example, making hand puppets. They visit a park, sketch the structures there and, in groups, experience the restrictions when producing similar structures using card and string. They understand how wheels and axles can be used to produce a moving vehicle, designed to transport Humpty. By the end of the key stage pupils use materials and equipment appropriately and express sensible opinions about their completed articles.
73. At the beginning of Key Stage 2 pupils disassemble a variety of torches as part of the process of designing their own. Good links are made with other

curriculum areas, in this case science. In Year 3 pupils extend their skill of working with textiles by making money containers and links are made with mathematics through measuring. In Year 4 pupils design and make Tudor houses, linked with their history topic. By the end of Year 4, pupils have engaged in a variety of appropriately challenging tasks. Pupils in Year 4 produce sandwiches and evaluate the result for appearance and flavour. In Year 4 pupils appreciate the limitations of producing a cardboard chair that looks attractive but is also strong. Overall, throughout the school pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, achieve well.

74. The quality of teaching is good in both key stages. Teachers' planning is good and lessons are well organised. Effective methods engage the attention of the pupils and enhance learning. In Year 1 for example, the teacher had provided a wide range of fruit and vegetables for the pupils to examine and taste. They responded very well to these and showed great interest in the range of colours, shapes and tastes. Lessons are carefully structured and lead pupils well through challenging tasks. A good example of this is the Year 3 topic of designing and producing a torch. This began by disassembling a variety of torches, considering the circuit diagram, and putting in the detail and labels on a cross section of a torch prior to the pupils own design process. Relationships within the classroom are very good and support learning very well
75. The curriculum complies with statutory requirements and has been examined and adjusted in the light of the national guidelines. Key skills are now clearly mapped to units of work. The curriculum has improved since the last inspection, in that pupils now have a greater range of experiences provided for them. The subject co-ordinator is well organised and has improved the monitoring aspect of his role since the last inspection. Formal assessment procedures consist, however, only of the annual report to parents. The co-ordinator keeps an up-to-date portfolio containing evidence of work done across the year groups in order to ensure that the full requirements of the National Curriculum are being met.

GEOGRAPHY

76. Attainment of pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 and Year 4 is in line with national expectations and pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Throughout Key Stage 1, pupils make sound progress in their knowledge and understanding of geography and in the development of geographical skills. Pupils in Year 1 are introduced to maps and plans and are helped to understand these by the use of block models built on a plan's outlines. They draw simple maps like that of a circular walk they make in the vicinity of the school, including on it details of features seen. In Year 2, pupils learn about their own seaside town of Minehead and use secondary sources to help them understand the main differences and similarities between it and Chembakolli, a village in India. By the end of the key stage, pupils are familiar with the physical and human features in their own

environment, understanding the use of symbols to represent features on a simple map.

77. Pupils develop a sound knowledge of some of the aspects of physical and human geography and their skills of analysis are developed appropriately. Throughout Years 3 and 4, pupils further their understanding of symbols and scales and become more confident in their use of maps and plans, as in the Year 4 lesson where pupils examined a plan of Blackpool in order to identify places where leisure activities take place. Pupils develop an appropriate vocabulary of geographical terms and use these appropriately. During the key stage pupils examine the settlement of Luccombe and understand the importance of the water cycle and river systems. They also develop a good understanding of environmental issues concerned with river and beach pollution, and have been actively engaged in clearing part of the local beach as part of local environmental awareness.
78. No overall judgement on the quality of teaching can be made as only one geography lesson was observed during the inspection. In the lesson observed, however, the quality of teaching was good and pupils responded satisfactorily, working collaboratively in pairs, discussing the leisure outlets that were featured on the plan of Blackpool.
79. The curriculum is broad and balanced and is in the process of being reviewed to bring it in line with the national guidelines. Appropriate fieldwork supports the curriculum, however the use of information and communication technology is under-developed. The subject is well led and the subject leader is building up a useful portfolio of pupils' work. Resources are limited in the area of aerial maps, which adversely affects the development of pupils' skills in this aspect of the subject.

HISTORY

80. It was only possible to see lessons at Key Stage 2 during the inspection. Evidence from these and from a scrutiny of previous work indicates that pupils are provided with a full history curriculum and that standards are in line with the national expectation at the end of Key Stage 1 and at the end of Year 4. Pupils in both key stages achieve well. This finding is similar to that of the previous inspection.
81. Year 1 pupils successfully compare the lives and work of lifeboatmen in the 19th century with that of today, after a visit to a local station. As part of a study of Florence Nightingale, Year 2 pupils construct stories from the perspective of soldiers in the Crimean War. Some of these are both sensitive and perceptive. They also write reports about the Great Fire of London that indicate a good understanding of this episode. Most appreciate the reasons why the Vikings set out on their voyages of exploration and have a sound understanding of aspects of Viking life and culture. They compare runes with our alphabet, using the former to write words and 'secret' messages. Pupils in Year 3 carry out a study of old

Minehead and carry out research, using a 19th century logbook to gain a flavour of life in schools at that time. They have a clear understanding of many aspects of the Aztec civilization and know why it came to an end. The current Year 3 pupils have very successfully begun to study the civilizations of Ancient Egypt and are already gaining a wide range of relevant information about the different periods within that era. Pupils in Year 4 have a sound understanding of significant episodes during the Tudor period. For example, they appreciate the reasons for Henry VIII's break with the Roman Catholic Church. The current Year 4 pupils successfully examine early 20th century artefacts. Most can give plausible reasons why an artefact such as a porcelain hot water bottle was made the way it was and appreciate that the different methods used today relate to technological advances. Other aspects of historical research, such as the use of information and communication technology to find information and the development of historical interpretation skills are relatively under developed.

82. Pupils' attitudes in the lessons seen were good and frequently very good. Most were keen to share their ideas with the rest of the class – although a minority were more inclined to express their own views than to listen to those of others. They were generally very enthusiastic about their tasks and applied themselves well to these. Teaching ranged from good to very good. Methods were appropriately varied, which helped maintain the pupils' pace of learning. Artefacts and other exciting resources - mostly provided by the teachers themselves - were employed successfully both to enhance the pupils' research skills and to stimulate their interest. Questions were suitably challenging and open ended. This had a positive effect on enhancing the pupils' understanding of the areas they were considering. Discipline was effective in keeping pupils on task and establishing good relationships in lessons.
83. Planning for history is effective. It is suitably based on national guidelines. Assessment, however, is still informal – although there is no evidence of this adversely affecting standards. The co-ordinator has a good understanding of the strengths of the school's current provision for the subject and the areas where it needs to be developed yet further.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

84. There was insufficient evidence available at the start of this new academic year on which to base an overall evaluation of pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 and Year 4. However, the limited evidence available suggests that many of the pupils are likely to reach the expected standard by the end of the academic year. Attainment at the time of the last inspection was in line with national expectations. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils understand that a variety of information, text and drawing can be entered and stored on the computer. Pupils in Year 1, for example, word process simple sentences that include the use of capital letters and full stops. They produce instructions for programming a floor turtle and abstract

pictures using an appropriate programme. They understand that situations can be modelled through the use of information and communication technology, as in a Year 1 lesson where pupils exhibited appropriate mouse control to chose and move items from the 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears' story. In Year 3 pupils understand that data can be organised through use of an appropriate program. An example of this was the class survey based around places visited and people's occupations. They also understand that text can be accompanied by graphics, but have only a very limited grasp of how this can be executed. Year 4 pupils control a screen turtle to produce shapes and routes and can change the fonts, size of font and the colour of text. They save and print out their work. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, made satisfactory progress during the lessons observed and are achieving satisfactorily overall at both key stages.

85. The quality of teaching was good in two out of the three lessons seen, and satisfactory in the other. Teachers display at least sound subject knowledge, give competent demonstrations and support pupils well during their hands-on sessions. This enables pupils to approach tasks with a good degree of confidence. Teachers encourage pupils to work co-operatively and collaboratively together and this they do well. In a Year 4 lesson for example, a group of pupils worked in pairs discussing how best to change the text of a list of class rules in order to highlight certain aspects of them. In the most effective lessons, teachers are imaginative in the way they introduce a topic. In a Year 1 lesson, for example, the teacher asked the pupils to organise three chairs, teddy bears, bowls etc before introducing a modelling program based on Goldilocks and the Three Bears. This showed the pupils clearly how the use of the application could make the task easier. Pupils talk with interest about their learning, show enjoyment in lessons and use equipment with care.
86. The information technology curriculum is sound and is based on national guidelines. Assessment procedures are developing satisfactorily. Until recently these have consisted of class teachers' individual records and the annual report to parents. This year they have been extended to include a 'bite size' skills checklist. A portfolio of pupils' work has been started. The subject leader is enthusiastic and well organised, and is looking forward to the forthcoming in-service training that will help to raise the expertise of all the staff to the good level displayed by some. This, and the provision of a mini-computer suite in each classroom at the end of last term, will be instrumental in increasing the use of information and communication technology to support the overall curriculum as this - although already improving - is still insufficient at present.

MUSIC

87. Standards in music are at the expected levels at the end of Key Stage 1 and the end of Year 4 and pupils achieve satisfactorily. This finding is similar to that of the last inspection.
88. Young Key Stage 1 pupils who are exploring duration successfully distinguish between long and short sounds and can imitate these. Year 2 pupils interpret an excerpt from Holst's Planet Suite. They produce a range of relevant suggestions as to what the music means to them and conjure up a series of related visual images. Most Year 3 pupils are able to change pulse successfully while singing an African song. They accompany the song with a range of body parts, most also being able to control pitch successfully. Year 4 pupils are able to recognise the number of beats in a piece of music and can keep time with a range of tuned and untuned percussion instruments while accompanying a simple song. They sing songs such as 'Down by the Bay' effectively with a good control of pitch and dynamics. In assemblies, hymns are generally sung sweetly and sometimes, as in the case of 'Colours of the Day', with considerable enthusiasm.
89. Most pupils enjoy their music lessons. They are attentive and keen to improve their performance. Year 3 pupils, for example, all participate in lessons with transparent enthusiasm. Occasionally, however, some of the oldest pupils – while keen to participate – become over-exuberant and exhibit inappropriate behaviour. Teaching is good overall and at its best is excellent. Teachers have a clear understanding of the aspect that they are delivering and lessons are suitably structured to support the pace of the pupils' learning. There is generally a good level of challenge to the activities provided. Behaviour management strategies are good and in most lessons successfully establish good behaviour and positive relationships. In the most successful lesson seen during the inspection, the teacher's good subject knowledge informed an effective, well-delivered introduction. There was a very good match of tasks to the skills of the pupils, who responded very well to the infectious enthusiasm of the teacher and made very good progress as a result.
90. No composition was seen during the inspection, but the evidence of planning documentation and previous work indicates that this does take place during the course of the year. For example, pupils in Year 1 have written music using a simple form of graphic notation. Overall provision and achievement is enhanced by regular recorder tuition and by the school's participation in a number of local musical initiatives. However, the potential of information and communication technology to support the subject has not yet been explored. There are also some shortages in the availability of large-scale percussion instruments and keyboards. The co-ordinator has a clear view of the subject's strengths and areas for further development and has appropriately begun to monitor the work of other teachers.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

91. There is insufficient evidence to make a judgement about pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 as no lessons were observed in this key stage at the time of the inspection. In Years 3 and 4, attainment can be judged in the areas of swimming, dance and games activities. The evidence from the lessons suggests that in the areas of dance and games skills the pupils will reach standards in line with national expectations by the end of Year 4, and in swimming many will exceed these. The school makes very good use of its own swimming pool during the summer months and an ex-parent, who is a swimming coach, makes a valuable contribution, enhancing pupils' swimming skills during this time each year. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well during lessons in these three areas of physical education. Pupils in Year 3 have sound ball skills and can throw and catch appropriately, higher attaining pupils coping with smaller balls. Pupils in Year 4 create and perform short movement sequences, showing sound understanding of an eight-pulse beat. In the half-class of Year 3 pupils observed in the swimming pool, only one pupil was a total non-swimmer. The rest of the group had various levels of expertise up to that of independent swimmers. Last year fifty per cent of the pupils achieved the National Curriculum level expected for pupils in swimming at the end of Year 6. In lessons pupils work well together in small groups and pupils with special educational needs are well integrated into the class and involved in all activities. The standard of pupils' attainment has been maintained since the last inspection.
92. The quality of teaching is good and sometimes very good and has been maintained since the last inspection. Teachers manage pupils very well and ensure through encouragement and suitably challenging activities that pupils of all abilities maintain concentration and work appropriately. Pupils show evident enjoyment in lessons and most work hard to improve their skills. Lessons are planned well with appropriate warm-up and cool down activities included. Teachers show a good understanding of the relevant techniques and describe and demonstrate these clearly. In a Year 3 and lesson, for example, the teacher described and demonstrated accurately the warm-up activities and, later in the lesson, the body position required for throwing a ball over-arm and under-arm. Teachers use pupils well to demonstrate good practice and this helps to motivate the demonstrator and the watchers. In a Year 4 dance lesson for example, the teacher chose two pupils to demonstrate their movements to the rest of the class, who then enthusiastically copied the sequences to music. Lessons are well planned and organized, ensuring that maximum lesson time is spent on pupil activity. Pupils are encouraged to change quickly before and after lessons, and the importance of wearing the correct kit is made clear. Teachers themselves are good role models for this. The importance of safe exercise and its good effect on the body is also promoted strongly by teachers in other curriculum areas, for example science. Teachers work hard at encouraging pupils to work together co-operatively and physical education supports the pupils' social development well.

93. The curriculum is broad and balanced and complies with national guidelines. The subject area is efficiently co-ordinated and teachers' planning and some teaching is monitored. Formal assessment procedures consist only of the annual report to parents, which is insufficient. The subject co-ordinator keeps good photographic evidence of the range of activities covered. This includes photographs of pupils engaged in folk dancing, sports and area sports days and outdoor pursuits like rock climbing as well as the expected curriculum activities. Accommodation and resources are good in some areas like the provision of the swimming pool and the grassed area for outdoor activities, but only adequate for the delivery of the curriculum in others. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities and these are well attended by the pupils. They help to support pupils' development in physical education well. Pupils regularly gain success in outside games, swimming and athletic events and have the opportunity to visit an outdoor activity centre.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

94. The school has a high regard for the teaching of religious education. Provision meets the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus and standards are at the expected levels at the end of Key Stage 1 and at the end of Year 4. Some pupils in Key Stage 2 exceed these. Most achieve well at both key stages.
95. Young Key Stage 1 pupils successfully distinguish between rules that make sense and those that do not. Most have a clear idea about people who might support their positive behaviour. They also have an emerging concept of God's role in their lives. Year 2 pupils can provide a range of characteristics that distinguish individuals from one another. In addition to physical differences, they can suggest ones that relate to aptitudes and personality. They have a sound understanding of various parts of the Bible including the creation story, the birth of Christ and familiar parables. They appreciate the role of pioneers in the development of Christianity, such as St Francis of Assisi, and the significance of symbolism and ceremony to worshippers. Key Stage 2 pupils have a sound knowledge of several areas of Christ's life and work. They have a good recall of key Christian beliefs such as the concept of the Holy Trinity. Most have an emerging understanding of the fundamental characteristics of each element of the Trinity. Higher attaining pupils pose challenging theological questions such as 'if God loves us why do we have natural disasters like fatal earthquakes' and attempt to find their own answers to these.
96. Pupils' attitudes in lessons are at least good and are sometimes very good. Most are attentive during class discussions and are keen to contribute their ideas, while being prepared to listen to those of others. They generally settle quickly to follow-up tasks and focus well on these. Overall behaviour in lessons is good. Teaching was very good in two of the three lessons seen during the inspection and good in the other. Teachers' introductions to lessons are frequently very enthusiastic, but always sensitive to the views of the pupils. Material is presented at a good pace – which keeps the

pupils alert and motivated. Questions are suitably open ended, and frequently very challenging, forcing the pupils to think deeply about moral and religious issues. In one of the very good lessons, for example, the teacher had a particularly good understanding of the complex issues being considered. Challenging concepts were well handled and put into a context that the pupils could understand. Questions from the pupils were handled sensitively and honestly, which encouraged the pupils to express their personal concerns. Discipline in all religious education lessons is positive and consistently applied. As a result, behaviour and relationships are good.

97. Although most lessons are founded in Christianity, due regard is given to key aspects of other major world religions. Overall provision for religious education is greatly enhanced through school assemblies, some of which are led by members of the local clergy and churches. Planning structures for the subject are appropriate. The co-ordinator has a clear overview of the school's provision for religious education and a deep commitment to its further improvement.