

INSPECTION REPORT

AXMINSTER COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Axminster

LEA area: Devon

Unique reference number: 113059

Headteacher: Mr A Harvell

Reporting inspector: Dr M Bradshaw
6169

Dates of inspection: 4th – 7th February 2002

Inspection number: 242879

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 to 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Stoney Lane
Axminster
Devon

Postcode: EX13 5BU

Telephone number: 01297 33005

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr K Hill

Date of previous inspection: 29th September 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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6169	Dr M Bradshaw	Registered inspector	Mathematics Geography Physical education	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further?
9999	Ms R Orme	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
23048	Ms D Wilkinson	Team inspector	English Religious education Equal opportunities Special educational needs English as an additional language	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
10204	Mr D Vincent	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology History	How well is the school led and managed?
16556	Ms E Matthews	Team inspector	Art and design Design and technology Music The Foundation Stage	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Axminster Community Primary School is situated on the eastern side of the town of Axminster, Devon. It has 209 pupils who attend full-time from Reception to Year 6. Children enter Reception full-time in either September or January, spending two or three terms in the class before starting in Year 1. The number of boys, at 55 per cent, exceeds girls. During last year, more pupils joined the school than left it. All pupils are from a white ethnic background and no pupil has English as an additional language. Thirty-two pupils (15 per cent) claim free school meals, which is close to the national average. The number of pupils identified as having special educational needs is about average; 47 (22.5 per cent) children are on the register of special educational needs. Three pupils have a statement of special educational needs. Attainment on entry, as indicated by assessments shortly after children start school, is below average and there are few children with above average attainment. In particular, there are weaknesses in communication skills. This represents a change from the previous inspection, which indicated that attainment on entry appeared to be average, with 'a full range of abilities'. The background of pupils is broad, and about average overall. However, the school is within an area identified as having a significant degree of social deprivation.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Axminster Community Primary School is an improving school, and is increasingly effective. Despite being without an effective deputy headteacher for some time, the headteacher provides the school with very good leadership and management. The school ensures equality and inclusion for all its pupils. As a result, children display very positive attitudes and values. Owing to good teaching, pupils' learning and progress are good. Pupils' attainment is usually average, or above average, by the time they leave at the end of Year 6, and this represents good achievement. Teaching observed during in the inspection was good overall, and never less than satisfactory. Over a third of lessons featured very good or excellent teaching. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported. The income per pupil is below average; the school uses its resources well and provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The leadership and management of the headteacher are very good, and he is strongly supported by staff and governors.
- The quality of teaching is good overall, and was never less than satisfactory in the lessons observed. This results in pupils making good progress during their time in school and attainment that is now average, or above average, by Year 6.
- Good provision is made to support pupils' personal development, especially in the moral and social areas. As a result, pupils' personal development and relationships, and their attitudes to school, are very good.
- Assessment of pupils' academic progress in English, mathematics and science, and the care provided, are good, and effective use is made of the information gained to set targets, and to help children understand what they have learnt.
- A good curriculum for pupils in Years 1 to 6 is well supported by the strong links made between the different subjects, which aid learning. It is strengthened by the links with the community and partner institutions.
- Parents receive very good information from the school.

What could be improved

- Standards in information and communication technology (ICT), although improving, are not high enough.

- The activities provided in Reception are not always well matched to the stage of development for children currently in the class.
- The spiritual development of pupils and the raising of their awareness of the nature of Britain's multicultural society are not given enough emphasis.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Axminster Community Primary School was inspected in September 1997 and found to have a number of weaknesses. Very good progress has been made since then. There has been a significant improvement in standards of attainment in mathematics and science. This is linked to an improvement in teaching. At the time of the previous inspection, about 20 per cent of lessons were unsatisfactory. No lesson was unsatisfactory during this inspection. More lessons feature good, or better, teaching. Assessment, including marking, has improved and it is used effectively to plan lessons and areas for improvement. Schemes of work are well organised, and supported by better assessment, this has led to better planning. Management of the school is better, despite the lack of a deputy headteacher for 18 months. The school development plan is carefully structured and now includes clear success criteria. Behaviour has improved and pupils with special educational needs make better progress. These improvements have been achieved despite a very tight budget and lack of adequate financial resources.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	E	D	D	E
mathematics	B	E	B	B
science	E	D	B	B

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

Since 1997, the rate of improvement has been broadly similar to that nationally, and has been particularly strong in science. As a result, standards, when children leave the school at the end of Year 6, are now similar to, or above, those found nationally. Last year, pupils' results in mathematics and science were above average. However, in English they were below average. When compared with the results of similar schools, that is those with between eight and 20 per cent eligible for free school meals, results are above average in mathematics and science, but well below average in English. The school is usually close to meeting its targets. Current pupils in Year 6 are likely to attain similar standards to last year, except in English where they should improve. Results last year, at the end of Year 2, were similar to, or above, the national average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. This year, attainment in Year 2 is about average overall. With the exception of ICT, standards in all other subjects are about average, or better. Throughout the school, pupils do not attain high enough standards in ICT. Children in Reception make satisfactory progress, and most will be close to the

expected standard when they enter Year 1. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well during their time in school.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils are enthusiastic about taking part in all the school has to offer.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' behaviour is nearly always at least good, and it is often very good in Years 3 to 6.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils are mature and sensitive to the needs and feelings of other people. Relationships are very good.
Attendance	Attendance is above the average, and there is no unauthorised absence. Punctuality is good.

Pupils are confident, polite and very friendly. Very occasionally, a small minority of pupils, especially younger ones, can become restless and their attention and behaviour suffer.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	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.

The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection, and is good overall. All teaching observed was at least satisfactory, just under three-quarters were at least good and over a third very good or excellent. Good or very good teaching was evident in every class, but teaching was of a consistently high standard in Years 1 and 6. The teaching of English and mathematics is good throughout the school. Teachers often make very good links between subjects, which help to enhance pupils' learning and understanding. In particular, the use of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills is very well developed. Another strength of the teaching is the quality of relationships with pupils. The management of pupils is usually good. Marking has improved and some is especially helpful. Homework is used satisfactorily to support learning. Teaching in Reception is satisfactory but does not sufficiently reflect the recent national guidance for the teaching of young children. The quality of teaching evident is helping to promote children's learning throughout the school and is one reason for pupils' good progress. Most pupils show interest and concentrate well. Those with special educational needs are well supported by teachers and other staff and, as a result, their progress while in the school is good.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a good curriculum, especially for pupils in Years 1 to 6, which helps them to make good progress. Cross-curricular links, including a range of opportunities for pupils to use their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects, are a strength of the curriculum. The very good programme of visits and visitors, and the exceptional links with local schools and pre-schools all help pupils to make good progress.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good, including for pupils with a specific statement of need. Pupils are well supported and take part in all that the school offers. They make good progress and achieve well for their abilities.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	There is very good provision for the moral and social development of pupils. Opportunities for raising spiritual awareness, and promoting knowledge of Britain's multicultural society are limited.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school looks after its pupils well. The results of National Curriculum tests in English, mathematics and science are analysed thoroughly and, together with the results of the school's own assessments, are used well to set specific targets.

The local community and other educational organisations give very good support to pupils' learning. The school involves parents in its work effectively. The planned activities for children in Reception are not always appropriate for their stage of development and they do not prepare them sufficiently for Year 1.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides very good leadership and clear determination to bring about continued improvement. He is fully supported by the newly appointed deputy headteacher and staff, all of whom discharge their responsibilities with diligence and commitment.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body is fully involved in the life and work of the school and makes a significant contribution to its success. Governors are very supportive, but are also perceptive in analysing ways in which the school can be improved.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school carefully analyses the quality of teaching and learning, as well as test data. It constantly seeks to improve its performance.
The strategic use of resources	The school operates within tight financial limits. Priorities are considered within a longer-term framework to improve standards. Resources are used very effectively.

The number and quality of teaching and support staff enable pupils to make good progress, but there is not enough adult support for children in the Reception class. The accommodation is satisfactory. Lack of suitable resources, especially for children in Reception and for ICT, restricts progress in some areas. The governors are careful to ensure the principles of best value are applied rigorously.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children like school. • Children's progress and behaviour are good. • Homework is sufficient. • Teaching in the school is good. • The school is approachable. • The school expects children to work hard. • The school works closely with parents. • The school is well led and managed. • Children are helped to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More information about how their children are progressing. • Closer links between parents and the school.

Inspectors support parents' positive views of the school. Children have very good attitudes and enjoy their time in school, they behave very well and become mature and responsible. Their progress is good because of effective teaching. Pupils are expected to work hard. The school uses homework satisfactorily to aid learning. Staff are very approachable and inspectors consider that the school works well with parents. Management and leadership of the school are very good. Inspectors agree that written reports differ from the style which parents are used to. However, they provide detailed and accurate information. Other information supplied is also detailed and helpful.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Over the period 1997 to 2001, in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, pupils' results have improved at a rate similar to the national improvement. The results in science have increased strongly, less so in English. Results in mathematics have fluctuated more. In 2001, results were above the national average in mathematics and science, but below the average in English. Compared with similar schools, they were above the average in mathematics and science, but well below the average in English. Inspection evidence shows that standards are currently about average in Year 6 in English, and above this in mathematics and science. The targets set for at least Level 4 attainment in English and mathematics are suitable, and usually met. There is no significant difference between the results of boys and girls.
2. Since 1997, in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, pupils' average results in reading, writing and mathematics declined initially, but have improved strongly since 1999. In 2001, overall attainment in reading and writing was above average, that in mathematics about average. In comparison with similar schools, results were above the average in reading and writing, and similar to the average in mathematics. Teacher assessments in science indicated that pupils' results last year were well above average. Inspection evidence indicates that, this year, standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science are about average. They are likely to be better for pupils currently in Year 1. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls.
3. The previous report indicated that standards were about average in English, but below average in mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT). In other subjects, in both key stages, standards were average or above. Attainment has now improved in both mathematics and science, but remains below average in ICT. In English it is about average and, in particular, by Year 2, it is improving after a period of decline.
4. Attainment on entry to Reception is below average, with the greatest weakness in communication skills. This represents a lower level than reported at the time of the previous inspection. Satisfactory progress helps to ensure that, when children join Year 1, most will achieve a standard close to that expected, but with little high attainment. In communication, language and literacy, children's speaking and listening skills improve slowly. Many are unsure of letter sounds, but can write their own name. Children have a secure knowledge of numbers. They know numbers to five, and some beyond this. Their grasp of mathematical language is insecure. Children's knowledge of the world increases satisfactorily, but there are few opportunities for children to develop their investigative skills. In creative development, children have insufficient opportunity to develop their skills, but they do enjoy singing. They use a range of media, including paint, satisfactorily. In physical development, sessions in the well-equipped hall help to ensure that children's skills improve well. Owing to inclement weather, it was not possible to use the outside area during the inspection. Children's personal, social and emotional development improves especially well.
5. Pupils in Year 2 are achieving average standards in English, mathematics and science. They are below average in ICT. Pupils read with satisfactory accuracy and fluency, and with a secure understanding of what they have read. Writing skills are average, but

improving due to the extensive use of literacy in other subjects. They use correct punctuation and spell simple common words accurately. Handwriting is generally neat, and about a third of pupils use a joined script. Pupils listen attentively, but their spoken language skills are weaker. Pupils' mathematical knowledge in Year 2 is about average. They handle numbers up to 100 with reasonable accuracy, especially for addition and subtraction. They know the features of a range of two-dimensional shapes. Pupils' numeracy skills are used satisfactorily in other areas of the curriculum. In science, pupils' attainment is about average by the end of Year 2. They have a satisfactory knowledge across all areas of science. Pupils' scientific skills, such as those of observation and recording, are also satisfactory. In ICT, pupils' work is below average because they have had insufficient opportunity to practise and consolidate skills. In religious education, pupils achieve standards in line with those expected. Pupils in Year 1 are making good progress and are likely to achieve higher standards by the end of Year 2.

6. Pupils currently in Year 6 demonstrate attainment that is about average in English, which is better than last year. Their attainment in mathematics and science is above average. In the 2001 National Curriculum tests, attainment was below average in English, and above average in mathematics and science. Pupils read with sound understanding and accuracy. Their writing has improved, but the spelling skills they have learnt are not consistently applied well in other subjects. Most pupils write cursorily, legibly and fluently. Speaking and listening skills are improving strongly. Pupils' literacy skills are used particularly well to support learning in other subjects. Pupils' mathematical knowledge is above average. They have good number skills and solve problems accurately. They draw and interpret simple block graphs and histograms with accuracy, and understand terms such as mode and median. Pupils use their skills very competently to solve real-life problems. In 2001, pupils' knowledge of science was above average, and this continues to be the case. Pupils' scientific skills are developed effectively. Pupils apply their skills well to scientific investigations. In ICT, attainment is below average, and pupils do not yet have a sufficient breadth of experiences.
7. Throughout the school, pupils achieve mostly average, or better, standards in other subjects. In art and design, in both key stages, pupils have good skills and use them well in drawing and collage work. The quality of work in design and technology continues to be above average; pupils design, make and evaluate a wide range of artefacts. Although the school recognises that the music curriculum requires development, in lessons, pupils achieve well. This was well illustrated in Year 4 where, after listening to Peter and the Wolf, pupils used a wide range of instruments to represent many other animals. In history, attainment is average. Pupils' understanding and skills are developed satisfactorily. In geography, pupils' map skills develop especially strongly. They use four- or six-figure co-ordinates very competently. In physical education, pupils attain average standards overall, although higher than this in swimming and dance.
8. Pupils' achievement during their time in school is good because of the good quality teaching. Achievement is also helped by pupils' enthusiasm for school. Pupils' progress during their time in school is good, and in Years 1 and 6 is especially strong. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and they make good progress. As a result, they achieve well and some reach average standards by the time they leave. A significant improvement has been the reduction in the number of pupils failing to achieve at least Level 3 in English by the end of Year 6.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. Pupils are keen to come to school and to take part in all the activities on offer. Nearly all parents report that their child likes school. Pupils talk about their work and activities with enthusiasm. They chat happily over lunch about what they have studied during the morning. Pupils in Year 6 particularly enjoy mathematics. They are often eager to take part in discussions in lessons, and they learn to take turns to contribute. Pupils enjoy taking part in community festivals for dance, music and art. The very good attitudes between all sections of the school's community give significant support to pupils with special educational needs. This enables them to develop confidence and self-esteem and supports the good progress they make. The school places strong emphasis on personal development for young children and this is well established in the Reception class. The children make sound progress in learning to share, they take turns and have a care for one another. They often start school with few social skills and some have specific behavioural problems. Various good strategies are used to support improvements but a more interesting environment, as well as permanent help, would be of benefit.
10. Pupils' behaviour is good and has improved since the last inspection. It is good around the school, even when pupils are not directly supervised. It is nearly always at least satisfactory in lessons, and it is good or better in three-quarters of lessons. Behaviour improves as pupils progress through the school so that it is very good in more than half the lessons in Years 3 to 6. Parents consider that behaviour in the school is good. There are a few instances of immature behaviour in Years 1, 2 and 5 which impede learning, but these are sometimes linked to less effective teaching. There was no evidence of oppressive behaviour during the inspection and there have been no exclusions in the past year.
11. The personal development of pupils is very good. Pupils understand the impact of their actions on other people. They are keen to raise money for a wide range of good causes, and pupils run a bring-and-buy stall at lunchtime in aid of different charities. In history, Year 3 pupils wrote with great sensitivity about the responsibilities of being a Saxon ruler showing a grasp of empathy. Pupils respect the feelings of others well and make allowances for others with physical or learning difficulties. Reception children respect each other's ideas, and Year 6 pupils appreciated the successful work of others in a design and technology lesson. Relationships are very good at all levels. Pupils work happily in a range of different groups. There was a high degree of collaboration and sensitivity in a Year 6 dance lesson.
12. Attendance and punctuality are good. Attendance is a little above the national average and there is no unauthorised absence. Registration procedures meet statutory requirements.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

13. Pupils are taught well in the school and this is helping to ensure good achievement and pace of learning. All teaching observed was at least satisfactory, almost three-quarters of lessons were good or better, and over a third very good or excellent. There are differences in the quality of teaching across the school. Although good teaching occurs in every class, that in Years 1 and 6 is of a particularly high quality. The quality of teaching is better than that described in the last inspection report, this is partly due to staff changes. In addition, assessment information is used effectively to help plan lessons to meet the needs of individual pupils and to ensure that there is greater challenge for more able pupils. The recently appointed deputy headteacher is having a

positive impact on the learning of pupils in Year 5, who previously had a period of time with a temporary teacher.

14. The teaching for Reception children is satisfactory. This is partly related to the fact that activities are not always well matched to the stage of development for children currently in the class. In addition, the resources available are not sufficiently stimulating, and there is inadequate additional adult help. All areas of learning are planned for, but those for literacy and mathematical development tend to follow the guidance in the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies too closely. Children's personal, social and emotional development is given good emphasis and, as a result, they share resources satisfactorily and co-operate when necessary. Assessment of the progress of individual children is good, and the information used satisfactorily to inform planning. Children's learning is sound and they work with satisfactory pace and concentration, however, learning is restricted by the weaknesses in the curriculum and the resources.
15. The quality of teaching in the remainder of the school is good, and none observed was less than satisfactory. Teaching of English and mathematics is good throughout the school. In other subjects, teaching is never less than satisfactory, and usually good. In physical education, teaching in specialist areas, such as swimming, is very good. Although teaching of ICT is at least satisfactory in individual sessions, a lack of resources and opportunities to consolidate skills restrict learning. The strengths of teaching are similar throughout the school, but they are consistently evident in Years 1 and 6. Pupils' learning in the lessons observed was mostly good. This was because of the high proportion of good quality teaching, which ensures pupils' good progress as they move through the school. Careful attention is given to ensuring that all pupils are helped to achieve their best. This was especially well illustrated in the careful planning to meet the needs of the different pupils in each class in a wide range of subjects. Teachers' subject knowledge is usually good, and this is used effectively to promote the development and use of pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy. In the best lessons, teachers' expectations about the standard and amount of work to be completed are made very clear. Literacy is well taught and used particularly well in other subjects, including the development of speaking and listening. The teaching of mathematics is also good and has been helped by the National Numeracy Strategy. Good attention is given to the application of mathematical skills to real-life problems and to the use of these skills in other subjects.
16. A few young pupils can be inattentive and do not always naturally behave well. Almost all teachers, supported well by other adults, work very hard to manage pupils and to ensure behaviour remains good, or better. However, expectations are not always made sufficiently clear for some of the pupils in Years 2 and 3. Detailed medium-term planning informs what is to be taught and daily plans usually contain good detail about how to meet the needs of different groups of pupils. There are good examples of how planning is informed by assessment, such as the use of co-ordinates in a Year 6 mathematics lesson. A range of methods is used well and, in the best lessons, teachers are very effective at making links between subjects. This helps learning by making the topics relevant to the pupils. Very good relationships between staff and pupils are evident in many lessons, especially for pupils in Years 1, 4 and 6. The pace of lessons is usually good and pupils are often encouraged to complete a good amount of work. Resources are used effectively to support learning. The limited amount of ICT resources is used effectively, such as using a digital camera to record and remind pupils of the production of their sound maps.
17. Teachers know their pupils very well and assessment during lessons is often effective. The quality of marking is often good, and the best encourages a dialogue between child

and pupil. However, there are occasions when marking is not precise enough, such as for errors in spelling or the labelling of the axes in graphs.

18. Pupils with special educational needs, including those with a specific statement of need, are taught well, particularly in Years 1 to 6. There is a good mix of small group sessions, sometimes withdrawn from class and whole-class work. The special educational needs teacher and the trained assistants have a very good understanding of the needs of pupils. This ensures that the methods and resources they use help pupils to learn well and make good progress. In class lessons, effective work, well matched to the stage at which pupils are working, is often set, especially in English, mathematics and science. As a result, pupils achieve well at the level at which they are working and this helps to increase their confidence and self-esteem as well as encouraging good attitudes to work. The support and encouragement given by both classroom teachers and assistants fully includes pupils in lessons. In the Reception class, the activities do not always match the stage of children's development and this has a negative impact on learning, particularly for special educational needs children. Classroom assistants are often used effectively to support individuals or groups of pupils. This helps to ensure all pupils, including those with special educational needs or a disability, are fully involved in all the school has to offer. During group sessions, classroom assistants give particularly good support to lower attaining pupils.
19. The good teaching in the school is helping to promote good learning. Assessment is used well to identify specific targets for individual pupils, who have to indicate when they have achieved their target. This is very effective in promoting a good awareness of pupils' own learning. Most pupils make good progress, so that by the time they reach Year 6, standards are now mostly above average. Pupils concentrate well and work hard. Virtually all settle quickly to their tasks and learning is therefore enhanced. High quality learning, linked to pupils' concentration, pace of working, interest in lessons and particularly good relationships, is a feature of the best lessons. These features are very evident in lessons in Years 1 and 6.

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

20. Very good improvement has been made in the curricular provision since the school was last inspected when there were weaknesses. Now the curriculum, especially for pupils in Years 1 to 6, is good. A particular strength is the good attention given to providing for both the academic and personal development of pupils.
21. The present curriculum in the Reception class inhibits children's learning. It does not prepare them sufficiently well for the beginning of Year 1. Children are required to sit for too long on the carpet while they try to follow the mainstream school framework for the literacy and numeracy sessions. This leads to boredom, noise and restless behaviour. When children are allowed to choose an activity, the choice is limited. There is little structure to the self-chosen play. The teacher plans meticulously for literacy and numeracy work but, while she also plans for other curricular areas, not enough opportunities are provided for children to explore, investigate, experiment, to be imaginative and to be active. This limits the interest they show in their activities and inhibits the progress they make, which, overall, is not as good as the progress made in Years 1 to 6.
22. In Years 1 to 6, the breadth and richness of learning opportunities the school provides for all its pupils motivates them well, so that they work hard and make good progress. The quality and range are good, particularly for science, religious education, art and

design, design and technology, history and physical education. The good curriculum is playing an effective part in helping to improve standards which are now above average by the time pupils leave the school. A particular strength is the exceptional cross-curricular links between subjects. This allows pupils to apply the skills and knowledge they have learnt across a range of subjects. Literacy skills make a very positive contribution to learning, particularly to the above average standards seen in religious education in Years 2 and 6 and in geography in Year 6. Numeracy skills help pupils to organise and present their work in subjects such as geography and science. The National Numeracy Strategy has been very effectively implemented and this has led to pupils reaching above average standards by the time they leave the school. Owing to staff illness and changes, the impact of the National Literacy Strategy has been less obvious although, over the past 18 months, the provision has improved and is now helping to raise standards in English. A lack of resources for ICT and staff expertise has prevented pupils from using these skills effectively in other subjects.

23. When the school was last inspected, there was no overall curricular map or schemes of work in some subjects and this made it difficult for staff to plan for an effective balance between different subjects and to provide activities which would build on, and extend, pupils' learning. Very good improvement has been made in this aspect, and now yearly planning and schemes of work are good. This helps to ensure that termly and weekly planning is effectively supporting pupils' progress. The good planning also guides teachers well, contributing to the high levels of good, very good and excellent teaching seen during the inspection.
24. The provision for pupils with special educational needs, including those with a specific statement of special educational need, is good, especially in Years 1 to 6, and pupils are fully involved in the school's activities. This is because of good identification, planning and monitoring. The activities planned for special educational needs children in the Reception class are often not appropriate for the stage at which they are working. When this happens, they become discouraged, lose concentration and little learning takes place. Individual education plans for pupils in Years 1 to 6 effectively identify their needs. These are addressed well, particularly in small group activities.
25. The school is fully committed to equality of opportunity for all its pupils and in this it is largely successful. This is significantly helped by the caring and inclusive ethos, which allows all pupils to develop confidence and self-esteem and to make good progress in all aspects of their development by the time they leave.
26. The school makes very good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education. This includes the teaching of sex education and drugs awareness appropriate to the age and maturity of pupils. The effective scheme of work for personal, social and health education emphasises healthy living, the individual's responsibility for others and the importance of positive relationships. Very good opportunities are given to allow pupils to put some of their learning into practice through the work of the School Council or by acting as monitors.
27. The contribution made by the local community, including visitors to the school, and the programme of visits that pupils make are very good. In particular, a number of retired members of the local community give very valuable support to the school by helping in lessons or hearing pupils read. The school makes very good use of visitors' expertise; for example, a local bank manager took part in the school's mathematics week. Both day and residential visits give very good support to learning. A good example of this is seen in the visit pupils make to Weycroft Hall where they increase their geographical or historical skills through taking part in orienteering or role-playing how the Romans lived

in the past. There is a good range of musical and sporting activities, such as the Carol Service held in the local church and a countywide dance festival. Local businesses and charities are very supportive of the school. Recent contributions have helped to develop the new library and a local charity funds a specialist programme, which a number of pupils with special educational needs can undertake at a local secondary school. The school also has an effective programme of extra-curricular activities, covering different areas such as chess, dance or sport. These benefit pupils and often encourage them to continue the activities outside school, for example in playing for local football teams.

28. The excellent relationships forged between the Axe Valley schools make a very positive contribution to pupils' learning. At all levels, the sharing of expertise, resources and information benefits pupils in the different phases, which is evident from the time children start in the Reception class. The school has excellent relationships with the pre-school providers in Axminster, especially the nursery that shares the school site. This ensures that children make a smooth transfer to full-time education and allows early identification of special educational needs. The common assessment system, devised in consultation with the local schools, helps to ensure a smooth transition to secondary education, especially for pupils with special educational needs. A series of workshops and support groups help staff to increase their expertise in a range of subjects. The above average standards achieved in swimming are partly due to access to the local community pool sited in the grounds of the nearby secondary school. This was built as the result of pressure from the local community, including the partnership of schools. In addition, the above average standards seen in dance have been supported well by visits from local secondary school pupils.
29. Overall, the school makes good provision for the personal development of pupils, and nearly all parents consider that the school is helping their child to become mature. Behaviour in lessons improves as pupils progress through the school, reflecting its success in helping children to mature.
30. The provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. Spiritual development is addressed well in religious education. All pupils have the opportunity to attend a daily act of collective worship. Whilst these assemblies meet statutory requirements, they do not make a significant contribution to spiritual development. Some opportunities for spiritual reflection are used when they arise in lessons, but such opportunities are not planned across the curriculum. The provision for this aspect of personal development is not fully secure and has not improved since the last inspection. Aesthetic awareness, for example, is not emphasised sufficiently in art and design.
31. The school makes very good provision for the moral and social development of pupils, particularly through the personal, social and health education programme. Each week, the school community divides into 'Friendship Circles'. These provide an effective opportunity for pupils to discuss moral and social issues and for them to learn to co-operate in a different setting. Opportunities for collaborative work are effective features of many lessons. Assemblies, including the weekly 'Star Book' assembly that celebrates achievement, make a good contribution to moral and social development. Moral issues, such as pollution and over-fishing, are discussed in geography. Participation in the School Council teaches pupils of all ages to exercise responsibility. Pupils are also helped to learn responsibility as prefects, house captains and library monitors. Adults are good role models.
32. The cultural development of pupils is addressed well. Pupils are taught about the local history of the area and they are encouraged to take part in festivals in the community. Pupils have an opportunity to create dances to Scottish and African music, and to listen

to the works of great composers. Year 4 pupils enjoyed listening to the different instruments highlighted in 'Peter and the Wolf'. Pupils are taught about the different religious faiths followed by people in this country. However, opportunities to learn about the multicultural diversity of the United Kingdom are much more limited. There are few multicultural dressing-up clothes for children to use in the Reception class.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

33. The school continues to ensure the welfare of pupils to good effect. It is a safe and friendly community, which reflects its aims. No health and safety concerns were noted during the inspection and the school has good security systems. There is good first-aid cover and any accidents are carefully recorded. Pupils are supervised well during lunch and playtimes. There is good awareness of the need for confidentiality. Child protection arrangements are secure and meet locally agreed requirements.
34. The school promotes good behaviour very well and this is demonstrated by the increasingly mature behaviour of pupils as they progress through the school. The school is equally successful at eliminating oppressive behaviour of all kinds. The weekly 'Friendship Circles' and the systematic programme for personal, social and health education make a significant contribution to improving behaviour and attitudes. The school's provision for personal, social and health education has benefited from involvement with the 'Healthy Schools Initiative'. Attendance is effectively monitored to encourage pupils to attend regularly.
35. The personal development of pupils is monitored well through the system of merits and certificates, and through the 'Star Book', which records special contributions to the school community celebrated at a weekly assembly. Staff know their pupils well. Suitable procedures are in place before children start in Reception, with close links maintained with the adjacent independent Nursery class. Within their class, Reception age children are supported and cared for well.
36. Assessment arrangements and procedures overall are now a good feature of the school, representing considerable improvement since the last inspection. Assessment of pupils' attainment and progress in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science is now particularly good and effective in providing clear information on how to develop the work further, both for individual pupils and for the school as a whole. The 'baseline' assessment of children when they enter the Reception class has proved helpful in establishing the various levels of maturity and pre-school experiences of individual children aged four.
37. Staff are very conscientious in establishing the procedures within their classes and they follow the school's guidance policies accurately, giving much of their own time out of school. This has resulted in a clear picture being established term-by-term as to the academic performance of pupils, as well as to their personal development. The pupils themselves are involved in the process of assessment and, together with their teachers, each pupil is set a target for achievement. This has a built-in aspect of flexibility so that if a target is met earlier than expected the next one can readily be put in place. The reverse is also true. If a target is set too high it can be re-adjusted. The school has also set over-arching targets aimed at improving academic attainment. These are based on earlier assessment results and are agreed by all staff. From scrutiny of past results and during the inspection, it is clearly apparent that these systems have already begun to raise the levels of attainment. Some children, when starting school, have had limited pre-school experience. The good progress, particularly in English and mathematics, which they make through the school, is one of the

outcomes of the impact of assessment and its use in forming an appropriate curriculum.

38. The school is now addressing the need to assess progress and attainment in all other areas of the curriculum. A good beginning has been made, particularly in design and technology, history and geography.
39. Teachers record all work undertaken and collect portfolios of pupils' representative work, which is placed into individual files and annotated. These files are passed on to the next teacher, together with the relevant National Curriculum test results and the internal school results. At present, the school sets its own tests for pupils twice during a primary school pupil's life in the core subjects. These results are carefully analysed against the National Curriculum criteria. In future, if results correspond, the school may feel that there is no need for internal testing.
40. The school's caring ethos, shown in the very good relationships seen, contributes particularly well to the care of pupils with special educational needs. Assessment of these pupils is good and is used well to aid both planning and teaching. Particularly good liaison with the pre-school providers helps early identification of needs. Excellent relationships with other schools and the common assessment system used by the Axe Valley schools allow very good information about pupils' needs to be passed to the secondary school to which they transfer. The school has made good arrangements to introduce the new Special Educational Needs Code of Practice and statements and reviews are up-to-date. There is good liaison with outside agencies and the action taken on the advice given benefits pupils well.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

41. The school effectively promotes a positive partnership with parents and this contributes well to the standards of work achieved. Nearly all parents say they feel confident about approaching the school with concerns, but a small minority considers that the school does not work closely enough with them. Overall, parents have positive views of the school.
42. Suitable links are established with parents prior to their children starting in the Reception class, mainly through the adjacent independent Nursery class. The school provides parents with very good general information and details about what is taught in each class. Parents have several formal opportunities to come to the school to discuss a child's progress with the headteacher or class teacher. They are also welcome to come informally at any time. These verbal discussions are complimented at the end of the year with written reports to parents. These reports, based on teachers' assessments and test results, are clear and informative. They provide very good and detailed information about what pupils can do in each subject and the progress they have made. However, a minority of parents do not feel well informed about their child's progress, although they also receive two formal opportunities to discuss this with the class teacher. In some instances, parents do not like the style of the reports.
43. Parents support their children's learning well. Many provide assistance in classrooms and on educational visits. Parents encourage their children to complete the regular homework and to take part in extra-curricular activities. Parents send their children to school regularly and in correct uniform, thus supporting well the ethos of the school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

44. The headteacher provides very good leadership and is ably supported by the newly appointed deputy headteacher and by the staff, all of whom discharge their responsibilities with energy, diligence and commitment. There is a clear determination, shared by everyone associated with the school, to raise standards and bring about continued improvement.
45. The governing body is fully involved in the life and work of the school and makes a significant contribution to its success. Governors are fully supportive but are also perceptive in identifying ways in which the school can improve. Despite severe financial problems, they are careful not to allow short-term pressures deflect them from the benefits of longer-term strategic decisions. The governors make an excellent contribution to shaping the direction of the school.
46. The headteacher consults widely about proposed improvements and the contributions of staff and governors are highly valued. The process supports thoughtful discussion leading to the identification of pertinent initiatives for development. It helps to ensure that developments are clearly focused on improvement and that they proceed with the commitment of all concerned. The degree to which everyone associated with the school is committed to driving up standards is a strength of the school and a tribute to its leadership.
47. The Continuous Improvement Plan identifies these proposals and provides precise details of the financial implications. Monetary affairs are extremely well controlled and the school makes very good use of computer analysis. Financial control and office administration are very good. The last audit report contained a small number of relatively minor recommendations and all of these points have been properly addressed. Very good use has been made of the additional money made available to the school through specific grants, such as that to support identified pupils and the development of ICT skills.
48. The governing body has established a committee with financial responsibility and has properly defined its role. Governors are fully meeting their responsibilities in relation to budget setting and expenditure is carefully monitored. The governing body thoughtfully evaluates the cost-effectiveness of major spending decisions through the reports of the headteacher, discussion, regular evaluation of teaching and learning, visits to the school and a thorough analysis of assessment and other data. Governors compare the school's results with national averages and with schools having a similar intake. A desire for higher standards and improvement is central. These instruments enable the governing body to have a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Governors are very aware of the need to ensure that money is spent carefully. Competing quotations are obtained before contracts are issued although governors are mindful that the cheapest price does not always represent the best value. The school constantly challenges itself to provide better value. Taken as a whole, the governing body employs principles of best value to an excellent degree.
49. An issue of the previous inspection noted that the headteacher was not supported effectively by the deputy headteacher. More recently, the school has operated without a deputy headteacher and this has placed an unreasonably heavy load upon the headteacher. The recent appointment of a deputy headteacher is beginning to rectify this issue. A number of criticisms in the previous report centred on the effectiveness of the improvement plan and the fact that teaching and learning were inadequately monitored. All of these matters have been thoroughly addressed. Overall, the school has made a very good response to the weaknesses identified at the time of the previous inspection. There are now appropriate systems in place for performance management

and teacher appraisal. The school provides a very good location for those in training as teachers.

50. The financial allocation for educating each pupil is low compared to similar schools nationally and this money is used well to promote the academic and personal development of its pupils. The school uses its resources shrewdly and productively. In the past, the school had to run with a deficit budget. Owing to careful planning, this is now being eliminated.
51. The school has an appropriate number of teachers with much experience to meet the needs of teaching the curriculum. The Foundation Stage is satisfactorily managed, but there is not enough adult support available for children in Reception. The well-informed mathematics co-ordinator, working with colleagues, is having a positive impact on the standards being achieved in the subject. Good use is made of outside expertise in physical education lessons. The provision for special educational needs has improved since the school was last inspected and this is due to the hard work of the co-ordinator, together with the support of the management and staff of the school. The hardworking, part-time co-ordinator fulfils her role well. Her teaching commitments mean that some aspects, such as monitoring of the provision in some classes, are undertaken by the headteacher. However, this helps to ensure that overall leadership and management of this aspect are good. Both classroom teachers and classroom assistants receive good support, resulting in the good provision seen. There is an appropriate number of support staff. Administrative staff are effective and efficient, and they provide a cheerful reception to the school.
52. The school's accommodation is satisfactory. Classrooms are of good size and are mostly well laid out with attractive displays to inspire learning. The buildings are well maintained and cleaned by the caretaker and the cleaning team. Pupils' progress in physical education is helped because the school has a good-sized hall with fixed apparatus, a covered swimming pool and large playing field. There are sufficient hard play areas, including a separate fenced space for Reception children.
53. Overall, learning resources are unsatisfactory. There are insufficient computers for pupils to practise newly acquired skills, so that standards in ICT are below average. Resources for Reception children are poor and affect the quality of education provided. There are too few computers, few large-wheeled toys, few multicultural clothes and artefacts, and many of the resources are old and drab. Learning resources are satisfactory for all other areas of the curriculum. The new library is well laid out, and equipped with a small network of computers; it is an effective multimedia resource centre for pupils.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

54. Pupils' attainment is not high enough in ICT. The curriculum for children in Reception is not always well matched to their needs, and their resources require further improvement. Pupils' spiritual development and the need to increase their knowledge of multicultural Britain are not given sufficient emphasis.

55. In order to improve standards further, the headteacher, staff and governors should:

1. Improve standards of attainment in ICT by:

- a. improving the range of resources, including the number of computers;
- b. ensuring that pupils have more opportunities to use their ICT skills;
- c. planning in more detail the use of ICT across the curriculum;
- d. providing in-service training to ensure all staff can contribute to the improvement.

(Paragraphs 3, 5, 15, 22, 53, 79, 102, 108, 109, 110, 112, 113, 114, 116)

2. Improve provision for children in the Reception class by:

- a. reviewing the curriculum so that it is better matched to the stage of development of children currently in the class;
- b. increasing and updating the range of resources available;
- c. improving the number of adults in the Reception class.

(Paragraphs 4, 9, 14, 18, 21, 24, 32, 51, 53, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65)

3. Plan more opportunities for pupils' spiritual development, and for raising their awareness of Britain's multicultural society by:

- a. planning ways in which collective worship and subjects across the curriculum can contribute to spiritual development;
- b. where relevant, planning opportunities within a range of subjects to develop an understanding of the nature of British society.

(Paragraphs 30, 32, 53, 57, 119)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	53
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	35

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	8	11	19	15	0	0	0
Percentage	15.1	20.8	35.8	28.3	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		209
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		32

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		47

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	12
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0

National comparative data	5.6
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National comparative data	0.5
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Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	17 (19)	13 (13)	30 (32)

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17 (17)	17 (14)	16 (19)
	Girls	12 (11)	12 (11)	13 (13)
	Total	29 (28)	29 (25)	29 (32)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	97 (88)	97 (78)	97 (100)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17 (17)	16 (18)	17 (17)
	Girls	13 (11)	13 (13)	13 (13)
	Total	30 (28)	29 (31)	30 (30)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (88)	97 (97)	100 (94)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	19 (16)	12 (22)	31 (38)

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13 (11)	14 (9)	18 (16)
	Girls	10 (14)	11 (13)	12 (18)
	Total	23 (25)	25 (22)	30 (34)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	74 (66)	81 (58)	97 (89)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13 (6)	14 (11)	17 (12)
	Girls	10 (12)	11 (16)	12 (17)
	Total	23 (18)	25 (27)	29 (29)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	74 (47)	81 (71)	94 (76)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	185
Any other minority ethnic group	2

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.5
Average class size	29.9

Education support staff: YR– Y6

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	96

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1.0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

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.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
	£
Total income	347,963
Total expenditure	342,842
Expenditure per pupil	1,573
Balance brought forward from previous year	-8,225
Balance carried forward to next year	-1,980

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	193
Number of questionnaires returned	57

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	53	44	2	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	51	47	2	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	37	63	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	19	60	14	0	7
The teaching is good.	44	53	0	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	26	46	28	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	60	35	4	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	58	42	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	32	49	18	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	49	47	4	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	47	47	2	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	25	47	11	4	14

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

56. Children of four years enter the Reception class in September or January according to their birth date. At the time of the inspection, there were 27 children in the class some of whom had only started school during the previous month. Attainment on entry, as indicated by assessments shortly after children start school, is below average and there are few children with above average attainment. In particular, there are weaknesses in communication skills. This represents a change from the previous inspection, which indicated that attainment on entry was average, with 'a full range of abilities'. Most of the children are confident and well settled, whilst some are having difficulty in adjusting to school life. A qualified early years teacher takes the Reception class. She receives some good support from various classroom assistants. It is recommended, however, that the adult:child ratio for children in the Foundation Stage should be 1:10. It is also suggested that the teacher should have the same full-time assistant each day. Neither of these areas of guidance is achieved currently and the Reception class is, therefore, working under difficulties.
57. The provision made for children in the Reception class is just satisfactory. However, as well as staffing problems, there are anxieties about the curriculum provided for these children, who are not yet of statutory school age, and concerns about resources and accommodation. Two classes, a Year 1 and an independent Nursery class, can only gain access to their rooms by going through the Reception class. All three classes share the very small and inadequate toilet accommodation that is in the Nursery and Reception classrooms. The outdoor play space is limited, the surface uneven and it can rarely be used during the winter and early spring months. This is unsatisfactory. The Reception class is poorly resourced. Much of the equipment is drab, uninviting and worn. The role-play area is particularly bleak with limited domestic furniture. Dressing-up clothes and artefacts gave limited acknowledgement to the multicultural diversity of modern Britain. No water play is provided currently. Sand toys are difficult to reach. Large bricks are not visible. The only malleable material seen during the inspection was plasticine. There was no clay or paint made readily available. Some of the books are of good quality but again, some are worn and need to be exchanged. Resources in the Reception class are a priority.
58. In the last inspection report, none of the teaching and learning was found to be unsatisfactory. Most of the teaching of the current curriculum remains satisfactory, but if a more appropriate curriculum for Reception children is to be adopted, adjustments will have to be made. The quality of learning is satisfactory overall, but on occasions, it is unsatisfactory. Children are required to sit for too long on the carpet while they try to follow the mainstream school framework for the literacy and numeracy sessions. This leads to boredom, noise and restless behaviour. When children are allowed to choose an activity, and the choice is limited, they become boisterous and unruly. There is little structure to the self-chosen play. The teacher plans meticulously for literacy and numeracy work but, while she also plans for other curricular areas in detail, opportunities for children to explore, investigate, experiment, to be imaginative and active are limited. The present curriculum inhibits children's learning. It does not prepare them sufficiently for the beginning of Year 1. The teacher has a good understanding of how young children learn and a secure knowledge of the requirements of the Foundation Stage, but these have not had sufficient impact on provision.
59. The teacher makes a 'baseline' assessment of a child's attainment on entry, which focuses on literacy, mathematics and personal development. Based on this, she keeps

clear records of children's progress. At present, the range of ability and linguistic development, as shown by the assessment, is wide and the tasks provided do not always cater for the range of attainment.

Personal, social and emotional development

60. The school places strong emphasis on this area of development and its ethos is well established in the Reception class. The teaching here is strong and the children make sound progress in learning to share, taking turns and having a care for one another. They often start school with few social skills and some have particularly defined behavioural problems. With little or no special educational needs support in Reception, it is left to the teacher to manage the poor behaviour. She has various good strategies for this but a more interesting environment, as well as permanent assistance, would help.

Communication, language and literacy

61. On entry, pupils show a wide variation in their ability to listen and speak. Some have reasonably well developed speech while others are limited. Few find it easy to listen. They enjoy stories, rhymes and action songs but for many, the teaching of letter sounds has little meaning and is begun too early. The teacher is diligent in following the National Literacy Strategy but there needs to be ways of encouraging language and communication drawn from activities which are imaginative and enjoyable, and relevant to children's various stages of early development. The children have too little opportunity to communicate thoughts, feelings and ideas to each other and to adults when taught in whole-class or large groups. Play times, lunchtimes and assembly time are moments containing large groupings, which are daunting for many Reception children. In class, the children are beginning to learn to write and some can already write their names. They rarely find corners in the room, however, where they can experiment in writing for various purposes such as lists, stories, instructions or notices.

Mathematical development

62. This area of the Foundation Stage is taught satisfactorily. Although few children enter school with good mathematical concepts, they are beginning to count and match objects to five and some can go further. They find any mathematical language, such as bigger, smaller, more, less, wide, narrow, heavier, lighter, difficult. Yet there is little practical equipment to help their understanding. No balances, for example, were seen in use during the inspection and no investigation table for counting and sorting interesting objects. The sand was always dry so that tracks of different lengths or widths could not be made. The teacher is meticulous in her preparation for numeracy, but this preparation does not always meet the needs and stages of development of these particular children.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

63. As yet, these children are not confident investigators. They rarely have opportunity to check out their curiosity about living things and events or to question how things happen and how they work. Children are over-directed at times so that opportunities to use magnets, magnifying glasses or switches are missed. There was a useful input by the teacher to help the children gain a sense of time by talking about old and new toys. She had several examples, which the children discussed, and they then chose which one they would draw. Some of the carpet maps of road layouts offer opportunities to experiment with traffic signs and symbols as a beginning towards an understanding of direction and geographical location. Resources for this area of the curriculum are

meagre and do not provide the full range of experience necessary, although, in individual sessions, teaching is satisfactory.

Physical development

64. The Reception outdoor play area is underused as, in poor weather, it is inaccessible and there is no covered way. The Reception class at present, therefore, must rely on the two hall periods a week for purposeful, energetic activity. This is insufficient. The larger school playground is underused by the Reception class and whole-school playtimes are inappropriate. During the inspection, a good physical education lesson was observed when children were learning independence in dressing and undressing. In the hall, they enjoyed the vigorous part of the lesson and could feel their hearts pumping faster. They moved with confidence and were beginning to show awareness of space, of themselves and of others. Smaller motor control is encouraged in class with the use of pencils and crayons, with the building with construction toys and, on some occasions, when using malleable materials and scissors safely.

Creative development

65. Staff do not provide well for creative or imaginative play. Time is limited unnecessarily by the weight of literacy and numeracy on the timetable. The 'toy shop' could not be used imaginatively because of the lack of resources. There is evidence that children can paint, draw and cut with scissors and stick with glue with reasonable dexterity. Examples of children's paintings and drawings are displayed in the classroom but during the inspection, no experiment with paint was observed. The children enjoy music and usually listen well when music is played. During the inspection, they seldom sang with the teacher but, on the occasion observed when they sang 'Ten in the bed', they did so with enthusiasm. Singing is a good enrichment to the creative work of the youngest children.

ENGLISH

66. Between 1997, when the school was last inspected, and 1999, standards fell. One of the most significant reasons for this was a weakness in the management of the subject, partly due to the long-term sickness of the post holder. This meant that the National Literacy Strategy had not been implemented as effectively as in many schools. For the last 18 months, under the direction of the headteacher, and supported by outside advisers, members of staff have worked well together to rectify this situation. Standards are now rising again, and the school's performance in the 2001 National Curriculum tests was better than in most schools for pupils in Year 2. The school's performance for pupils in Year 6 last year was not as good as this. Although the proportion of pupils reaching the expected Level 4 was in line with that seen nationally, not enough pupils reached the higher Level 5. However, the good rate of progress continues and the standards of pupils currently in Year 6 now match the national average. Although pupils in Years 1 and 2 continue to make good progress, the lower prior attainment level of the current Year 2 pupils means that they have reached average, but not above average, standards. There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls. With the appointment of a knowledgeable and competent new co-ordinator, the good improvements made over the last year and a half are likely to be maintained and extended.
67. On entry to the Reception class, children's speaking and listening skills are below those seen for most children of their age. In addition, a significant minority of children have speech and language problems. Although they make satisfactory progress in this

aspect during the Reception year and continue to do so throughout the school, the below average prior attainment still has an effect on standards for pupils in Years 1 and 2. By the end of Year 2, the majority of pupils have sound listening skills, which help them to gain information and to understand what they have to do in a range of subjects. However, around 20 per cent of pupils, mainly those with special educational needs, find it difficult to listen in a focused way and to sustain concentration. Most Year 2 pupils explain and extend their ideas and, through good teaching, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, develop confidence. However, few pupils use a wide and varied vocabulary when speaking, and a significant minority do not pronounce their words accurately, nor are their sentences grammatically correct. The sustained good progress, which continues throughout Years 3 to 6, has a very positive effect on the standards these pupils eventually achieve. By the time they leave the school, most pupils reach the standard expected for their age in speaking and listening. The good support given to pupils with special educational needs is an important factor in the good achievement seen. During the inspection, a Year 6 pupil who receives support for special educational needs, spoke very confidently and effectively to inspectors about the book she was reading. The skills pupils gain also make a positive contribution to the quality of class discussions, including the ability to debate and argue a point of view.

68. Reading is taught well throughout the school and this helps pupils to make good progress. By the end of both Years 2 and 6, overall standards in reading match the national average. The school's arrangements for the teaching of literacy, introduced over the last year and a half, are proving effective. Regular opportunities for group reading, for pupils to read aloud and to talk about their books with adults are also having a positive effect. Parents, governors and members of the local community give very good support to this aspect of the school's work. Pupils are taught to use a range of strategies to help them understand what they are reading. In Year 2, pupils have better skills in recognising words or using the pictures and context than in sounding out new words, particularly where they have to use more than one letter for the sound such as 'ch' and 'ea'. However, pupils in Year 1 are already developing their phonic skills well. Good teaching of texts in literacy lessons, the good discussions led by teachers and an effective programme for encouraging pupils to read to their parents at home mean that very nearly all pupils reach the expected Level 4 by the time they leave. This is a greater proportion than is seen in most schools. However, mainly because the current curriculum has only been developed well over the past 18 months, the more able Year 6 pupils have had insufficient time to develop more advanced reading skills. Therefore, fewer pupils reach the higher levels than is seen in the majority of schools. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, identify important themes and analyse characters, using this information to help predict what is likely to happen next. They are beginning to select books for their own interests and to develop enthusiasm for reading. The majority of pupils find the position of non-fiction books in the library and use the content or index pages to find a specific topic.
69. The style that pupils use in their writing is good and, by the end of Years 2 and 6, the overall standards that pupils reach match the national average. Year 1 pupils write a lively description of Goldilocks on a 'Wanted' poster and Year 2 pupils use a wide vocabulary when re-telling the story of 'The Happy Prince'. By Year 2, pupils adapt to different forms of writing, for example in writing a letter or an account of a science investigation. By the time they move on to Year 3, most pupils' handwriting is of a uniform size and letters are correctly formed. They spell simple common words accurately, although they often forget to do so in their extended written work. Pupils make sound progress in both handwriting and spelling as they move on through the school. By the time they leave, most pupils write cursively, legibly and fluently. Although handwriting is taught well and pupils recognise patterns and rules, there is often

careless spelling in their written work. The fact that not all teachers regularly correct these errors means that pupils continue to make them. By Year 6, many pupils write very effective and interesting stories and poetry, for example in 'Spells' stimulated by their reading of Macbeth. Vocabulary is imaginatively used to add meaning or to create mood. Pupils develop a secure knowledge of the importance of writing for different audiences and purposes, and use their skills in writing letters, play scripts and also very effectively in a range of other subjects. This makes a very positive contribution to their learning. Accounts of different scientific investigations and explanations of the importance of the rivers, such as the River Axe in their local study, and the River Nile in their Ancient Egypt topic, help pupils to reach standards in science and geography above those seen nationally.

70. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well. They are often given specially designed activities well matched to the level at which they are working. On other occasions, they are given extra help to reinforce what has been learnt in whole-class sessions. Good examples of this were seen in a Year 2 lesson where the teacher provided extra resources and a special writing frame to help pupils. In another lesson, in Year 6, the special educational needs teacher gave help to a small group of pupils to ensure that they clearly understood the poetry they were reading. Both these occasions resulted in pupils having equal access to learning and making the same good progress as other pupils. As a result, pupils with special educational needs achieve well and some reach average standards in English by the time they leave the school.
71. Across the school, teaching and learning are consistently good and very good for the oldest pupils. Teachers have good expertise and this helps them to teach the basic skills of reading and writing well, so that pupils make good progress in this aspect. In all lessons, teachers set challenging work, with different tasks for groups, according to pupils' abilities and needs. This is successful because the good assessment systems now in place help teachers to judge very accurately the stage at which pupils are working. This allows learning to build on and extend pupils' skills and knowledge well. The teachers' good control and management mean that behaviour is good, and most pupils concentrate and work hard. This is especially important for the younger pupils where concentration and listening skills are not so good. Here, the teacher's firm management, high expectations of good behaviour and good relationships with pupils are supporting learning well. Classroom assistants are deployed well and guidance given to help them support the groups with whom they work. The best lessons are well paced and this ensures that pupils remain on task throughout. An effective marking system has been put in place, although it is not used consistently. On occasions, important spelling errors are missed, little indication is given to pupils on the strengths and weaknesses in their work and not enough guidance is given on how to improve. The best marking constantly relates to pupils' individual targets and is very helpful in promoting progress. Satisfactory homework, including reading and spellings, is set.
72. There are many opportunities for pupils to work together in pairs or small groups and this gives good support to their personal development. During the inspection, Year 2 pupils were reading the stories they were writing to a partner and then suggesting to each other how they could be improved. The pupils clearly enjoyed this, even asking the inspectors to join in. During the inspection, the lessons observed were lively, challenging and interesting. Pupils were very positive about what they were learning and this encouraged good effort. However, pupils report that, in the past, English was the subject that they liked the least because what they were learning was not really interesting. This was mainly due to the fact that the absence of the co-ordinator limited the adaptation of the National Literacy Strategy for the needs and interests of the pupils in the school. The lack of interest and enjoyment is another reason why standards in

English have not risen as fast as in mathematics and science. However, recent developments have begun to rectify this situation. Since the format for group reading has been changed, pupils have developed more positive attitudes and reached better standards. In addition, the school has provided good in-service training through the use of a subject specialist to increase teachers' skills. The new co-ordinator is well aware of the need to extend this to other areas of the English curriculum. The new library will also make a positive contribution to work in the subject.

MATHEMATICS

73. From 1997 to 2001, at the end of Year 6, attainment recorded in National Curriculum tests has varied considerably. It has tended to rise at a greater rate than nationally, from below average in 1997 to above average in 2001. The school now does as well as similar schools with an average number of pupils claiming free school meals. Over the period from 1997 to 2000, at the end of Year 2, attainment recorded in National Curriculum tests has been well below average, but in 2001 it improved to about average. By the end of Year 6, the performance of boys and girls is similar.
74. The previous inspection found that attainment was below average at the end of Years 2 and 6. Inspection evidence confirms that standards are now better than this. Over recent years, results have fluctuated significantly, but have improved recently. This is related to the particular characteristics of each year group. Teaching is now good overall and, on occasions, excellent.
75. Pupils in Year 1 make especially good progress because of high quality teaching. These pupils are achieving very well. In Year 2, the temporary member of staff is building satisfactorily on pupils' previous learning, and their attainment is about average. By the end of Year 2, most pupils are confident when adding numbers up to 99, and they know the properties of a range of two-dimensional shapes. They create symmetrical patterns using squared paper and different colours. Higher attaining pupils produce complex symmetrical patterns. In Year 1, almost half the pupils count accurately to 20, or beyond, recording their work as number sentences. Those pupils with special educational needs are also making good progress and achieving well. They order numbers to 20 correctly, and accurately record number addition facts to ten.
76. Well-organised teaching helps to develop good numeracy skills by the end of Year 6. Pupils' progress is strengthened by opportunities to apply their knowledge to real-life problems, such as calculating the area of carpet required to cover the floor of a room or measuring a carpenter's wood. Pupils in Year 6 handle numbers confidently, multiplying or dividing large numbers correctly. Most of these pupils work accurately with numbers to one or two decimal places. They acquire a good understanding of fractions, and the link with percentages, although lower attaining pupils are not confident with equivalent fractions. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 handle data well and understand terms such as mode, median and range. Year 3 pupils know some of the properties of a range of three-dimensional shapes and complete simple algebraic problems. Lower attaining pupils achieve well, and the main area of weakness is in their work on fractions. By Year 5, these pupils are mostly accurate in their use of the four rules of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division, but there are occasional careless errors.
77. Throughout the school, pupils enjoy their mathematics and complete a good volume of work. Older pupils, in particular, present their work well. Attitudes to mathematics are very good, illustrated by the speed at which pupils settle to group or individual tasks. Effective use of questions, including at the end of a session, helps pupils develop a good understanding of what they have learnt. Pupils are attentive, and behaviour is

usually very good in both whole-class and group activities. The only exception is that a few pupils, especially in Years 2 and 3, are not always sufficiently attentive during whole-class activities.

78. The quality of teaching is good overall, and in Years 1 and 6 consistently better than this. The good use of questions, clear explanations and high expectations are consistent features of the best lessons. In addition, relationships between the teacher and pupils often make a positive contribution to learning. Teaching demonstrates good subject knowledge, and particularly good attention is given to meeting the needs of the range of pupils in the class. Teachers have implemented the National Numeracy Strategy effectively, although there was an occasion when pupils were moved inappropriately from their individual work into the final group discussion. All pupils are involved very effectively in whole-class sessions, for instance by the use of number fans and mini-white boards. In the best lessons, teachers make sure that each group of pupils, including those with special educational needs, receives questions matched to their attainment. The whole-class session at the end of a mathematics session is often used well to review what has been learnt. However, it is not always used sufficiently to help pupils apply their learning to a new or extended problem. Teachers use the time available very effectively and learning is brisk. Good marking, particularly of number work, provides helpful guidance on how pupils can improve. Occasionally, marking is not precise enough, especially when pupils have drawn graphs with incorrectly numbered axes. Classroom assistants support lower attaining pupils well in their group tasks and this makes a positive contribution to their learning. Satisfactory homework, including learning multiplication tables, is set.
79. The pupils follow a curriculum based on the National Numeracy Strategy, but with especially good emphasis on using mathematical knowledge in practical examples. Teachers ensure that all pupils, irrespective of their attainment, are involved in the introductory, whole-class session. Pupils' numeracy skills are used well in a range of subjects. In the best examples, there is a close match so that mathematical learning is consolidated, such as in Year 6 where, after studying co-ordinates in mathematics, pupils applied their knowledge to use four- and six-figure grid references in geography. Assessment procedures, which include the use of optional National Curriculum tests, are good and used consistently. They give good detail about each pupil's attainment. Pupils' work in National Curriculum tests is analysed carefully. This information is used effectively to assess the progress made year on year, to set specific targets and to identify areas for improvement. Mathematics makes a sound contribution to pupils' personal development, especially when pupils co-operate and work in pairs or groups. Leadership of the subject is very good. The co-ordinator, who is currently absent on maternity leave, has been instrumental in the strong, recent improvement. She has a very clear picture of the subject's current strengths, and has clear targets for further improvement, such as the increased use of ICT.

SCIENCE

80. A significant proportion of pupils enter the school with knowledge and understanding below that expected for their age. Most make good progress as they move through the school and this results in attainment that is in line with the national average by the end of Year 1 and above the national average by the time pupils reach the end of Year 6.
81. Pupils in Year 2 identify a range of common materials and describe some of their similarities and differences. They are aware of some of the changes that occur to materials, and undertake simple classification. They understand some of the elements essential to life and how humans change as they grow. They construct simple electrical circuits and, with support, conduct basic scientific investigations. In all these areas, their attainment is similar to that expected and this represents a good gain from the time they enter school.
82. By the end of Year 6, standards are above the national average. Such attainment includes an understanding of the inter-dependence of plant and animal life, an understanding of the human body, knowledge of materials and their associated properties, an ability to classify according to given criteria and an understanding of forces such as magnetism, and the advantages and disadvantages of such forces. Most pupils have a keen appreciation of the importance and value of the environment to living things. Pupils conduct scientific investigations with increasing confidence and have a good understanding of fair testing. Higher attaining pupils appreciate the importance of isolating each variable. Most pupils plan and record experiments using an appropriate scientific structure. Pupils are encouraged to design tests, to hypothesise, to predict outcomes and to reach conclusions based on evidence. They display above average independence in these investigational skills. There is satisfactory use of ICT to support the subject with increasing use of the Internet as a scientific tool.
83. The school works conscientiously to build scientific understanding and to enrich pupils' experience. These efforts result in most pupils making good progress as they move through each class. Pupils with special educational needs are sensitively and effectively supported. Throughout the school, teachers and learning support staff work effectively to ensure such pupils make good progress in their scientific knowledge and understanding. Pupils who are capable of higher achievement are encouraged and given opportunities to extend the depth of understanding.
84. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is good and this results in good advancement of knowledge and skills. The relationships between teachers and pupils are productive and class control is secure. There is effective use of scientific inquiry as a means of developing knowledge and understanding across the various aspects of the subject. In a Year 1 lesson investigating sound, for example, careful preparation, high expectations and genuine opportunities for experimentation led to very good gains in understanding.
85. Teaching in Years 3 to 6 is also good. Teaching is founded on good subject knowledge and explanations are effectively communicated. Opportunities for genuine scientific discovery are provided and pupils are encouraged to predict outcomes and evaluate their experiments. This was particularly well demonstrated in a very good Year 6 lesson relating to saturated solutions. Here, the infectious enthusiasm of the teacher and the sharp focus on the scientific method successfully motivated the pupils and supported very good quality learning.
86. The consistently good teaching is a significant factor in the positive attitudes that pupils have towards science. With few exceptions, pupils concentrate well and work

industriously. Almost all pupils demonstrate an interest in scientific inquiry. Pupils collaborate productively when engaged in practical work and are keen to demonstrate their growing knowledge by answering in class and by contributing to discussion. Overall, pupils' attitudes to science are good throughout the school.

87. The co-ordinator provides committed and informed leadership. This is giving clear direction for sustained improvement. There is a suitable balance between the required aspects of the subject, and experimental work is given proper emphasis. Learning is systematically assessed and the information gained is used well in evaluating effectiveness and in determining what should be taught next.
88. The last inspection report judged attainment to be below average. Progress was unsatisfactory and the work set for higher attaining pupils was not sufficiently challenging. The previous inspection found shortcomings in relation to investigative work and in the consistency with which the planned programme was delivered. Attainment by Year 6 is now above the national averages and this is due to good progress made throughout the school. Suitable demands are made of higher attaining pupils and the use of scientific enquiry is now good. Overall, the progress in addressing the issues raised in the last inspection has been very good.

ART AND DESIGN

89. The attainment in art and design by Years 2 and 6 is above that expected. With one or two exceptions, the pupils make steady, or better progress in art and design from Years 1 to 6, and achieve well. This is particularly true in drawing and collage work. Since the last inspection, good standards have been maintained and the art work, both in classrooms and shared corridors, enhances the bright, cheerful and interesting setting of the school. The pupils are proud of their work and are often seen studying the displays and are eager to point out their own contributions. An excellent use is made of photographs so that there is a good record of past achievements. Pupils' knowledge of the work of famous artists is developing well and one lesson was seen where pupils looked closely at the work of Degas and then attempted their own charcoal designs of a human body based on their understanding of the work of this artist. In Year 6, pupils had painted their interpretations of the work of Michelangelo and there was a very impressive representation of his work in the Sistine Chapel. For good effect, the teacher mounted the work on the classroom ceiling.
90. The school has benefited from a visiting artist, as well as from educational visits to churches where pupils had experience of stained glass windows and murals. All gave inspiration for some of the work seen in class. The pupils make good progress in developing skills of painting, drawing, printing and working with textiles. The use of clay is underdeveloped. In most classes, pupils are confident in selecting and organising artists' materials although, at times, where the whole class is involved in the same activity, washing up and tidying away are not always organised effectively.
91. The quality of teaching is good which has a positive impact on the quality of learning. Pupils enjoy art, often becoming engrossed in their work. Those with special educational needs make sound progress in their learning. Pupils behave well and have good attitudes towards the subject. They are well motivated and work well together. They use resources with care and are keen to show their work to others.
92. The co-ordinator for art and design is a good practitioner and leads by example, so that lessons are well planned and the organisation of resources is good. Secure in her knowledge and understanding about art and design, she offers good support to her less

experienced colleagues. In some classes, time is not always so well organised. If the opening introduction is too long, the final moments of the lesson become rushed. Usually teachers encourage pupils to make accurate observations, using questions to help them to refine their work.

93. Resources are not adequate. Some teachers store what they have neatly and make sure that equipment is clean, tidy and inviting. This is not always consistent. The policy for art and design is clear and helpful, and the teachers' plans are full, giving sufficient detail on expected learning outcomes, as well as on the range of activities to be covered.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

94. Pupils' attainment in design and technology is above national expectations and by Years 2 and 6, pupils are achieving well. This gives evidence of good, although at times uneven, progress through both key stages, and also represents the maintenance of the good standards reported in the last inspection. The issue then, of accurately assessing pupils' work, has been addressed, but resources have not been significantly broadened. Pupils with special educational needs achieve satisfactorily.
95. In Years 1 and 2, pupils make good progress in developing their skills and understanding. They are developing an appreciation of how simple materials behave and how they may be shaped and joined. When designing a pizza, Year 1 pupils thought carefully about the shape of the pizza, the ingredients of the dough and chose a healthy topping from a wide selection of foods. They took great pride in their work.
96. Towards the end of Year 6, pupils draw annotated diagrams to scale and select materials based on a reasoned choice. They develop and refine their initial ideas and evaluate their work against simple criteria. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils were preparing to design and make a batik cushion cover. They discussed and explored different ways of joining materials, such as the use of zips, hook and eye, buttons and 'velcro', but then began to practise stitching with considerable success. They worked well, building on previous experiences. Progress in developing technical knowledge and understanding is increasing.
97. Throughout the school, attitudes to learning are good. Pupils enjoy their designing and making. They work sensibly together and learn to use materials and tools confidently and safely through a mixture of individual and group activities. Some pupils show initiative and curiosity and are beginning to seek information from a variety of sources. They discuss their work readily with others. The quality of teaching varies from satisfactory to very good, and is good overall. Teachers plan work carefully and usually manage practical activities well.
98. The work in design and technology is well managed by the co-ordinator, and curricular planning and assessment are well developed. Displays of completed models, including articulated machines and 'ghosts', bring further interest in design and technology to the pupils. Resources are not generous and are not always well stored. Space in the classrooms is at a premium, but some teachers are inventive and dextrous enough to make materials look attractive and inviting while still keeping them in good order.

GEOGRAPHY

99. The previous inspection report indicated that attainment at the end of Years 2 and 6 was similar to the average. Teaching was at least satisfactory. There was no detailed scheme of work. The school has made good progress. Standards remain average by Year 2 and higher than this in Year 6. Teaching is good and, in individual lessons seen, better than this. Planning is much improved and, although map work remains a significant strength, the school has recognised the need to develop other areas of geography.
100. By the time pupils leave the school, at the end of Year 6, attainment is above average. They use their literacy skills well to write, with good detail, about the wetlands of Spain, Holland and France. They record these details well in their books, and all pupils make good progress. Lower attaining pupils have competent literacy skills and, although their writing is less detailed, it shows a clear understanding of the geography involved. Mathematical skills are used well. These include an understanding of direction and calculations of distance using different scales. In Year 6, over a third of pupils use six-figure grid references very accurately when using an Ordnance Survey map of the local area. Other pupils coped very well with four-figure grid references. Year 5 pupils have examined some of the features of Papua New Guinea, and wrote well about aspects of its economy. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 locate Axminster on a local map and have a good understanding of river geography having studied the River Axe. They also know local information, such as that Axminster is famous for carpet production. In Year 2, pupils show sound understanding of the seasons. In Year 1, pupils produced good 'sound maps' during a walk around the school site.
101. Pupils take care in geography, and present their work well. Their writing, in particular, shows interest in geography, including countries overseas, as well as features of the local area. During lessons, pupils concentrate hard and show a good understanding of their work, such as when Year 1 pupils recalled their walk around the school. Teaching of geography is good, and was better than this in the lessons seen. Teachers make geography interesting and relevant, and establish effective links with other subjects. This was illustrated by history work about the Nile valley. Very good use of resources, such as the digital camera to record the areas identified on the 'sound map', helps develop learning strongly.
102. The curriculum is planned carefully using national guidance and the school's own material. It is designed to ensure the development of pupils' knowledge and skills as they move from Year 1 to Year 6. The main strengths of the geography curriculum are the study of the local area and map work. Pupils' experiences are extended by local visits, such as to study the River Axe and the coastal areas of Seaton and Lyme Regis. This work, together with the study of locations overseas, enables geography to make a good contribution to pupils' personal development. Pupils are introduced to global issues, such as pollution and over-fishing, which help to raise social and moral awareness. Assessment of pupils' work is satisfactory and is based on national guidance. The headteacher has been co-ordinator for a number of years, and has helped to improve the curriculum and develop a scheme of work. The next area for development is to extend the use of ICT to support learning in geography. The recently appointed deputy headteacher is to take over responsibility for the subject.

HISTORY

103. The levels of historical skills and understanding acquired by pupils are in line with those expected. Progress is satisfactory. In Years 1 and 2, pupils' concept of time is

satisfactorily developed through the comparisons between events in the past and the present day and through their own personal 'histories'. Pupils identify some of the changes that have occurred over time using different sources of historical information, such as artefacts, photographs and books. An enquiry into the first landing on the moon, for example, demonstrated how information is gleaned from various sources, whilst a study of lighting showed important changes in domestic life over time.

104. By Year 6, attainment is similar to that expected. Most pupils recall important events related to the topics studied, such as the Ancient Greeks, Tudors, the Saxons and the Victorians. Pupils' concept of chronology is satisfactorily developed with the regular use of time lines. Pupils describe the important features of the topics studied together with the reasons for some of the major events. In a Year 3 lesson, for example, pupils discussed the context and influences surrounding the rule of Alfred the Great. They identified some of the changes that had occurred over time. The ability of pupils to investigate, interpret and explain the past is satisfactorily developed. They are beginning to analyse the reliability of the range of evidence. Satisfactory use is made of ICT to support learning, as exemplified by the use of the Internet to research life in Ancient Egypt. Satisfactory progress is made as pupils proceed through the school. Those pupils with special educational needs are integrated into the programme well and they also make appropriate progress.
105. The quality of teaching in the school is satisfactory. Lessons are conducted at a purposeful pace within a productive working atmosphere. Teachers work hard to make the material meaningful and are mindful of the need to include skills, such as the use and reliability of sources of historical information. In a practical Year 3 lesson, relating to the Saxon period, pupils were challenged to think creatively, to offer opinions and to make interpretations. This had the effect of motivating pupils and of enhancing their learning and enjoyment of the subject.
106. Pupils' attitudes are good. Most are interested in the subject and discuss their work with some animation. Most collaborate with other pupils in a mature and responsible fashion. Concentration is sustained and work is generally presented with care and pride.
107. Delivery of the curriculum is through a series of topics. These properly reflect the programmes of the National Curriculum. Published guidance forms a sound basis for teachers to plan their work. The links made between history and other subjects are particularly effective. The study of Ancient Egypt, for example, provided opportunities to understand how a modern country has been influenced by historical factors. Various visits and events, such as themed historical days and a visit to Weycroft Hall, provide further valuable experiences. The last inspection report was largely favourable in relation to history. This position has been maintained.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

108. Standards in ICT at the ends of Years 2 and 6 are below those expected. Pupils at the end of Year 2 display sound competencies in basic keyboard skills and have satisfactory levels of proficiency in wordprocessing, but other aspects of the subject are less secure. Their ability to enter and present data is very limited. Many pupils do not know how to give sequential instructions to control programmable devices, and the ability to save and retrieve information, even with support, is insecure. Most pupils select options when investigating on-screen situations and many use 'painting' programs with appropriate skill. The majority have only cursory understanding of how ICT is used in the home and their environment.

109. At the end of Year 6, pupils' competence in the skills required by the National Curriculum is below the average. Word processing skills are extended and most pupils reach satisfactory levels of competence. Most save and retrieve stored information independently. The majority are able to combine text and pictures to a satisfactory level and print the finished product. Achievement in other areas of the subject is below that expected. Many pupils have little knowledge of how to establish, test, modify and store sequences of instructions to control on-screen events. Pupils' ability to monitor external events, such as temperature, is below that expected. Many do not know how to enter, sort and classify data and to present the findings using a range of graphical representations. Their awareness of the application of ICT outside the school is somewhat limited. The school has recently installed Internet access and most pupils confidently log on and use the search facility.
110. In recent years, the school has operated within severe financial restrictions. This means that there are insufficient computers and hence limited opportunities for pupils to operate them. Despite the recent and significant investment in additional computers, the number of machines remains below that needed to meet the demands of the subject fully. Recent improvements mean that the majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs, are now making satisfactory progress as they move through the school and the planned programme that is now in place meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. However, the limited progress, due to previous shortcomings in provision, has not had time to be eliminated. Consequently, not every pupil has received the same exposure to the subject and there are significant 'gaps' in the knowledge and skills of many pupils. Teachers work hard to provide opportunities and pupils are enthusiastic about the subject. Given recent improvements, pupils might confidently be expected to achieve higher standards.
111. Teachers make satisfactory use of ICT to enhance and support other areas of the curriculum. Utilising the Internet to research the solar system, maintaining up-to-date weather information and employing a digital camera to illustrate the features of a 'sound' map are productive examples in science and geography.
112. Only a limited amount of direct teaching was observed during the course of the inspection. The available evidence indicates that teaching is at least satisfactory, but this has yet to impact fully upon standards. In lessons where ICT was being used to support other subjects, teachers were conscientious and effective.
113. Pupils display very good attitudes. They behave sensibly and sustain concentration over time. Almost all pupils strive to achieve the desired outcome and interact well with each other and with staff. They talk about their work with animation and enthusiasm. Almost all pupils clearly enjoy their work in relation to ICT, but the earlier lack of resources means that these positive attitudes are only just being fully harnessed.
114. The programme for ICT incorporates national guidance. It provides a satisfactory basis for teachers' planning, although more detail is required. In recent years, the school has operated within extreme financial constraints. Limited numbers of computers make it difficult for teachers to combine the direct teaching of skills with immediate 'hands-on' experience for their pupils. Learning and standards have been adversely affected by the time it takes for each pupil to have active experience following the teaching of a particular skill. In an observed case, where pupils were learning to change font and size, for example, an unreasonable number of sessions would be needed before every pupil in the class would have an opportunity to engage in the task. Teachers maintain records but these are not part of a whole-school procedure for rigorously charting individual

experience and progress and for ensuring that every pupil receives his or her entitlement.

115. Despite the financial restrictions, the headteacher has been leading the subject with energy, enthusiasm and a determination to drive up standards. The leadership of the subject has been further strengthened by the recent appointment of the deputy headteacher who has considerable ICT expertise.
116. The last inspection report found standards to be below those expected. Progress was said to be inconsistent. The programme did not give teachers sufficient guidance, resources were said to be insufficient. Since then, the requirements and prominence of ICT within the National Curriculum have been greatly increased. The school is part way through a programme of initiatives which, whilst not yet fully implemented, constitutes a satisfactorily response to the weaknesses identified in the previous report.

MUSIC

117. The pupils in Years 2 and 6 attain standards expected for their ages. This represents an improvement since the last report. There have been some recent staff changes when the school lost teachers with particular music expertise. This, however, revealed that others on the present staff have musical talents, which has helped, and can continue to help, to raise standards of attainment.
118. Most pupils throughout the school show appropriate control of a limited range of percussion instruments and use them effectively when performing or composing. At the time of the inspection, singing was not a strong feature in the school. Singing was heard in only one class and not at all in any of the assemblies. Pupils listen attentively to music, however, and offer perceptive ideas about mood, pulse and representation. This was demonstrated well in a Year 4 class when, as part of the lesson, pupils listened to a part of 'Peter and the Wolf', and in a Year 1 class where pupils gave clear responses about the differences between a classical piece and some jazz.
119. Pupils make steady progress in music through the school although this falters in some classes where teachers, unnecessarily, lack confidence. At times, gains in musical knowledge are more variable and sometimes slow. Usually pupils use knowledge of musical vocabulary in discussion accurately. In Year 4, they were coming to terms with the word 'glissando'. Pupils with special educational needs make appropriate progress. Older pupils in school have a superficial knowledge of music from other cultures, and fail to realise that these traditions in music are now very much a part of British heritage as well.
120. The quality of teaching and learning in the school is at least satisfactory. In a Year 1 class, it was excellent. Most teachers are now gaining in confidence in the teaching of music. The school recognises that the music curriculum has been in need of development. The recently appointed, temporary co-ordinator for music, supported by the headteacher, has introduced a clear scheme of work, which may provide sufficient guidance and support for teachers in their planning. This is a recent innovation and its effect has yet to be evaluated. In the most successful lessons, the teachers have high expectations of what their pupils will achieve, adults and pupils share an enjoyment of music, instructions are clear and relationships are supportive. These teachers use feedback and praise effectively to develop learning.
121. Resources are meagre and are not always displayed effectively. However, there is a good collection of CDs, often supplemented by the teachers' own. Pupils benefit from

visiting musicians, and from taking part in church concerts and galas. Music is now better established in the school and is poised to improve.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

122. The previous inspection indicated that pupils' attainment was about average and that they made satisfactory progress. Teaching was mainly sound. In specialist areas, such as swimming, teaching and progress were better. The school has improved provision, and much of the teaching is better. Attainment varies according to the different areas of the subject. Standards in dance and swimming are above average, in other areas attainment is satisfactory. One lesson was seen in Year 2, and a much wider range in Years 3 to 6.
123. Year 2 pupils display satisfactory attainment in dance activities. They move with adequate control to interpret African music, and recognise differences from their earlier Scottish country dancing. Excellent teaching helped pupils in Year 6 to make very good progress in dance to the theme 'Growing Pains'. Attainment was well above average as pupils completed their routine confidently, working together exceptionally well. They used expression and movement very effectively to interpret the music and display their feelings. In very effective Year 5 and 6 swimming lessons, the younger pupils made significant progress in improving their confidence in the water, while those who could swim made good improvements in their style. Attainment was above what might be expected for pupils in Year 5. Standards of swimming are above average by Year 6. All the older pupils are confident in the water and swim 25 metres using a range of strokes.
124. Most pupils enjoy physical education and display good attitudes and behaviour during a lesson. In the best lessons, pupils are keen and listen carefully to the teacher. Some of the pupils in Years 2 and 3 do not always listen as well as they should. The quality of teaching is good overall, but ranged from satisfactory to excellent. In satisfactory lessons, greater attention could have been given to explaining what was expected. This was evident in the Year 2 dance lesson where pupils were suddenly asked how they could improve what they had done. This they found difficult because they had not had chance to focus on their performance. Similarly, more opportunities to evaluate the performance of other pupils in gymnastics would have aided learning. In a satisfactory Year 3 lesson, resources were not organised as effectively as they could have been, and groups became too large, so that pupils were not always involved enough. The teacher made good links with numeracy and geography by developing an awareness of the points of the compass. A feature of the best teaching is that time is taken to improve particular skills, this was especially evident in swimming and dance in Years 5 and 6. In the Year 6 dance session, the teacher and pupils reviewed the previous lesson before undertaking the warm-up. Pupils then went straight into their activities. In one of the effective swimming lessons, an opportunity was taken at the end of the lesson to encourage pupils to reflect on what they had learnt or how they had improved. Pupils described how their backstroke arm action was better. The very good relationships between the teacher and pupils were also evident in the humorous reply of one pupil. She had learnt 'I cannot swim out of water'. The well-organised provision helps to ensure all pupils, including those with particular needs, are fully involved. This was especially evident in swimming when classroom assistants enter the water to support specific, individual pupils. Two very able Year 6 boys were supplied with their own programme, which was designed to develop stamina and style. Very good expertise helped these pupils improve, such as when they were breathing on every stroke when using the butterfly technique.

125. All areas of the National Curriculum, including outdoor and adventurous pursuits, are taught, thus ensuring pupils have the opportunity to develop skills across all relevant areas of physical education. These opportunities are aided by residential trips. The school has its own swimming pool, which younger pupils, in particular, use during the summer and autumn terms. A sound range of extra-curricular opportunities, including competitive sport, is available. Except for swimming, where it is very good, assessment of physical education is satisfactory, and based on national guidance. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development, such as working as part of a team, co-operating in a range of activities and learning dances from Britain and overseas. The headteacher is acting as co-ordinator currently, but a returning member of staff will assume responsibility shortly. The large hall, swimming pool, outside space and range of resources ensure all pupils experience a good curriculum.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

126. The school has improved its provision and the standards pupils achieve since it was last inspected. Both the curriculum and teaching are now good. By the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils now reach standards that exceed the expectations set out in the locally agreed syllabus. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well.
127. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 gain a good knowledge of Christianity. They explain why the Disciples were Jesus' special friends and enjoy learning about the stories Jesus told. This helps pupils to develop a good understanding of Christian teaching and also positive moral and social attitudes. In the Year 1 lesson seen, pupils thoroughly enjoyed acting the story of The Good Samaritan and explained the nature of the Samaritan's kindness well. Year 2 pupils know that religions give their followers a set of rules or commandments to follow. They write their own class rules and also prayers. Pupils enjoy celebrating the Christian festivals such as Harvest, Easter and Christmas, and clearly recall the stories associated with them and their significance.
128. As they move on through Years 3 to 6, pupils make good progress in building on their knowledge of Christianity and also learning about other world faiths. Year 4 pupils recognise the significance of pilgrimage in different religions, including the visit that many Muslims make to Mecca. Pupils know the significance that the Creation Story, told in the book of Genesis, has for both Jews and Christians. Pupils develop a sound understanding of the sacred texts of world religions. They have a good knowledge of the Bible and its meaning for Christians and Jews. Year 6 pupils investigated a range of stories about the life of Jesus and correctly identified the information that they told them about Jesus' character.
129. Pupils have good attitudes to their learning because teachers make it relevant and interesting. Year 1 pupils enjoyed role-playing the story of The Good Samaritan immensely and remembered many features of the story and its teaching well. Year 6 pupils engaged in very good discussion groups about the teaching in the New Testament stories they researched, one group debating the nature and existence of heaven and hell.
130. Teaching across the school is good. Some very good and excellent teaching was observed. The good guidance and scheme of work help teachers to be confident and knowledgeable. They plan exciting and interesting activities. Year 5 pupils gained a very good understanding of the origins of the Bible and its development when their teacher dressed up as an archaeologist to show them a clay pot similar to those found with The Dead Sea Scrolls. The very good relationships that teachers have with their pupils,

together with their effective questioning skills, help pupils to make thoughtful responses and to question different beliefs well.

131. The new locally agreed syllabus provides well for teaching pupils a range of skills and knowledge. This has been very effectively supplemented with a good unit on learning about Christianity through studying The Bible, which has been planned by the present co-ordinator. The school is very sensitive to responding to the needs of the small number of pupils from non-Christian faiths. Good use is made of the local church to enhance learning, for example in a Year 3 lesson observed, pupils used knowledge gained from their recent visit to explain accurately the difference between a sign and a symbol. Visitors to the school include leaders from all the local churches and, when available, from a nearby Buddhist community.
132. The current co-ordinator has only recently taken over, but her good expertise and the previous support she has given to the provision, both in curricular planning and in developing resources, will ensure that recent good developments are maintained and extended. Resources are satisfactory overall. There is a range of videos that help pupils to recognise the part that different faiths play in modern British society. The school recognises that it would benefit from increasing the number of artefacts.