

INSPECTION REPORT

ST BARTHOLOMEW'S C OF E FIRST SCHOOL

Crewkerne

LEA area: Somerset

Unique reference number: 123750

Headteacher: Mr. M. P. Collins

Reporting inspector: Miss M. A. Warner
17288

Dates of inspection: 10th – 12th March 2003

Inspection number: 248503

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 – 9 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Kithill Crewkerne Somerset
Postcode:	TA18 8AS
Telephone number:	01460 72829
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr. P. Dudeney
Date of previous inspection:	19 th – 22 nd January 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
17288	M. A. Warner	Registered inspector	Science Design and technology Music Religious education	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well pupils are taught? How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? What the school should do to improve further?
13706	G. Marsland	Lay inspector	Educational inclusion	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school cares for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
32136	L. M. Brookes	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Physical education Foundation Stage Special educational needs	
22990	C. B. Furniss	Team inspector	English Art and design Geography History	How well the school is led and managed

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	11
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	14
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	16
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	18
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	20
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	21
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	24
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	25
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM AND SUBJECTS	30

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St. Bartholomew's Church of England First School is situated on the southern edge of Crewkerne, in Somerset. All pupils come from the town, and most come from the immediate area. There are 181 pupils on roll, which is smaller than most primary schools nationally. Eleven per cent of pupils are entitled to claim free school meals, which is below the national average. Three per cent of pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds, and all speak English as their first language. The school has identified nine per cent of pupils as having special educational needs, which is well below the national average. One per cent of pupils have formal statements of need, which is below the national average. A smaller than average number of pupils join or leave the school during a year. Most of the children who join the school in reception, during the year that they are five, attended pre-school groups. They begin part-time and attend full-time during their first half term. Their attainment on entry is below average in significant areas of learning, such as literacy and numeracy.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

St. Bartholomew's is a very effective first school, with several excellent features. The leadership of the headteacher, and relationships throughout the school, are excellent. The school has a highly committed staff and teaching is very good. Pupils have very good attitudes to learning. As a result, standards have improved in almost all subjects since the last inspection, and are above average. The socio-economic context of the school and the cost per pupil are average. The school gives very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards in geography and history are well above average. Standards in writing, mathematics, science, art, information and communication technology, and religious education are above average, and the presentation of pupils' work is well above average in science in Years 3 and 4.
- The quality of teaching is very good, and learning support staff work very effectively with teachers to raise standards.
- The quality of assessment across the school, and its use in helping teachers to plan lessons, are very good.
- Staff and pupils have excellent relationships.
- There are very effective procedures in place for the care and welfare of pupils.
- The school has developed very good links with parents.
- The excellent leadership and vision of the headteacher, very well supported by a talented, committed and hard-working deputy head and other key members of staff, are significant strengths of the school.

What could be improved

- There are no significant weaknesses.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Improvement since the last inspection, in January 1998, has been excellent. Standards are higher than at the last inspection in almost all subjects.

Improvement in information and communication technology (ICT) has been very good, especially the use of ICT across the curriculum. Improvement in the planning and monitoring of the curriculum, and in assessment procedures and their use, has been excellent. There have been improvements in clarifying the roles of governors, and in long-term financial planning, but few governors have attended training. Further improvements have been in the quality of teaching, pupils' attitudes to learning, provision for pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development (provision for their moral development is still very good), and in the information the school provides for parents.

There is a total, shared commitment of all staff to the school, and their capability to improve the school even further is considerable.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
reading	C	B	B	A
writing	B	A	A	A*
mathematics	B	A	A	A

Key	
very high	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

On entry to the school, children's attainment, generally, is below average. Standards, overall, are above average across the school and pupils achieve very well.

In the Year 2 National Curriculum tests in 2002, results were above the national average in reading, and well above average in writing and mathematics. The percentage of higher-attaining pupils, who reached the higher than average Level 3, was above the national average in reading and mathematics, and well above in writing. Compared with similar schools, results were above the national average in reading, both at Level 2 and Level 3. In mathematics, they were well above the national average at Level 2, and above the national average at Level 3. In writing, they were high, being in the highest five per cent of schools nationally, both at Level 2 and Level 3. Standards have been rising over the last three years. In science, results were high in the teachers' assessments at the end of Year 2, with an above average number of pupils reaching Level 3, both when compared with national results and those of similar schools.

Inspection evidence shows that standards in English, mathematics and science are above national expectations in both Years 2 and 4, and are well above national expectations in the presentation of pupils' work in science in Year 4. It is not possible to judge standards in science in Year 2 because of lack of evidence. Overall, standards are in line with national expectations in design and technology, music and physical education in both Years 2 and 4. They are above national expectations in art, information and communication technology (ICT) and religious education in both Years 2 and 4, and in geography and history in Year 2. They are well above national expectations in geography and history in Year 4. Pupils achieve very well in all classes and particularly in English, mathematics, science, geography, history and ICT by Year 4. Their achievement in art and religious education is also good. The school provides very well for all pupils.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils' very positive attitudes to school make a strong contribution to their successful learning and to the standards that they achieve.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils respond well to the consistently high expectations of all staff. The very good behaviour of the pupils improves the quality of their learning and adds to the friendly family atmosphere that is evident throughout the school.
Personal development and	Very good. Excellent relationships are a strong feature of the school.

relationships	The school is very successful in promoting the pupils' personal development.
Aspect	Comment
Attendance	Good. The overall attendance rate for the school is good. However, although discouraged, some absences still occur as a result of holidays in term-time.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is very good.

Strengths in teaching

- The very good quality of teaching in reception classes, in all areas of learning.
- The very good teaching of English and mathematics. The excellent ways in which numeracy skills are taught and the very good ways in which literacy skills are taught.
- Teachers' excellent insight into how children learn.
- Teachers' use of evaluation and assessment.
- Excellent relationships. Very good class management skills.
- The school meets the needs of all pupils very well, particularly through very good assessment, and resources very often made by staff, matched well to their different needs.
- The use made of the local area, visitors and specialist teaching.

Strengths in learning

- Pupils' high degree of interest and concentration.
- Pupils think creatively and enjoy solving problems.
- Pupils work well together.

Areas for development in teaching and learning (there are no significant weaknesses)

- The use of peer evaluation, through demonstration, in physical education.
- Subject knowledge in some aspects of music and design and technology.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The school provides an imaginative and relevant curriculum which makes very good use of cross-curricular links.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. These pupils make very good progress as they move through the school. Their individual needs are identified early by teachers and they are given well-targeted support by teachers and learning support assistants.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good and for their spiritual and cultural development is good. Science, art, music and religious education all make good and sometimes very good contributions to these aspects of their development.
How well the school cares	Very good. This is a very caring and friendly school in which the well-

for its pupils	being of the pupils is a priority. The staff know the pupils well and take good care of them. Assessment procedures are very effective.
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The school works hard to promote and maintain very good links with parents. Parental involvement is good and has a positive effect on the life of the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. There is excellent leadership from the headteacher who has a very clear vision of the school. He is supported extremely well by a talented, dedicated and hard-working deputy and a team of committed subject co-ordinators.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. The governors are knowledgeable about the school and very supportive. They satisfactorily fulfil their roles, but most tend to react to information and suggestions from the headteacher and staff rather than actively using their own expertise or seeking ways to become involved in the development of the school. Few have attended training sessions.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. There are excellent strategies in place for monitoring, appraising and improving the performance of all staff, and the action taken to improve the school is reflected in the very good improvements that have been made.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Financial planning is very good. The governing body agrees the budget allocations annually and monitors expenditure. There is an effective school development plan with very clear priorities. Spending decisions are very closely linked to these priorities. The headteacher and governing body apply the principles of best value very well.

The school is very well staffed with a good number of experienced teachers. There is a very good level of support staff, who are very capable and very well deployed. Resources are very good and are very well used, including the local area, to support pupils' learning. Accommodation is good, overall, but there is no space available for a separate computer suite. The accommodation is cleaned to a high standard by the caretaker and cleaner and is enhanced by very high quality displays of the pupils' work.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children are making good progress. • The teaching is good. • The school is well led and managed. • The school is helping their children to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of activities outside lessons. • Being kept well informed about how their children are getting on.

Inspectors agree with the positive comments of parents. They consider that the school provides a very good range of extra-curricular activities and parents are kept well informed about their children's progress. A minority of parents' questionnaires raised concerns about how comfortable parents felt about approaching the school with problems or concerns. The inspection confirmed that the headteacher and staff are accessible and willing to discuss any problems that arise.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

Strengths

- Standards in science, geography and history are well above average.
- Standards in writing, mathematics, art, information and communication technology and religious education are above average.
- Pupils achieve very well in reception classes. Pupils achieve very well in Years 1 to 4 and particularly in English, mathematics, science, geography, history and ICT by Year 4.

Overall standards are above average across the school and pupils achieve very well.

Foundation Stage

1. On entry to the school, children's attainment, overall, is below average. Their personal, social, emotional and physical development is average but their reading, writing, number, creative development and their knowledge and understanding of the world are below average. Their attainment is well below average in speaking and listening, and staff work hard to remedy this. Some children have been identified as having special educational needs. Children make very good progress in the reception classes, in many areas of their learning, and by the time they start in Year 1, the majority will exceed the Early Learning Goals in their personal and physical development, and in literacy and numeracy will be working within the early stages of the National Curriculum. They are expected to reach the Early Learning Goals in their knowledge and understanding of the world, and their creative development.

Results and performance data

2. In reading, in 2002, the percentage of pupils in Year 2 who reached the expected Level 2 and the higher Level 3 in the National Curriculum tests was above the national average. In mathematics, the percentage of pupils who reached the expected Level 2 was well above average, and the percentage who reached the higher Level 3 was above the national average. In writing, both at Level 2 and Level 3, the percentage of pupils was well above the national average. In science, results were high in the teachers' assessments at the end of Year 2, with an above average number of pupils reaching Level 3, both when compared nationally and when compared with results of similar schools.
3. When compared with similar schools, overall results in reading and mathematics were well above average, and the percentage of pupils reaching the higher Level 3 was above average. In writing, both at the expected Level 2, and the higher Level 3, results were high, being in the highest five per cent of schools nationally.
4. Standards have been rising over the last three years. They have continually improved in English; they improved for two years and then remained at a high level in mathematics. In science they went down in 2000, but then rose in the following two years. Both boys and girls have exceeded the performance of boys and girls nationally for the last three years in all three subjects.

5. The school analyses entry and test data and has identified gender variations on entry to the school and in the end of key stage tests, with girls' attainment slightly higher than boys'. As a result, the school has employed additional learning support assistants to provide equality of opportunity for all and to improve the attainment of boys. However, there was no evidence of any significant variation in attainment and progress in lessons observed during the inspection.

Inspection findings

6. Standards in English and mathematics are above national expectations in both Years 2 and 4 and are well above national expectations in the presentation of pupils' work in science in Year 4. It is not possible to judge standards in science in Year 2 because of lack of recorded evidence and because no lessons were taught in this subject during the inspection.
7. Overall, standards are in line with national expectations in design and technology, music and physical education in both Years 2 and 4. They are above national expectations in art, information and communication technology and religious education in both Years 2 and 4, and in geography and history in Year 2. They are well above national expectations in geography and history in Year 4.
8. Pupils achieve very well in all classes and particularly in English, mathematics, science, geography, history and ICT by Year 4. Their achievement in art and religious education is also good.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

Strengths

- Pupils' attitudes to the school.
- Behaviour in classrooms and around the school.
- The pupils' personal development.
- Relationships between the pupils and between the pupils and staff.

Pupils' attitudes to school

9. The pupils' attitudes, values and personal development are strengths of the school. Pupils' attitudes have improved since the previous inspection, in 1998, and they are now very good. The pupils are well supported by teaching staff, who use praise and encouragement appropriately to promote pupils' self-esteem. Pupils are enthusiastic, interested and involved in most activities. There was a good example of this in a Year 1 numeracy lesson, where the pupils were counting in two's. They quickly settle down to their work and respond swiftly to instructions. Most pupils maintain concentration and effort, and work sensibly together. This was evident in a Year 2 numeracy lesson, where the pupils were working on number sequences. They listen carefully to their class teachers, and are able to express their opinions clearly. In a Year 3 literacy lesson, they were observed discussing traditional stories in detail. The pupils are polite and confident and are eager to assist and talk to visitors. Many of the pupils clearly enjoy lunchtime activities such as the basketball, football and hockey clubs. The pupils' positive attitudes to school make a strong contribution to their successful learning and to the standards that they achieve.

Pupils' behaviour

10. Behaviour in the school and playground is very good because the pupils respond well to the consistently high expectations of all staff. At lunchtimes, the pupils are polite and treat the supervisors with respect. The pupils understand what is expected of them and know the difference between right and wrong and how their actions can affect others. This is because they understand the behaviour guidelines and have assisted in writing the school rules. Consequently, there is a warm and caring atmosphere in the school and bullying or racially motivated incidents are rare. In the last complete school year, no pupil was excluded from the school. Parents agree that behaviour is good. The very good behaviour of the pupils improves the quality of their learning and adds to the friendly family atmosphere that is evident throughout the school.

Pupils' personal development and relationships

11. Excellent relationships are a strong feature of the school. Relationships at all levels are warm and friendly, both amongst the pupils themselves and between the pupils and staff. At lunchtime, the pupils talk and play together sociably. They work together well, regardless of gender or race. A good example of this was seen in a Year 2 physical education lesson, where the pupils worked in pairs, balancing, rolling and turning.
12. The school is very successful in promoting the pupils' personal development. The pupils respect the feelings, values and beliefs of others. This was evident in a Year 1 and 2 music lesson where the pupils volunteered, without fear or embarrassment, to come to the front of the class to sing. Pupils also speak confidently during classroom discussions. The pupils take responsibility for tasks around the school and are reliable and trustworthy. They act as assembly, door and register monitors and assist with tasks in the classroom. Older pupils enjoy writing prayers for morning assemblies and supporting the youngest pupils by taking part in shared reading sessions. The pupils are also gaining an understanding of the wider global community by raising money for charitable causes such as Dr. Barnardo's and the NSPCC. Taking on responsibilities is having a good effect on pupils' personal development.

Attendance and punctuality

13. The overall attendance rate for the school is good and has been maintained since the previous inspection. Registration meets legal requirements and is swiftly and effectively undertaken. Most pupils are punctual for school. However, although discouraged, some absences still occur as a result of holidays in term-time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

Teaching and learning

Strengths

- The very good quality of teaching in reception, in all areas of learning.
- Very good class management skills.
- Excellent relationships.
- Teachers and learning support assistants make resources matched to the needs of different pupils.
- Teachers' excellent insight into how children learn.
- The use made of the local area and visitors.
- Teachers' use of evaluation and assessment.
- Specialist teaching in music.

Areas for development

- The use of peer evaluation, through demonstration, in physical education.
- Subject knowledge in some aspects of music and design and technology.

The quality of teaching

14. The quality of teaching is very good, overall. The quality of teaching is excellent in a sixth of lessons, very good or better in half, good or better in four-fifths, and satisfactory or better in all lessons.
15. The quality of teaching in the reception classes is very good. These teachers effectively ensure that the planning of children's learning is matched to the guidance materials given to schools nationally. They have a good understanding of the needs of young children and choose activities that effectively extend and challenge them. There is good liaison between the teachers and the support assistants who work alongside the children, and this ensures that they have a good understanding of what the children are to learn and the most effective ways to achieve this. Resources are of good quality, well organised, and hold the children's interest well. The management of the children is very good and relationships are warm and purposeful. This ensures that the children settle quickly into the day-to-day routines of the school and become aware of the expectations that the class teachers have of them; these are high, both in terms of academic performance and in how children are expected to treat one another.
16. Teachers, throughout Years 1 to 4, have very good classroom management skills and this, and the excellent relationships that have been fostered and nurtured, makes for pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour in lessons. This has a very positive effect on the progress that pupils make. Teachers have very good subject knowledge in almost all subjects, and use humour very effectively, encouraging pupils to help each other rather than providing answers themselves. Throughout the school, excellent links are made across subjects. For example, good links are made in many subjects with basic skills of literacy and numeracy and information and communication technology.
17. One of the outstanding strengths of teaching in this school is the work that teachers and learning support assistants put in to make their own teaching resources suitable for the needs of the pupils. They plan, prepare and use resources very well, and this stimulates and motivates pupils. They provide a good mix of mental and written activities; whole-class, individual and group work occur in many lessons. Teachers demonstrate an excellent insight into how pupils learn. Stimulating activities and very effective use of visitors, for whom pupils are well prepared, also make a strong contribution to their learning. For example, a visitor from Yeovil Museum brought a range of artefacts to show to pupils to help them to understand how people lived 50 and 100 years ago. These sessions really brought history to life. The use made of

opportunities in the local area and of visits and visitors are strengths of both geography and history.

18. Teachers' planning and provision allow equality of access and opportunity for all pupils. Both lower- and higher-attaining pupils are included in all activities and are catered for well in all lessons or learning support groups. Children with special educational needs make very good progress in their learning as they move through the school. Their individual needs are identified early by teachers and they are given well-targeted support by teachers and learning support assistants.
19. A particular strength in teaching is in teachers' use of evaluation and assessment. They use a range of assessment techniques, including tests, very effective questioning, and marking, for example in English, which enables them to plan very well and target work to the needs of different pupils. Very effective questioning is also used in mathematics, geography and history, guiding pupils and used by the teachers to assess their day-to-day learning. For example, a lower-achieving child demonstrated a solution to a problem in front of the whole class, who supported him well. This questioning is also effectively used when sharing new skills in ICT. A particularly good feature of teaching, in mathematics, is the use of mixed-ability pairings, so that pupils learn to help one another and consolidate their own learning. In music, evaluations are made at the end of the lesson and planning is based on these evaluations. Teachers assess pupils throughout lessons, either as they play instruments or sing on their own. In physical education lessons, teachers encourage pupils to look at the work of their classmates during lessons, although this is something which could be developed further.
20. Where teaching was not observed, such as in art, an analysis of samples of pupils' work, a range of very good displays and photographic evidence showed that basic art and design skills are taught very well. Whilst teaching in Years 3 and 4 is very good in science, as seen by the work pupils produce (no lesson was observed), teaching of science in Years 1 and 2 can only be judged by the high test results and the very good planning.

How well pupils learn and make progress

21. Pupils are keen to do well, become involved in all activities and settle down to the tasks given them with a very high degree of interest and concentration. They work very well, independently and in groups, and there are many examples of good co-operation between pupils. When they settle to their tasks, pupils sustain a good level of effort and concentration, co-operating well with their friends when necessary, and producing good quantities of work. When challenged, pupils demonstrate a good capacity to think creatively about how to solve difficult problems. Learning is often very enjoyable as well as productive. Pupils work well in pairs, for example to sort photographs of local places in geography. The extremely effective use of resources, and very well-planned and paced activities, interest and stimulate the pupils and they show enthusiasm and interest. They are all involved in the lessons and participate well, working together sensibly. Relationships are excellent and the atmosphere and interest created by the teachers creates an environment in which very good learning can and does take place. This is particularly evident in religious education where pupils share ideas and explain how they would feel in different circumstances.

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

Strengths

- Literacy, and the use of literacy across the curriculum.
- Numeracy, and some evidence of numeracy in other subjects.
- The considerable improvements in ICT.
- Good use of the local environment in science, art, geography and history.
- The physical education curriculum enriched by extra-curricular clubs and specialist coaching.
- The very good use made of lunch breaks to run clubs and teach reading, 'additional literacy' and 'springboard mathematics' groups, and 'booster' classes.
- Clear guidance on how monitoring of the curriculum should take place.

The quality and range of opportunities for learning provided by the school for all pupils, including whether statutory requirements are met

22. The school provides an imaginative and relevant curriculum, which makes very good use of cross-curricular links and is enriched by the local environment, visitors, clubs and specialist teaching. For example, a visitor brought Victorian artefacts from the local museum for pupils to use during a history lesson, which brought history to life; library links also encourage pupils to use the library in holiday periods, and many opportunities are given in school for pupils to develop, for example, literacy and music skills at lunchtime.
23. The effectiveness of the strategies for teaching literacy is very good and for teaching numeracy is excellent. Literacy, numeracy and ICT are all developed well across the curriculum. The local environment is used very effectively to teach science, art, geography and history. The school has very constructive relationships with the middle school to which almost all pupils go.
24. The school successfully teaches subjects in blocks of time; for example, science alternates with design and technology half termly, and geography alternates with history. Time is also used very effectively in the long lunch break, when clubs, Booster classes and reading groups take place. In addition, lunch supervisors spend a quarter of an hour at the end of each lunch break supervising reading.
25. The school has a two-year rolling programme in all subjects and uses national guidelines in all subjects, except art and religious education. The school's own scheme is used in art, based partly on the guidelines, and the locally Agreed Syllabus is used in religious education.
26. There is a clear overview of the curriculum, through a curriculum map of subjects. Medium-term plans are detailed and relevant to the different year groups. Very clear guidance is given in the 'Policy for monitoring the curriculum'. This is regularly carried out by the headteacher and the literacy and numeracy co-ordinators.
27. The curriculum provides good equality of access and opportunity for all the pupils to learn and make progress. There is an appropriate policy for equal opportunities in place and staff are aware of the need to ensure that all pupils are included in all aspects of school life. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The co-ordinator, a skilled and committed teacher, works effectively supporting children individually and in small groups. Planning for the children is of good quality and the liaison between the co-ordinator, teachers and support staff ensures that pupils make very good progress. Staff have high expectations and the pupils respond well because of the strength of relationships within the school.

How well the school provides for pupils' personal, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development

28. The school provides for pupils' personal, moral and social development very well and for their spiritual and cultural development well. The school has a good 'Personal, social and health education and citizenship' policy. Drug education is included in this, and the school has a policy statement on sex education. Many cross-curricular links also develop the pupils' personal development; for example, relationships are discussed in religious education, and health is discussed in science and physical education. Responsibility for the environment is promoted through geography, history and in science. The whole ethos of the school promotes pupils' personal development very well.
29. Provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development is good and for their moral and social development is very good. For example, in an assembly, when the rector spoke to them about the swans at the bishop's palace at Wells pulling a rope at feeding time, 'as a way of saying please and thank you', they reacted with a genuine sense of wonder. The school has a two-year rolling programme of weekly assembly themes, which can be adapted, when appropriate. The pupils know the Lord's Prayer by heart and sing it to music. They say grace before their mid-day meal and make up their own prayers, such as, 'Thank you for kind people who help us in school, when we fall over at playtime.' Pupils know hymns or songs by heart, but seldom is assembly used to promote younger pupils' reading skills, with an overhead projection of the words. In some assemblies, the very good standards of recorder playing, where pupils play many tunes to a recorded accompaniment, promote both pupils' spiritual and their cultural development. Music also contributes well to pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development in lessons. For example, in a Year 4 lesson, pupils discussed how the music made them feel. The environmental area on site is being developed, and provides further opportunities to wonder at nature.
30. Social skills are promoted well, when pupils are involved in the organisation and presentation of assemblies, such as preparing the hall, controlling the compact disc player, and writing up on a board suggestions made by pupils. In both art and religious education, pupils are encouraged to empathise with others, considering how the artist would feel or how Jesus' parents would have felt when he was left behind in the temple. Pupils' social and moral development is also promoted well through Circle Time, when 'we talk to each other and sort things out'. These sessions are built into the timetable but were not observed during the inspection. The pupils have helped to write the school rules, and they are fully aware of the behaviour policy. Pupils' social development is also promoted well through working together, such as at computers, through paired reading, when older pupils help younger ones with their reading, and in the playground, where all ages play well together. The link with the middle school is also very good and promotes their social development very well. Pupils from the middle school visit as part of their literacy lessons; they talk to individual pupils from Years 1 and 2, take notes, and then write a story about them using this information. They return to the school with the stories and read them to the pupils.
31. The school promotes multicultural understanding through, for example, the study of Chinese New Year, Jewish festivals and Hindu mehndi hand patterns. A Hindu visitor took assembly on one occasion and talked to the pupils about Hinduism, and the school has enjoyed a visit from a black gospel singer, when a compact disc was made. Pupils' own culture is promoted well through art, music and dance; for example, they take part in the annual country-dance celebration in Wells and a good-quality musical production each year, and they visit local places of interest. The whole school has

been taken to the theatre in Yeovil for the last two years, and pupils visit the Rural Life Museum at Glastonbury. Some take part in the local carnival.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

Strengths

Welfare

- Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance.
- Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour.
- Procedures for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour.

Assessment

- Very good analysis of assessment data in literacy and numeracy to identify pupils, and groups of pupils, who need support and target resources and help to them.
- Very good monitoring and assessment procedures in reception class, for pupils with special educational needs, and in literacy and numeracy.
- Very good use of portfolios of pupils' work to monitor their progress in school.

Areas for development

Welfare

- Completion of whole-school risk assessment.

Assessment

- The need for target setting in literacy and numeracy for pupils throughout the school to help focus learning.
- The need for a consistent, effective and easy-to-use system of recording what pupils know and can do in all foundation subjects to help staff to monitor pupils' progress even more effectively.

The steps taken to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety

32. This is a very caring and friendly school in which the well-being of the pupils is a priority. This is a strength of the school, which is reflected clearly in the care arrangements that are in place. The staff know the pupils well and take good care of them. Staff are available to greet the parents and pupils at the start of the school day and they ensure that all pupils are collected by a known adult at the end of the afternoon.
33. Procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare are good. The headteacher is the named person responsible for child protection and any children in the care of the local authority. Staff and lunchtime supervisors are aware of procedures and have received appropriate training. The school follows the procedures set out in the revised health and safety policy, but the headteacher acknowledges the need to complete whole-school risk assessment. A policy is in place for the safe use of the Internet by all pupils. The school ensures that electrical appliances, fire and safety equipment are kept in proper working order and are checked by the appropriate authorities. Levels of supervision at breaks and lunchtimes are good, and lunchtime supervisors join in playground games. There are good arrangements in place for dealing with accidents, and a member of staff is trained to administer first aid.

The effectiveness of the school's assessment and monitoring procedures

34. Overall, procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' academic progress are very good. Teachers in the reception classes, and other adults, make good use of the regular assessments that are made on the children as they move through their first year at the school. The assessments that are made following their first few weeks at the school are used well to group pupils and to plan their learning. The day-to-day assessments are effective and the information is evaluated carefully to gauge what

skills the children have mastered and what modifications to teaching are necessary in order for the children to master the skills taught.

35. Assessment procedures are very good in English and mathematics, good in science, geography, history and information and communication technology and satisfactory in other subjects. Information gathered from various test results is extremely well analysed to provide a picture of how well the pupils are progressing through the school. This enables staff to identify possible areas of need and to target help and resources through, for example, early learning support and additional learning support groups. The headteacher and literacy co-ordinator work very hard with staff to produce a very effective action plan, which shows a keen awareness both of the needs of the school and of strategies to meet those needs. In science, religious education and the foundation subjects, teachers assess pupils very well on a day-to-day basis and use this information to help them plan work suitable for different groups of pupils. Some subjects have end-of-unit assessments and there are good portfolios of pupils' work, which are checked and graded against National Curriculum levels by staff working together to make sure that progress is consistent through the school.
36. Assessment procedures for pupils with special educational needs are very good. Detailed assessment records are kept and Individual Education Plans are updated on a termly basis, in consultation with teachers, support assistants and, where appropriate, the individual children.
37. Not all teachers are yet regularly setting targets for pupils in literacy and numeracy, but a system has been successfully trialled by the numeracy co-ordinator and it is planned to put it in place throughout the school next term. There are not yet consistent procedures in the school by which staff can easily record what pupils know and can do in the foundation subjects but this need has already been noted. A system has been tried in geography and history in Year 2, and after further discussion with staff it is expected to extend this through the school.
38. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are very good. As a result, the good overall attendance rate has been maintained. Class teachers monitor attendance, keeping the secretary and headteacher fully informed. The secretary checks on the receipt of absence notes and monitors punctuality and medical appointments. Parents are very supportive and quickly inform the school when a pupil will be absent. Should problems arise, the school can use the services of the educational welfare officer. Good attendance is regularly promoted in newsletters, and holidays in term-time are actively discouraged.
39. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and eliminating oppressive behaviour are very good. There is a suitable behaviour policy and all staff consistently manage behaviour well. Lunchtime supervisors have successfully established positive patterns of behaviour at lunchtimes. There is an effective scheme of rewards and sanctions, which the pupils understand. Badges, celebration assemblies, praise and names entered in the Golden Book and Celebration Book, all promote good behaviour and achievement. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 are rewarded with a choice of activity during Friday afternoons. The lunchtime supervisors have established the 'table of the week' award and a 'headteacher's award' is given for outstanding work. No bullying, challenging or racially motivated incidents were seen during the inspection, but when problems occasionally arise they are dealt with by the headteacher and deputy head. Parents are involved if necessary, and are very supportive. All serious incidents are recorded on a behaviour chart and monitored by relevant staff. Lunchtime supervisors also record incidents of challenging behaviour. The school actively discourages

oppressive behaviour, in assemblies and personal, social and health education lessons, and in 'Circle Time'.

40. Procedures for monitoring and supporting the pupils' personal development are good. They are founded on the very good relationships between the staff and the pupils and the school's strong commitment to promoting the pupils' confidence and self-esteem. The staff know the pupils very well and in return the pupils feel valued and supported. Personal, social and health education is taught in lessons such as religious education and during discussion periods called 'circle time'. This work makes a valuable contribution to the pupils' personal development. Health professionals, such as the educational psychologist, speech therapist and school nurse, provide additional support. Year 2 pupils have been involved in developing targets for improvement with their class teachers, which enables them to gain an understanding of the progress that they make. Plans are in place to develop this area of target setting further, throughout the school. The success that the school achieves in support and guidance of the pupils has a good effect on the pupils' attitudes, behaviour and learning.

The effectiveness of the school's educational and personal support and guidance in raising pupils' achievement

41. The school cares for its pupils very well, using very good procedures to monitor their welfare and to assess their work. They use this information to plan lessons, matched appropriately the pupils' differing needs. These have all been instrumental in effectively raising standards to the present good levels.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

Strengths

- Parents' views of the school.
- Links with parents.

Parents and carers' views of the school

42. The majority of parents have expressed very good support for the school. Parents spoken to during the inspection appreciated the 'open door' policy and praised the efforts of the headteacher and staff. A minority of parents' questionnaires raised concerns about how comfortable parents felt about approaching the school with problems or concerns. The inspection confirmed that the headteacher and staff are accessible and willing to discuss any problems that arise. Parents agree that the children enjoy coming to school.
43. The school works hard to promote and maintain very good links with parents. Frequent letters inform parents about events and achievements. There is also a parents' noticeboard located in the school reception area. The school has distributed a suitable home/school agreement, but not all have been signed and returned. Parents' meetings, drop-in sessions for parents of prospective pupils, and school productions are very well attended.

The effectiveness of the school's links with parents and carers

44. Parental involvement is good and has a positive effect on the life of the school. This has been maintained since the previous inspection. Most parents support fund-raising activities organised by the Friends' Association. Fairs and jumble sales have been arranged at which a considerable amount of money has been raised to benefit the

pupils. Additional resources have been purchased such as a projector with a stand and playground benches. Some parents act as volunteer helpers in classrooms, on educational visits, listening to readers, assisting on pottery day and with sporting activities.

45. The quality of information for parents has improved since the previous inspection and is now good. The school prospectus and governors' annual report now meet legal requirements and are attractive and informative. Additional information about what the children are learning is now given and parents are informed of the school's expectations regarding homework. Parents have the opportunity to consult staff formally in the autumn and summer terms and after the issue of the pupils' progress reports to discuss their children's progress. The pupils' progress reports are good and include all the required information. They report on the areas of study and personal and social education but also now include targets for improvement for literacy and numeracy. This enables parents to understand how they can help their children to improve their work.
46. The contribution that parents make to their children's learning at school and at home is good. Most help their children with homework and listen to them read. The home/school reading log provides a valuable channel of communication between home and school and some parents use these well. Older children have the opportunity to attend after-school French classes taken by a parent. The school has also hosted a local authority course for parents which had the potential to assist them in helping their children to learn.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

Strengths

- The excellent leadership and very good management of the headteacher.
- The very good support given by the deputy headteacher and by other key members of staff.
- Subject managers are knowledgeable and most lead their subjects very well.
- The total commitment of all staff and their excellent, shared capacity to succeed.
- The excellent strategies for performance management and appraisal.
- The very good use of the very high quality support staff.
- Governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and support very well.
- The very good use of financial planning to support the school's priorities.
- The very good learning resources in the school, which very effectively support learning.

Areas for development

- Lack of a designated area for a computer suite makes it harder for staff to teach all necessary skills effectively.
- Some classrooms are cramped, especially in Years 3 and 4 where numbers of pupils are large.
- Governors are not as proactive in seeking out ways of improving and developing the school as they might be, but rely too heavily on initiatives from the headteacher and staff.

How effectively the headteacher and key staff lead and manage the school

47. Leadership and management are very good. There is excellent leadership from the headteacher who has a very clear vision for the school. He is supported extremely well by a talented, dedicated and hard-working deputy and a team of committed subject co-ordinators and staff.

48. There is a very positive school ethos, which reflects the real commitment of all staff to equality of opportunity and inclusion for all pupils. The school reflects equal opportunity in its aims and objectives, planning and organisation, and staff are excellent role models to all pupils. Everyone has worked hard to build a community where all are made to feel welcome and where staff, governors and parents work well together for the benefit of the children. High expectations and the very high standards of behaviour throughout the school are based on mutual respect and have a positive effect on the quality of pupils' learning. As a result, standards continually improve.
49. Subjects are generally very well managed and subject co-ordinators are knowledgeable and enthusiastic about their subjects. The very good leadership of the core subjects has resulted in very significant and measurable improvement in pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science, and standards have been significantly raised in art, geography, history and religious education. The improvement in standards in information and communication technology since the last report has been very good. One of the great strengths of this school is the total commitment of all staff and their determination and capacity to succeed and to continue to raise standards.

How well the school monitors and evaluates its performance

50. There are excellent strategies in place for monitoring, appraising and improving the performance of all staff, and the action taken to improve the school is reflected in the very good improvements that have been made.

How well the governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities

51. The governors are knowledgeable about the school and very supportive. They satisfactorily fulfil their roles but most tend to react to information and suggestions from the headteacher and staff and to rely on their initiatives, rather than actively seeking for ways to become involved in the development of the school. Only a few have attended training.

The extent to which the school makes the best strategic use of its resources

52. Financial planning is very good, and special grants, such as allocations for special educational needs, are used appropriately. The large carry forward includes specific grants and without them is £30,156. The governing body agrees the budget allocations annually and governors monitor expenditure in order to check that actual expenditure is in line with the agreed budget. The headteacher has a very clear grasp of how money is being spent and ensures that good quality financial information is made available to all governors. Governors now receive good quality information upon which to base their decisions. There is an effective school development plan with very clear priorities; spending decisions are very closely linked to these priorities.

The extent to which the principles of best value are applied to the school's use of resources

53. The headteacher and governing body are well aware of the principles of best value. The school development plan is well costed and spending decisions are very closely linked to the educational priorities set. The effectiveness of decisions is constantly reviewed and decisions are altered where necessary. For example, the placement of learning support staff was reviewed, following the entry of a number of pupils with specific needs in the lower part of the school. This review led to effective changes in allocation of support time to meet that need. The school uses contractors on the

recommended list of the local authority and invites tenders for any work carried out and always seeks best prices and best value for goods and services. St. Bartholomew's is a very effective school and gives very good value for money.

The adequacy of staffing, accommodation and learning resources

54. The school is very well staffed with a good number of experienced teachers. Much thought and planning has been given to providing a very good level of support staff and these are very capable, very well deployed and work extremely closely with teachers to make sure that all pupils are given very good support and have equal access to the curriculum. Resources are very good and are very well used to support pupils' learning. The quality and range of equipment actually prepared by teachers and learning support assistants are exceptionally good and are particularly helpful to the pupils, being designed especially for their needs. Very good use is also made of the local area, visits, visitors and resources from the local museum to enrich pupils' experiences and enhance their learning.
55. The school was built recently and accommodation is good overall and very well used. There is an attractive and welcoming reception area and most classrooms are of a good size with adequate storage facilities. The school makes very effective use of the shared teaching area outside the classrooms and benefits from a first aid room and facilities for the disabled. Outdoors, there are good quality hard-play areas, a 'quiet area,' with seating, and a large playing field surrounded by trees and shrubs, incorporating an environmental area with interesting wildlife. Outside the Foundation Stage classroom is a covered area and secure hard surfaced, well-marked play area. There is no grassed play area for Foundation Stage children, which is not essential but would enhance their creative play. There is no space available for a dedicated computer suite, as the only possible space is at present excellently used for many different activities which benefit pupils throughout the day. Although the school makes very good alternative use of small banks of networked computers, this lack of a suite makes it much harder for teachers to cover all areas of skills teaching effectively. Classroom space is limited and some areas are cramped. For example, although the prefabricated classrooms used for Years 3 and 4 are in good condition and are well maintained, they are not really big enough for the large numbers of pupils in these classes if a full range of teaching and learning styles are to be used. The accommodation is cleaned to a high standard by the caretaker and cleaner and is enhanced by very high quality displays of the pupils' work.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

56. In this very effective school, there are no significant weaknesses and only a few areas for improvement. In the light of the very good education provided, and in order to maintain and improve this very good quality of education, the headteacher, governors and staff may wish to consider including the following in their action plan:

- Ensure that the good practice in target setting, which has been trialled in Year 2, is put into practice throughout the school. (Paragraphs 40, 71.)
- Find ways to teach information and communication technology as a discrete subject in Years 3 and 4. (Paragraphs 55, 101.)
- Develop subject knowledge in some aspects of design and technology, and music. (Paragraphs 94,101)
- Carry out regular risk assessments. (Paragraph 33.)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	32
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	32

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	5	12	10	5	0	0	0
Percentage	16	38	30	16	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 three percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	181
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	11

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	17

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	5
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.7
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	16	20	36

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	14	16	16
	Girls	20	20	20
	Total	34	36	36
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	94 (95)	100 (95)	100 (100)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	16	16	16
	Girls	20	20	20
	Total	36	36	36
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	100 (97)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

Ethnic background of pupils**Exclusions in the last school year**

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	176	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	2	0	0
Parent / pupil preferred not to say	0	0	0
Information not obtained	0	0	0

The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y4

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23
Average class size	30

Education support staff: YR – Y4

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	226

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
	£
Total income	435,813
Total expenditure	384,485
Expenditure per pupil	2,124
Balance brought forward from previous year	24,070
Balance carried forward to next year	51,328

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	152
Number of questionnaires returned	55

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	75	24	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	76	24	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	58	40	0	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	55	42	2	0	1
The teaching is good.	82	18	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	58	38	4	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	87	11	2	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	71	27	2	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	62	35	2	0	1
The school is well led and managed.	87	13	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	73	27	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	40	53	5	0	2

No additional issues were raised by a significant number of parents.

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

Strengths

- Very good provision.
- Children make very good progress during their reception year.
- Very good teaching.
- Effective use of assessment to track the children's progress and to help plan lessons.

Introduction

57. The provision for children in the Foundation Stage is very good, and reflects overall standards found at the previous inspection. Children start at the school during the year they become five, attending part-time until the end of the first half term, with continuing flexibility where appropriate. The school works closely with four pre-school groups locally, and nearly all the children have some experience of pre-school education before they enter the school. The reception teachers have developed purposeful links with parents, who give good support to their children's learning at home. Many read with them, for example, or support them well in their early learning. Parents are welcomed into classrooms at the start of the day and this gives them a good opportunity to share with the teachers and support assistants any concerns they may have.

Personal, social and emotional development

58. Children enter with standards that are average; they make good progress and, by the time they transfer to Year 1, most achieve above the expectations of the Early Learning Goals in terms of their personal, social and emotional development. Teaching is very good and effective in ensuring that children make good progress in this aspect of their learning. Children are confident in their approach to their work and establish effective relationships with one another and with the class teachers and the learning support assistants. They behave well, and are considerate of others when moving around the classroom or playing with resources and equipment. They work well together when part of a group, and concentrate effectively when they are asked to work independently. Some are sufficiently confident to move freely to another activity without guidance from the teacher, and this ensures that little time is lost between activities. Children are polite and know that they need to wait patiently if the teacher is working with other children. When getting ready for physical activities, the children change into their shorts and T-shirts quickly, although a small number of children need the assistance of an adult, particularly with laces and top buttons. All adults give due praise and encouragement when they notice children who have tried particularly hard or done something kind for one of their classmates. For example, a child distressed by not being chosen to put away the mats after a physical education lesson, was comforted by a friend. Such praise, from adults, is effective in building up the children's esteem and personal confidence in their approach to each other and in their work.

Communication, language and literacy

59. Children enter with standards that are well below average in speaking and listening, and below average in reading and writing. They make very good progress and, by the time they transfer to Year 1, most children achieve standards which are above the expectations of the Early Learning Goals and some are working within the early levels of the National Curriculum. They make good progress in their understanding and use

of literacy during the course of their first year at the school. Teaching is very good, and rich and varied opportunities are provided for the children to practise the development of their skills. For example, teachers develop their vocabulary well, when they ask children to suggest words to use instead of banging or hitting instruments. Good opportunities are provided for children to extend and develop their speaking skills through other areas of learning. They enjoy listening to stories, nursery rhymes, songs and poems that are read to them. In discussions, they are encouraged to express their ideas about what they have heard, and to use an expanding vocabulary. The creation of a range of story boxes has been particularly effective in developing speaking skills as children retell favourite stories with the 'props' provided. By the end of their reception year, children have a good understanding of the conventions of books and can explain what an author is and the purpose of an illustrator. The school does not rely on a commercial reading scheme. The teachers have developed their own scheme in which children create books of their own, for example of 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears', extending their reading vocabulary as they recognise more words and learning effective strategies to cope with the reading and writing of less familiar or long words. By the time they transfer to Year 1, children can write their names and a significant number can write simple statements and accounts of something they have experienced. Higher-attaining children understand what is meant by capital letters and full stops and are starting to employ them in the course of their daily writing. Letter formation is usually correct. Use is made of the classroom based computers to support the children's early reading and writing skills, such as in the recognition of letters and their corresponding sounds, and simple matching exercises.

Mathematical development

60. Children enter with standards that are below average; they make very good progress and, by the time they enter Year 1, most are attaining above the expectations of the Early Learning Goals. They make good progress in their early understanding of number, shape and measure. By the end of their time as reception children, some, especially higher-attaining children, are working at the early levels of the National Curriculum. Teaching is very good, and pupils are given work that extends and pushes them on in their understanding of mathematical ideas and concepts. Most children can count on and back within 10 and 20 and are able to write numbers in the correct order. Children talk about various mathematical shapes and can talk about the number of sides and corners, as well as name them. Teaching provides children with a wide range of opportunities to develop their understanding of terms such as 'full' or 'empty'. The teachers devise interesting activities that successfully develop the children's understanding of shape, for example by enabling children to create 'shape' pictures. For children who are less confident with number, teaching is effectively organised by providing them with a wide variety of games and puzzles specifically designed to support their early understanding of number. These include computer games. Children enjoy shopping games and demonstrate that they can recognise prices and count money. Work is carefully planned to support the children's different stages of learning and, as a result, their progress and development are well supported. Staff are careful to use appropriate mathematical vocabulary and, because of this, children make good gains in their understanding of mathematical language such as 'addition', 'counting on' or 'counting back.'

Knowledge and understanding of the world

61. Children enter with standards that are below those of most children of their age. They make good progress and, by the end of the reception year, most children achieve the expectations of the Early Learning Goals in this area of their learning. Teaching is very good and makes effective use of the children's immediate local environment in extending their understanding of their place in the world in which they live. Children can explain the role and purpose that various members of the community play and how they help one another. For example, the school was visited by a fire engine and its crew and the children were shown the purpose of the hoses. Children are very aware of the people who help them in school and the sort of work they undertake. They understand that people live in different types of homes and that their town of Crewkerne is smaller than cities such as Bath or Wells. Children can explain that houses are made out of different materials such as bricks, wood and glass. They know that animals and insects also have a 'home' but that these creatures may well live outside or underground. They understand that all living creatures need food, water and air in order to live and grow. Some children have a secure understanding for their age that all living creatures get taller and grow older and that getting older is often commemorated through 'special days' such as birthdays or anniversaries. Children's knowledge that a church is a 'special place' is secure and they know that Christmas and Easter are special events that are remembered. Their basic understanding of the lives and customs of faiths other than Christian is more limited. Each classroom has computers for pupils to use to support their learning. Children use a mouse comfortably to click on an option and the higher-attaining children enjoy moving around the different layers of a computer program.

Physical development

62. Children enter with standards that are broadly in line with expectations and, by the end of the reception year, most children reach standards that are above the expectations of the Early Learning Goals. They make good progress in developing their physical skills, and teaching is very good. Immediately outside the classrooms is a roofed area which enables sand and water play to take place outdoors in suitable weather. Both classrooms have easy access to the dedicated outdoor area, which is used mainly for recreational play. There is a range of wheeled toys, small equipment, and hobbyhorses for children to use. The children are regularly taken to the school's own on-site adventure playground. When using larger play equipment, such as large tricycles and bikes, children move around the play area carefully. Good use is made of equipment such as bricks and blocks to support the children's physical development. Further creative opportunities are provided for the children to work with glue and scissors in order to construct models. There are good opportunities for children to use a range of pencils, brushes and other equipment in their writing and in their creative work. The children learn quickly and become quite skilful at using such equipment during the course of their everyday work. When taking part in physical education work in the school hall, children work well and listen carefully to their teacher. In an observed lesson they were seen to slide, hop and crawl on the mats and on the gymnastics equipment. They use space effectively and are able to balance and climb with good control.

Creative development

63. Children enter with standards that are below national expectations; they make good progress and, by the end of their reception year, most achieve the Early Learning Goals and make good gains in the creative aspects of their development. Teaching is very

good. Many opportunities are provided for the children to work with a variety of media in order to develop their painting and drawing skills. They understand that some colours can be mixed in order to make others. They are learning about the work of famous artists, and examples of children's work displayed on classroom walls show that they have produced their own work in the styles of L S Lowry, Klee and Seurat. Further opportunities are provided for the children to listen to, and take part in, the singing of songs and to experiment by using simple percussion instruments. They learn how instruments are played in different ways by experimenting with untuned percussion. The children are very self-controlled, when music is taken in the hall, and only play instruments when told to, by shaking, turning, tapping or scraping them. Having learned about the instruments, they walk round the hall playing them to songs such as, 'The grand of Duke of York' and 'She'll be coming round the mountain when she comes'. Children's creative development is enhanced by opportunities for them to participate in imaginative structured role-play. For example, during the inspection visit, both home corners were 'Ye Olde Three Bears Cottage'.

ENGLISH

Strengths

- Standards have improved a lot and are high.
- Teachers have implemented the National Literacy Strategy very well.
- The quality of English teaching throughout the school is very good.
- The very good attitudes and behaviour of pupils make for very good progress and quality of learning.
- There are very good links with other subjects.
- Assessment is used very well to guide teachers' planning.
- There is very good leadership and management of English.
- The outstanding commitment of all staff and their capacity to succeed have brought about very good all-round improvement.

Areas for development

- Introduce target setting throughout the school to help focus pupils' learning.

64. Standards in English are above average in both Years 2 and 4, and pupils achieve very well.

National Curriculum test data

65. The pupils' attainment in English, by the end of Year 2, is well above national expectations. In 2002, the National Curriculum test results were well above those of pupils nationally, especially in writing. This indicates a considerable improvement since the previous inspection in 1998, when overall standards were judged to be in line with national expectations.

Inspection standards

66. Evidence gathered during the inspection shows that pupils consistently make very good progress in speaking, listening, reading and writing through the school. The school has very effectively implemented the National Literacy Strategy and this, along with high quality teaching and very good links with other subjects, including information and communication technology, is raising standards. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress towards their set targets, largely due to very effective and well-integrated learning support staff, and work that is well targeted to pupils' needs. All pupils are included in all school activities. Standards, overall, are about average when

pupils start in Year 1. The number of pupils who are above the expected level by the end of Year 4 is well above expectations; they achieve very well.

67. Teachers and learning support staff constantly encourage pupils to listen carefully and to share their thoughts and ideas, so that speaking and listening skills develop very well. All pupils show great respect for the views of others, whether adults or children, listening carefully. The sharing atmosphere created gives pupils the confidence to express themselves and they do this clearly. Even some Year 1 pupils are able to express themselves in quite complex sentences, as did one girl in a discussion about Cinderella. 'Cinderella was very tired because she had to work all day for her jealous sisters.' By Year 2, most pupils' vocabulary has been significantly extended and in a discussion about a sequel to Goldilocks and the Three Bears, ideas flew thick and fast when thinking about the reaction of the wolf to the 'trashing' of his house. Examples given by different pupils included, 'angry', 'furious', 'hopping mad', 'surprised', 'shocked', 'astonished', 'astounded' and 'amazed'. By Year 4, all pupils talk confidently to each other and to adults and are able to choose words for effect. Thus, in a discussion about Iron Man, they talk about a 'glowing infra-red eye', a 'scratching, searching hand' or 'clutching, grasping fingers'.
68. Very effective teaching of basic skills and use of a good range of books, including big books, help to develop a love of books and of reading in pupils. Pupils regularly take books home and there are good links with and support from most parents, who listen to their children and make useful comments in the home/school reading records. Parents can help their children to change their reading books, before school each morning, in the library. Very good use is made of traditional story books, stories from different cultures and non-fiction books, and by Year 2 pupils talk about favourite authors, describe what illustrators do and can use contents pages and indices to help them find information. Most pupils in Year 4 are reading independently and with understanding and expression. Pupils make use of a range of reading skills, including phonics, picture clues and using the context to work out what an unfamiliar word might be and its meaning. Throughout the school the pupils are using CD-ROMs and the Internet to find information.
69. By the end of Year 2 most pupils have made very good progress in writing and almost all of them are attaining above expectations for their age. The writing of the majority of pupils in Year 2 shows an above-average understanding of the use of capital letters, full stops and sentence structure. The pupils spell most short words correctly and spelling is well taught in the school. Examples of very effective use of literacy and extended writing are seen in a range of subjects, including art, science, history, geography and religious education, and computers are very well used. All pupils, throughout the school, regularly practise forming their letters, and standards of handwriting are good overall. They are beginning to understand different types of writing and how to adapt both speaking and writing to different audiences. A good example of this was seen in a Year 3 literacy lesson, where effective use was made of a traditional story from another culture, 'Baira and the Vultures', to help pupils to recognise and use features of oral and written traditions.

Teaching and learning

70. Teaching ranges from good to excellent and is very good overall. Teachers know their pupils very well and use a range of assessment techniques, including tests, very effective questioning and consistently marked work. This enables teachers to plan very well and they do so, making sure that there is a range of work targeted to the needs of different pupils. One of the outstanding strengths of teaching in this school is the work

that teachers and learning support assistants put in to make their own teaching resources suitable for the needs of the pupils. Teachers have very good classroom management skills and this and the excellent relationships that have been fostered and nurtured makes for very good attitudes and behaviour in lessons. This has a very positive effect on the progress that pupils make in English. Pupils are keen to do well, get involved in all activities and settle down to the tasks given them with a very high degree of interest and concentration. They work very well independently and in groups and there were many examples seen of good co-operation between pupils. Teachers teach basic skills very well and encourage the pupils to think carefully about their own work and how it can be improved. A Year 4 display of poetry, for example, includes examples of pupils analysing their own work and how it can be improved.

Leadership and management

71. The leadership and management of the subject are very good. The subject co-ordinator has a very clear grasp of the strengths of the subject and what needs to be done to continue to improve. For example, the action plan has focused on the need to introduce target setting across the school so that all pupils have very clear goals at which to aim. This has already been successfully tried in Year 2. The level of commitment of all staff is outstanding and this has enabled the very successful implementation of the National Literacy Strategy and a range of initiatives which have been introduced and that have helped to raise standards. Resources are good and are used well. Accommodation is limited in space, especially for Years 3 and 4 where pupil numbers are high, but is good overall, and is supplemented well by a very good range of attractive displays of pupils' work, which helps to motivate and stimulate the pupils.

MATHEMATICS

Strengths

- Excellent strategies for teaching basic skills and dealing with perceived weaknesses.
- High quality teaching.
- Very good resources.
- Assessment and its use, to help plan lessons and development.
- Excellent subject co-ordination.

Area for development

- Data handling and problem solving.
(These weaknesses have already been identified by the school and effective steps are being taken to address them.)

72. Standards in mathematics are above average across the school, and pupils achieve very well.

National Curriculum test data

73. The 2002 National Curriculum results in Year 2, show that pupils attained standards well above average. When compared with similar schools, standards were equally high. Inspection findings indicate that standards in mathematics are well above average at the end of Year 2, and remain above by the end of Year 4, which is an improvement on the average standards reported at the time of the last inspection. This is due to the focus the headteacher has given to the subject for the last three years, the appointment of a gifted co-ordinator, and the support of full-time learning support assistants in all classes. Pupils in Year 4 take the optional National Curriculum tests, and the results identified a need for further work on data handling and problem solving. Work has already begun on addressing these perceived weaknesses. There is no significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls. Pupils with special

educational needs are well supported and make good progress towards their individual mathematical learning targets.

Inspection standards

74. By the end of Year 2, most pupils are achieving above average standards. They have good knowledge and understanding of tens and unit numbers, including pounds and pence and how to write, order, add up and subtract them. The more able pupils have extended their number knowledge into thousands, hundreds, tens and units. The pupils use this knowledge effectively to solve simple problems presented in words, such as working out the total cost of a series of purchases. Their knowledge and understanding of shapes are well developed. They have a very good mathematical vocabulary and use it effectively to explain their calculations and observations clearly. They are confident in looking for, and investigating, patterns in numbers and shapes. They are beginning to use multiplication tables, such as five and ten.
75. By the end of Year 4, most pupils continue to be achieving above average standards. They have a secure understanding of the number system, including decimals and fractions. They are learning to devise, as well as recite, multiplication tables and are learning good strategies to aid their calculations. For example, pupils were shown how to use their fingers as a swift and accurate method of checking components of the nine times table. In general, work is presented neatly. Attainment, overall, is above average in this year group because of the high proportion of pupils likely to achieve the above average Level 5 at the end of Year 6, in the middle school. Pupils do not make progress as rapidly as when they were in Years 1 and 2, but they still make good progress and are consolidating their knowledge well and learning to apply it effectively.

Teaching and learning

76. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall. No teaching of a less than very good standard was observed during the inspection, and two excellent lessons were seen. Lessons are well planned, with due attention to the teaching of basic skills. Teachers provide a good mix of mental and written activities, and whole-class and individual and group work. Introductions to lessons set out clearly what is to be learned, and teachers then help pupils effectively as they work, with very good support from teaching assistants. The introductions to lessons are timed appropriately with sufficient time for pupils to work at their own level and to review their learning at the end of the lesson. A particularly good feature is the use of mixed-ability pairings so that pupils learn to help one another and consolidate their own learning. When they settle to their tasks, pupils sustain a good level of effort and concentration, co-operating well with their friends when necessary and producing good quantities of work. Teachers use questioning effectively, matching their questions to the attainment of different pupils appropriately, to enable all to succeed. For example, a lower-achieving child demonstrated a solution to a problem in front of the whole class, who supported him well. When challenged, pupils demonstrate a good capacity to think creatively about how to solve difficult problems. In an excellent lesson in Year 4, pupils made very good progress in their ability to use the nine times table, using a range of resources. They worked out the answers to problems collaboratively, through an enjoyable mix of discussion, questioning and interesting practical activities, supported by the teacher and two learning assistants. Problems were appropriately graded so that all pupils progressed at their own rate of ability and all were challenged. The teacher demonstrated an excellent insight into how pupils learn, as well as very good subject knowledge, using humour very effectively and getting the pupils to help each other rather than providing answers himself. The pupils rose to this challenge with

enthusiasm in their efforts to find the solutions to questions. The learning in this lesson was very enjoyable as well as profitable. Generally, lessons promote a good rate of learning and cater well for the development of thinking skills across the ability spectrum. Lessons provide opportunities for the use of computers and there are good examples of pupils developing and using their numeracy skills in other subjects, for example by using graphs and charts to present findings in science and geography lessons.

Leadership and management

77. The leadership and management of the subject are excellent, making an extremely positive contribution towards the improving rate of progress. In the last two years the newly appointed co-ordinator has brought a high level of expertise and enthusiasm to the subject, encouraging her colleagues to make better use of the National Numeracy Strategy in the planning of lessons. This is promoting a more flexible approach to learning that is meeting the pupils' needs at a more individual level. The co-ordinator has identified the key priorities through checking the pupils' work and has established and produced a clear action plan, giving the school a good capacity to further improve provision and standards. Assessment is rigorous and of high quality and it is used effectively to inform future planning. Resources are particularly good and, although 'home-made', are of high quality. For example, in a planned focus on problem solving, the school has introduced 'Bart the Builder', with each class having their own toy (dressed in dungarees). Each toy carries a toolbox which contains prompts to aid a good approach to the steps in solving problems; for example, a pair of spectacles reminds pupils to read the problem through twice.

SCIENCE

Strengths

- High standards reached in the Year 2 teacher assessments.
- Well above average standards in Years 3 and 4.
- Excellent range of library books on science.
- Links between literacy and science contribute to high standards.
- The developing use of the school environment to promote science.

Areas for development

- Use the present hand-written, medium-term planning to develop a scheme of work.
- Recording of investigations in Year 2.

78. Standards in science are well above average by the time pupils leave Year 4, and they achieve very well.

National Curriculum test data

79. In 2002, pupils reached high standards in the National Curriculum teacher assessments, and an above average number of pupils reached above average standards. These results were the same when compared with results of similar schools. High standards were reached in all aspects of the subject. Improvement since the last inspection has been considerable.

Inspection standards

80. During the inspection, no science lessons were being taught. Science is taught in blocked weeks, alternating with design and technology. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 record very little of this, mainly practical, subject; therefore, there was too little evidence to confirm standards in these years. However, in Year 1 pupils study animal habitats, they begin to understand how materials change when they cook biscuits in food technology, and they learn about movement and forces when they make products in design and technology. In Year 2, when covering a topic on 'ourselves' (about health and growth) they find out that exercise 'makes your heart beat fast and makes you strong'. They make graphs and pie charts to record their findings about what exercise they like to take. They draw foods that you should only have sometimes and vegetables and fruit which are good for you. The school nurse explains that some foods are good for you but other foods you must only eat sometimes as they are 'nice but not good for you'. They know that crisps have too much salt and fat in them. They also study weather, including rainfall, wind speed and temperature, the direction and length of shadows, and moving toys and forces.
81. The standards of work in Years 3 and 4 are above average, and standards of presentation in both classes are high. The expectations in Year 4 result in well above average standards of presentation for this age pupil. Year 3 pupils complete excellently presented booklets, mainly using a variety of different writing and recording frames, on different aspects of the subject, which clearly show the thorough understanding they gain about each topic, for example light and shadow and changing materials. The contents page, at the beginning of each booklet, clearly summarises what has been learned. Pupils learn, for example, about the skeleton and moving joints, they test different papers for their strength, and they investigate solids and liquids. In Year 4, recording is developed further and pupils begin to present work themselves, using a combination of writing frames, free writing, diagrams and drawings. The imaginative, and sometimes humorous, presentation of their work, especially by higher-attaining pupils, is excellent. For example, when they explain a survey showing 'Why so many pupils fall over at lunchtime' in an imaginary school, or 'Which materials would be best for mopping up after 'Bagpuss'?' Through these investigations, they gain a very good understanding of the properties of different materials related to some of their own experiences. They label diagrams exceptionally well, use pictures, graphs and tables to record their findings and, when studying light, they complete crosswords. By Year 4 pupils also have knowledge of electrical circuits and forces, knowing how to measure in Newtons and testing how different surfaces slow down or speed up the movement of an object. They consider why bridges are not made of rubber, and why a wooden spoon should be 'not bendy'.
82. A lunchtime science club is sometimes held, which encourages pupils to care for their world. They, with the science co-ordinator, are developing an environmental area and they study badger sets, insects and trees.

Teaching and learning

83. No teaching was seen during the inspection. From the results of the Year 2 teacher assessments and from the scrutiny of work in Years 3 and 4, it is judged to be very good. Planning is detailed in Years 1 and 2, the preparation needed to prepare the booklets in Year 3 is considerable and the expectations of pupils in Year 4 are high. Assessments are carried out at the end of each topic and records are usefully kept, highlighting those above and below average. ICT, such as the Intranet, is used for some topics.

Leadership and management

84. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator has a good grasp of where the subject is and how he would like to develop it. The success of the subject at present is the result of a stable staff and he is keen that this success continues should staff change. Teachers plan in year groups and this is very successful. Plans are very detailed and are carefully matched to the National Curriculum programmes of study. However, some plans are hand-written and, as such, are difficult to adapt for a future year group, giving extra work to teachers. There is no scheme of work, as such, but national guidelines are followed and adapted. Areas for development, which the co-ordinator has identified, are the writing of a scheme of work, using these medium-term plans and further links with literacy. He is also keen to develop the environmental side of the subject and has the support of the Somerset Wildlife Trust. The school may also wish to find ways of recording work, or pupils working, in Years 1 and 2. For a first school, the subject is extremely well resourced with library books and well resourced with equipment.

ART AND DESIGN

Strengths

- Standards are above national expectations.
- Basic art skills are taught very well.
- The quality of display work is high and helps to stimulate pupils.

Standards

85. Standards are above national expectations for pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 4. This is an improvement on those reported at the time of the last inspection where they were found to be meeting national expectations. Pupils use a range of techniques and media to explore and develop ideas. They evaluate their work and gain a good knowledge of styles and techniques of different artists. Pupils, including those who have special educational needs, achieve very well in Years 1 to 3 and achieve well in Year 4.

Teaching and learning

86. It was not possible to observe any lessons in art and design during this inspection. However, an analysis of samples of pupils' work, a range of very good displays through the school and some exceptionally well put together and presented photographic evidence give a clear indication of standards. The quality of work implies very good teaching. Basic art and design skills are taught very well. Pupils learn to mix colours in order to make different shades and practise line drawing and shading, using a range of drawing materials. As a result, they use these media skilfully.
87. Examples seen include very well-executed paintings of Indian tigers in reception, Year 1 and Year 2. Evidence of detailed study, such as shape of ears, length of tail and features such as white whiskers, has helped pupils produce remarkably accurate drawings and painting for their age. Well-thought-out landscapes, echoing the work of Paul Klee, include painting and collage work. Pupils have considered very carefully the style and colours that Lowry used. Some particularly well-produced landscapes and seascapes reflect the 'pointillism' style and dot techniques of Georges Seurat. Year 3 have investigated patterns and textiles in printmaking and there is an attractive display of paintings of Greek pots, and photographic evidence of clay pots they made and

decorated in the Greek style. Year 4 have been looking at abstract art and have produced an attractive display, showing evidence of well-learned skills and techniques.

88. Cultural and multicultural development is good in art, because pupils are encouraged to think about how artists from different cultures work. They have looked at Hindu mehndi patterns and produced their own, and a range of artwork celebrates festivals such as Diwali, Hanukkah and Chinese New Year. Art is very well used to support other subjects, especially in Years 1 to 3, including history, geography and religious education. Pupils use information and communication technology to find information about art and artists and also to produce pieces of art, such as portraits.

Leadership and management

89. The subject is managed well. Since the last inspection, a good scheme of work has been produced by the school to help teachers to plan for the development of skills and knowledge of art. In Years 3 and 4 this is linked to the national guidelines, but is specifically adapted for the school. Resources are good and are well supplemented by staff.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Strengths

- Cross-curricular links.

Area for development

- The development of the subject by reviewing the policy and updating teachers' skills.

Standards

90. No lessons were observed during the inspection but, from evidence seen, standards are judged to be in line with expectations, overall. In Years 1 and 2 pupils have made puppets, birthday cards and presents and followed instructions in a book to make a fire engine. They then explained how they had made this wind-up toy. They have made Chinese lanterns as part of their work on Chinese New Year. Year 1 pupils have made houses, using straws as a frame and measuring and cutting paper to fit the sides of their houses and to make the roof fit. They took care in measuring out the different pieces. They also designed a coat of many colours and playground equipment.
91. In Year 3 pupils study packaging, using mathematical, ICT and design and technology skills. They use a mathematical 'net', drawn on computer, and then design the packet, for example for different soups, with writing and drawings. When considering control technology, Year 3 pupils study torches, linking design and technology with science and mathematics. They look carefully at a torch, try out different shapes based on cylinders and cones, agree criteria for a design, discuss the decision, agree the design, decide the order to do things, make Christmas lights, and then evaluate their designs and make 'top tips' for other people making Christmas lights, for example keeping bulbs away from cords, being able to switch the lights off and allowing for space to hide the wires. In Year 4, when studying structures and textiles, they make a frame to support a piece of paper. They also begin to learn to sew and use cross stitch and running stitch when sewing their own initials onto a purse.
92. Some food technology takes place, with pupils making sandwiches when studying healthy eating, and biscuits when studying changing materials in science.

Teaching and learning

93. No lessons were seen during the inspection but, from the evidence, teaching is judged to be satisfactory.

Leadership and management

94. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory, and the subject is due for development on the school development plan, for example the reviewing of the policy and updating teachers' knowledge and skills in the subject. The subject was judged to be satisfactory at the last inspection and this is still so.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

Strengths

- Pupils' attainment is above average.
- Very good teaching and learning throughout the school.
- Good use of the local environment to make the subjects interesting and relevant.
- Good use of a range of visits and visitors to stimulate and motivate pupils.

Areas for development

- A whole-school assessment recording procedure, to monitor more consistently how well pupils are progressing and achieving through the school.

Standards

95. Geography and history are taught in blocks of time, using a two-year cycle for each. Because of this and timetabling constraints it was only possible to see two history lessons in Years 1 and 2 and two geography lessons in Years 3 and 4 during the inspection. However, pupils' work was carefully scrutinised and there are very good portfolios of work and photographic evidence in both subjects. These show that standards are clearly above those expected of their age at both Year 2 and Year 4 and pupils make very good progress through the school.

Teaching and learning

96. Teaching is never less than good, and is very good overall. The high standard of work seen throughout the school bears out this judgement. There is very good planning, preparation and use of resources, which stimulate and very successfully motivate pupils. Teachers use questioning effectively to guide pupils and assess their day-to-day learning. The excellent relationships, stimulating activities and effective pupil management techniques result in very good behaviour and attitudes to, and quality of, learning.
97. Examples of the very effective use of visitors were seen in both the history lessons observed. On both occasions a visitor from Yeovil Museum brought a range of artefacts to show to pupils to help them to understand how people lived 50 and 100 years ago. Pupils from both year groups had been very well prepared and already had a good knowledge of how people lived and this made it possible for them to contribute well and answer questions such as, 'Why did they not have vacuum cleaners and washing machines in Victorian times?' The visitor was very knowledgeable and well prepared too and there was clear evidence of very good planning and preparation and close liaison between the school and the museum. This meant that the teaching could be very well focused and enabled pupils to learn well. Many pupils had the opportunity of handling and using a range of everyday household items from the past, such as a

carpet beater, a flat iron, a floor cleaner and an old-fashioned vacuum cleaner. The lessons were very well planned and structured too and included some very practical, hands-on sessions. Year 2 pupils, for example, were given a very clear demonstration of how people washed clothes in a washtub and were very keen and excited because they actually had a chance to do it themselves, use a real mangle to squeeze out the water and then hang the washing out to dry on a specially put up washing line – using old-fashioned dolly pegs! This was really bringing history to life and learning was very good. These sessions followed on from visits to the local Heritage Centre.

98. Very good planning and use of resources, including information and communication technology, were evident in the geography lessons seen in Years 3 and 4. Year 3 pupils were observed looking at housing, industry, commerce, services and recreation around Crewkerne. The teacher very effectively led a discussion about which category different buildings come under, using a PowerPoint presentation and very well-targeted questions. Almost all pupils showed a good understanding of how different buildings are used and several even recognised that a post office falls into two categories, being both commercial and a service. Working well in pairs, all pupils were able to correctly label aerial photographs of the town and then colour-code a map, showing the various categories of different buildings. Year 4 pupils were also seen looking at land use and all pupils were able to correctly sort buildings into their different groups. Most are able to recognise that some buildings may come into more than one category. When looking at pictures of the old textile mill, about half of the pupils recognise that this has changed its use from industrial to retail and so pupils realise that there is constant development as towns and cities change. Once again, the teacher uses questioning very effectively to challenge and extend the pupils. The extremely effective use of resources and very well-planned and paced activities interest and stimulate the pupils and they show enthusiasm and interest. They are all involved in the lessons and participate well, working together sensibly. Relationships are excellent and the atmosphere and interest created by the teachers create an environment in which very good learning can and does take place.
99. The use made of opportunities in the local area and of visits and visitors are strengths of both geography and history. In geography, pupils look at their own classrooms, the school, the Mill Pond, Happy Valley and settlements of Crewkerne and Hinton St. George. Links and comparisons are made between Chembakoli in India in Years 1 and 2 and Kapsokwany in Kenya in Years 3 and 4. Visitors and local residents visit the school to talk, for example, about how things have changed and developed in Crewkerne over the years. There is, for example, a very interesting display based on several visitors who came the week before the inspection. As well as the visit and visitor mentioned above, history is supported by visits to the Glastonbury Rural Life Museum and Portland Castle, and visitors come from Wessex Archaeology Society.

Leadership and management

100. The same teacher co-ordinates both subjects very well, being knowledgeable and enthusiastic. The co-ordinator has worked with colleagues to produce schemes of work and effective monitoring of planning and of pupils' work makes sure that all areas of the National Curriculum are well covered and that pupils make consistently very good progress. The action plan has already noted the need for a manageable way of recording what pupils know and can do through the school, to make assessment even better and help with planning. The co-ordinator has already been trialling a system and expects it to be put into place in the whole school after further discussion with other staff. The quality and range of resources are good and they are very well used. At the last inspection in 1998, standards were in line with national expectations, progress

satisfactory and teaching sound, so there has been considerable improvement since that time.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Strengths

- The level of improvement in the subject since the previous inspection.
- Very good cross-curricular links.
- An ICT technician who visits regularly.
- Assessment and its use to inform planning.

Areas for development

- Lack of a dedicated computer suite to facilitate whole-class learning.

Standards

101. Standards in information and communication technology are above national expectations by the end of Year 2 and Year 4. This shows very good improvement since the last inspection, where standards were below average. Improved resources, a higher profile for the subject, and good teaching have contributed to this overall considerable improvement in standards. Provision in the subject is good, with some very good elements, such as keyboard skills and cross-curricular links. However, despite these strengths, the lack of a dedicated computer suite affects whole-class teaching, particularly in Years 3 and 4. The lack is compensated for well by the provision of computers in all classrooms. The use of larger-screen monitors, and projectors linked to computers, helps teachers to demonstrate to the whole class in the upper school. However, where class numbers are large, pupils' access is limited by the available classroom space, and whole-class teaching is difficult. The school does not have interactive whiteboards which would go some way to rectifying this problem. Pupils of all abilities make good progress in their understanding of information and communication technology, and how equipment such as computers and digital cameras can be used to support their learning. No specific ICT lessons were observed, other than short sessions of keyboard skills or cross-curricular links with other subjects, such as music. Judgements are based on scrutiny of pupils' own work and of portfolios of work illustrating cross-curricular links. The support received by pupils with special educational needs enables them to progress at a similar rate to their peers.
102. The pupils' skill in using computers develops well throughout Years 1 and 2 so that by the end of Year 2 pupils have confidence in word processing to produce simple text, adding text to their drawings and using colour to fill pictures. They can use shift keys and punctuate, and can recognise icons, selecting and dragging, and are beginning to use toolbars with understanding. There is a good focus on improving keyboard skills with children visiting 'keyboard cottage' and learning to use 'lemon left' and 'raspberry right' hands to encourage speed and skill when typing, using correct fingering. In the reception class, work shows that pupils have used the 'dazzle' program to illustrate work on the Three Billy Goats Gruff. Recorded work also shows that pupils have made charts of hair colours in Year 1 and that they are adept at putting items, such as numerals, in order of size, and that they have modelled towns. In addition to learning about, and using, a digital camera, pupils have used cassette recorders to store collected information, for example after interviewing a fireman.
103. By the end of Year 2, pupils use information and communication technology with confidence, learning about data collection and labelling. Development of control technology is good and pupils can describe giving simple instructions to route a floor

roamer (a robotic control device). Ideas are explored well through use of art packages, for example, in producing symmetrical pictures in Year 2. Throughout Years 1 and 2, pupils have good opportunities to find things out using a CD-ROM dictionary, for example. Teachers encourage independent work, and equipment is well prepared so that pupils are able to quickly access software and most can print their completed work, where appropriate. They can save and retrieve their own files, some requiring support.

104. By the end of Year 4, pupils are confident in the use of computers for a range of tasks. For example, in Year 3 pupils were observed using 'compose world' to create music for 'travelling through space'. There were very good cross-curricular links to science and art, and pupils worked with enthusiasm and expertise producing high quality results. In Year 3 pupils are adept at editing their work and inserting pictures and are extending their knowledge of databases and their use. By Year 4 pupils are using their developing skills with data-handling software to collect and present information such as geography notes, and use bar charts and pie charts effectively. They word-process their work on a regular basis and use their skills to collect and classify information. For all age groups, planned opportunities are provided to develop ICT skills through other subjects, including downloading information on artists, 'PowerPoint' demonstrations in literacy, and the use of imported images and text to display work on Crewkerne. The use of ICT across the curriculum is excellent, particularly for a first school.

Teaching and learning

105. Teaching and learning are good overall, as are pupils' attitudes to the subject. Teachers have good subject knowledge of information and communication technology, using and reinforcing technical vocabulary well so that pupils learn the language of the subject. Good links are made with basic skills of literacy and numeracy. Teachers' planning for cross-curricular links through the subject is well focused on appropriate objectives, and is supported by a comprehensive scheme of work. Teachers use questions effectively to draw out recollections of prior learning and challenge pupils to offer ideas and share new skills which they have acquired. Teaching assistants provide good support for groups and whole classes. Teachers make good use of ongoing assessment, identifying pupils' errors and misconceptions and using them as a basis for reinforcing learning. Regular, more formal records are also kept.

Leadership and management

106. The leadership and management of the subject are very good. The enthusiastic co-ordinator has very good subject knowledge, and runs in-service training for the local education authority. She supports teachers in the school very well, with well-organised resources, by writing detailed lesson plans and advising them on cross-curricular opportunities, matched to the demands of the curriculum. She gives expert guidance. The excellent portfolios of work demonstrate the cross-curricular strengths of the subject.

MUSIC

Strengths

- Teaching by specialists.
- Lunchtime clubs for singing and recorders.
- Good use of the hall.

Areas for development

- The teaching of pitch by non-specialists.

Standards

107. Pupils have basic skills in music when they start in Year 1, and continue to build on this in Years 1 and 2. Years 1 and 2 are taught separately in the hall, where they have space to experiment with instruments. Year 1 pupils learn about long and short sounds and the difference between beat and rhythm. Almost all pupils are able to clap rhythms such as 'short, short, l o n g, short, short, l o n g'. They learn to clap or play the rhythm of their own name on a tambour. When learning about beat and rhythm, some pupils understood the difference, whilst others could play the 'beat' correctly, but found playing the 'rhythm' more difficult. The majority of these pupils are reaching the expected Level 1. By Year 2, most pupils sing tunefully and those who attend the singing club sing very well indeed, reaching the higher than average Level 3, as they can sing in tune with expression and explore the way sounds can be combined and used expressively.
108. In Years 3 and 4, pupils listen well and begin to appraise music. They work in groups with a range of tuned and untuned instruments, creating music to a given structure, having listened to this structure in a piece played on the compact disc. They find creating their own tune to a given structure difficult at first but by the end of the lesson about half the class have been successful in producing a tune to an ABA pattern. Pupils demonstrate pitch but lack the tunefulness that Year 2 show in their singing. The different ways pitch can be described are not fully understood. However, pupils discuss how pitch can be used to create different emotions and listen to a piece of music, such as 'Schindler's List', while creating a pattern on paper illustrating these emotions. Standards are similar to the last inspection.

Teaching and learning

109. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is good. The organisation of lessons, taken in the hall sitting in a large circle, is highly successful. Evaluations are made at the end of the lesson and planning is based on these evaluations. For example, 'Most children could follow an adult playing a steady beat and some could keep it on their own'. Learning is good when teachers ensure that pupils understand new vocabulary, such as 'rhythm' by listening to the teacher playing a short rhythm, using long and short sounds, and then trying to make up their own rhythms. Pupils listen attentively and are keen to volunteer. Teachers use these times as useful assessment opportunities. Further ways could be found to teach long sounds more successfully, for example using tuned instruments, but pupils make very good progress because of good teaching and support, and their very good attitudes. The learning support assistant enables pupils with hearing difficulties to be fully involved and works with pupils who have difficulty in playing a rhythm. Her role is also well defined in that she suggests who should play next, keeping a watch on pupils as the teacher teaches.
110. Fourteen Year 2 pupils attend a lunchtime singing club, taken by two professional singers, who are also teachers. As a result, pupils reach high standards. They sing calypsos and English folk songs and are taught the importance of good diction through specific exercises which develop the lip muscles. Individuals are shown how singing loudly is different from shouting, which can be heard above the whole group. Pupils learn to listen to the person singing next to them and to sing in three parts. Pitch is taught excellently, with the result that there is considerable improvement within the sessions and, as demonstrated on a tape recording, particularly tuneful singing. Pupils sing in trios and as solo singers. The teacher assesses individuals as they each sing their names to a given note; if out of tune they are coached until they are able to sing in tune. These sessions could be used well for in-service training of other teachers. The

video of the Christmas nativity play shows how this tuneful singing is carried through to performances.

111. Teaching in Years 3 and 4 is satisfactory and effective support is given by learning support assistants. Sometimes the pace of lessons is slowed down because teachers have to keep telling pupils to put instruments down or because the subject knowledge of the teacher is limited. Teachers have high expectations but have to work very hard to achieve them. However, clear explanations are often given and objectives are followed well. Some in-service training would be helpful in these year groups.
112. The subject contributes well to pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development. For example, in the Year 3 lesson there was some discussion about how the music made the pupils feel. Music is listened to in assemblies, but more could be made of this. However, a teacher runs recorder clubs at lunchtime and a group play a wide range of tunes in assembly. They also enthusiastically practise on their own at lunchtimes. The independence and standard of this group are very good.

Leadership and management

113. The subject is well led and managed. The co-ordinator team-teaches, and has worked with three teachers. Advice has also been given by the local education authority's advisor. The school follows a published scheme of work which supports non-specialist teachers. Good cross-curricular links are developed and ICT is used to compose music. A visit from a black gospel singer has enhanced the curriculum and promoted pupils' appreciation of different cultural traditions. The subject is well resourced and the use of the hall provides good accommodation facilities to promote the subject.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Strengths

- Balanced curriculum including games, gymnastics and dance.
- Good teaching.
- Range of extra-curricular activities.

Areas for development

- Limited formal assessment.

Standards

114. By the end of both Years 2 and 4, pupils reach standards that are in line with national expectations, maintaining the standards noted at the time of the last inspection. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. Children have regular swimming lessons, in eight-week blocks, at a local leisure centre with specialist teaching. This makes a positive contribution to the standards pupils reach in this aspect of the physical education curriculum, and those who are less able are to be offered the opportunity for further teaching to aid their development. The importance of physical education, both in the school curriculum and beyond the school day, is given added status through the efforts of the co-ordinator, and the employment of suitably qualified staff to organise lunchtime and after-school activities. There is a good range of extra-curricular clubs and activities for pupils to participate in, and they are well attended. This has a positive impact on pupils' social development by enabling them to have opportunities to work together as a small team during clubs and by taking part in competitive sports.

115. By the end of Year 2, pupils understand the importance of warm-up exercises before undertaking gymnastic work, although these are not always of sufficient length or appropriate content. Pupils perform various gymnastic manoeuvres, demonstrating suitable poise and accuracy in their work. In a lesson of mixed Year 1 and Year 2 pupils, they were observed balancing, rolling and turning, using different large body 'patches' such as back, front and side. Pupils were observed using gymnastic equipment in all three infant years. They use the floor and wall apparatus enthusiastically and are alert to the need to use this equipment sensibly and with care for others. No games or dance lessons with Year 1 and Year 2 pupils were observed during the inspection and no judgements can be made on the progress that pupils make in this aspect of their development.
116. By the end of Year 4, pupils are making good progress in their understanding of the need to play fairly and equitably in small team games. For example, they were observed in lunchtime ball skills activities where they played handball and hockey. They listened attentively to the instructions given by the coach and were able to put these to good effect when playing the game. They effectively demonstrated their skills in passing and catching the ball accurately. Such sessions promote co-operation and social skills. It was particularly noted that pupils made no criticism of their less able companions' ability to throw and catch, for example. Pupils in Year 4 were observed in a good dance lesson where both boys and girls worked hard, co-operated well, and performed with skill and grace. Discussions with pupils indicate that they enjoy their physical education work and talk positively about the school's provision.

Teaching and learning

117. The quality of teaching and learning in both key stages is good. For example, this was observed in a Year 4 dance lesson. This commenced with an effective warm-up session where pupils undertook various exercises. Pupils performed routines that they had devised in previous lessons, and were encouraged to adapt and develop their creations. These were loosely based on the themes of space travel and flight, linking with work in other lessons such as art and science. Pupils worked well and the teacher carefully demonstrated to pupils how to move safely and develop their routines. The pace of the lesson was good and the teacher effectively ensured that the pupils were able to practise and refine their work. Teachers encourage pupils to look at the work of their peers during lessons, but limited scope was provided for them to critically evaluate this by making suggestions as to how the work they had observed could lead to improvements in their own efforts.

Leadership and management

118. The subject is well led and managed, and makes a positive contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Efforts have enabled pupils to participate in competitive sports against other schools and this is successful in developing pupils' understanding of the need to work co-operatively and effectively as a member of a larger group. The leadership offered by the co-ordinator is good and has had a positive impact on the standing that the subject currently holds in the school. The school has yet to develop more effective ways of monitoring and tracking pupils' progress as they move through the school, although the co-ordinator has observed his colleagues teach physical education and studied their lesson plans. This has given him a good understanding of the quality of teaching in other classes. Evidence is in the form of photographs, demonstrations and highlighting skills. The quality and range of resources are good and the school explores many opportunities to extend the range of equipment available.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Strengths

- Length of lessons so that a theme can be followed through well.
- Very good structure to lessons, which start from pupils' own experiences.
- Good balance of both attainment targets.
- Very detailed and useful scheme of work.
- Resources – especially a good range of books.
- Cross-curricular links.
- The co-ordinator's good action plan.
- Subject is monitored well.

Areas for development

- Assessment and recording, using new Agreed Syllabus guidelines.

Standards

119. Standards in Years 1 and 2 are in line with the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus, and the links between the reception children's lessons and Year 1 are particularly successful. Both classes learn a large number of Bible stories through drama.
120. Good teaching in Years 1 and 2 enables pupils to have a good understanding of religious concepts. For example one pupil said, 'Jesus was not lost in the temple because God was his father and people pray there'. However, they realise that Jesus' parents might have had the same feelings of fear that they discussed, when they found him missing. Pupils learn about rules for friendship, the life of Gandhi and elements of Hinduism, as well as festivals and celebrations such as Poppy Day, Christmas, christenings and weddings. They draw a plan of 'milestones of life', which include their first day in school and birthdays. When studying Judaism and the Christian Old Testament, they learn about the Torah, and the teacher records that they 'enjoyed hearing about Jewish people and handling the Torah scroll and the mezuzah'. Pupils have made mezuzahs to put on doors around the school, which contain the school rules, showing pupils' understanding of how mezuzahs might be used. They write in their books, 'When it snowed we had rules to keep us safe'. They write about their feelings, such as when they feel happy, cross, proud, sad or excited.
121. They write prayers, such as:
- Thank you for my friends,
When I am going to the park,
When it is cold and dark,
When we have sweets to share,
Even when they pull my hair.
122. The recording of their work varies, and is sometimes better in Year 1 than it is in Year 2. However, the different expectations teachers have of pupils of differing levels of attainment are good, and demonstrate good planning and teaching.
123. Good standards are reached in Years 3 and 4, where thoughtful work is produced. When considering the 'journey of life' pupils also consider the Hindu 'story of life' and Christian journeys and pilgrimages. They write a Christian wish, such as, 'that everyone in the world who is ill, have medicines to care for their problems.' They draw a bag of their own 'burdens', such as 'when I have no friends' or 'when I can't do my sums'. In Year 4 they write about a problem and how to resolve it, even if it is mum saying, 'keep your chin up, grin and bare it'. They learn about the church building and

artefacts and visit the parish church. They write about what it means to be a Christian, making promises and what the commandments are. They learn about the beatitudes and who are the truly happy. They think about the meaning of prayers they say, such as grace before meals. They learn about the different types of books in the Bible and write out, in very good handwriting, in ink, Psalm 8, expressing the psalmist's wonder at God's created world. Good links are made with a number of different subjects. For example, pupils go on a 'sound walk' which links with music and science and they illustrate Jesus' boat on the Sea of Galilee, through moving pictures in design and technology, considering how they too enjoy boats at the seaside.

124. Overall, higher-attaining pupils produce very well-presented and thoughtful work, average attainers produce mainly factual records and lower-attaining pupils record their work in a satisfactory way, with help.

Teaching and learning

125. The team teaching, between teachers and support assistants, in reception and Year 1 is very good and enables both age groups to learn at their own level of understanding. The two years are taught together for the first part of a lesson when Year 1 pupils act a play from a Bible story to reception children. There is then a question and answer session after which the reception children return to their class and the Year 1 pupils learn a new Bible story, and make up a play about it, ready to show the reception children the following week.
126. Teaching and learning are good in Years 1 and 2. Teachers use a long lesson to develop a theme very well. For example, they talk about a picture of a busy street in a city and what it would feel like to be lost, before telling the story of Jesus as a boy of 12 in the temple in Jerusalem. No lessons were seen in Years 3 and 4. Teachers plan together and the syllabus is taught over a two-year period.
127. A particular strength in teaching is in the way teachers start from the pupils' own experiences or use the knowledge they gain to make that knowledge applicable in their own lives. The two attainment targets are clearly taught.
128. Teachers do not yet use the recently introduced Agreed Syllabus advice on levels in their planning.

Leadership and management

129. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The policy is detailed and clearly explains how the subject is to be taught. Good links have been made with the middle school to which most pupils go to ensure there is progress rather than repetition. The scheme of work is very detailed and is a working document, being added to as teachers complete lessons. Assessment is also in the process of being developed. The school has bought a very good number of large and small books, particularly on the life of Jesus. There are a satisfactory number of books on Judaism and Hinduism. The co-ordinator has arranged for visitors to speak to the children from Hindu and Christian faiths. She keeps an interesting portfolio of pupils' work, monitors the subject well and enjoys pupils showing her their good work on the subject. The subject contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.