

INSPECTION REPORT

WEARE CE VC FIRST SCHOOL

Weare

LEA area: Somerset

Unique reference number: 123813

Headteacher: Mr D Williams

Reporting inspector: Mr D J Curtis
20893

Dates of inspection: 4th – 6th November 2002

Inspection number: 248511

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
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Weare Axbridge Somerset
Postcode:	BS26 2JS
Telephone number:	01934 732270
Fax number:	01934 732560
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs J Beaverstock
Date of previous inspection:	January 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr D J Curtis 20893	Registered inspector	English Design and technology Information and communication technology Special educational needs Foundation Stage	How high are standards? (The school's results and achievements) How well are pupils taught?
Mrs S McDermott 9173	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with its parents?
Mr J Palethorpe 20671	Team inspector	Mathematics Music Physical education Religious education Inclusion	How well is the school led and managed?
Ms L Thorogood 29988	Team inspector	Science Art and design Geography History	How high are standards? (Attitudes, behaviour, personal development and attendance) How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Mrs M Henderson 19827	Team Inspector		The work of the hearing- impaired unit

The inspection contractor was:

TWA Inspections Ltd
102 Bath Road
Cheltenham
Glos
GL53 7JX

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33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Weare Church of England Voluntary Controlled First School is situated near Axbridge in Somerset. It is a smaller than average primary school, with a total of 143 pupils on roll, 77 boys and 66 girls. No pupils come from ethnic minority families. There are no pupils who have English as an additional language; this is below the national average. There are 15 pupils on the school's register of special educational needs, with seven pupils having a Statement of Special Educational Need; this is above average. Two pupils presently attend the Hearing-Impaired Unit attached to the school. Currently there are seven pupils entitled to free school meals; this is below average. Children enter school with standards that are average for the local education authority.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school that provides its pupils with a high quality education. By the end of Year 4, when pupils leave the school, standards in English, mathematics and science are good. Pupils' relationships are excellent and their behaviour is very good. Teaching is good and contributes significantly to the standards achieved. The leadership and management of the headteacher are good. Learning support assistants make an effective and significant contribution to pupils' learning. The way in which all pupils, irrespective of gender or ability, are included in the school is an outstanding strength. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- By the end of Year 4, standards in English, mathematics, science, art and design, and geography are good. By the end of Year 2, standards are excellent in mathematics, and well above average in reading and writing. Standards in science, art and design, and geography are good.
- Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress in their learning, especially in the key skills of reading, writing and number.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs, including those in the Unit, is very good.
- The quality of teaching is good and contributes significantly to the standards achieved.
- Pupils' relationships are excellent, and behaviour is very good.
- The leadership and management of the headteacher are good and contribute significantly to high standards in the school.
- The way in which all pupils are included in the day-to-day life of the school is excellent.

What could be improved

- Standards in writing and the consistency of pupils' handwriting and presentation, and of teachers' marking.
- Teachers' knowledge and understanding of physical education and their awareness of health and safety issues.
- Pupils' punctuality and the use of teaching time, especially at the start of the day.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS PREVIOUS INSPECTION

The school was previously inspected in January 1997. It has made good improvement since then. More-able pupils now achieve good standards and subject co-ordinators have greater opportunities to monitor teaching and learning in their subjects. Child protection procedures are now good. The percentage of unsatisfactory teaching has fallen significantly. The school is well placed to meet its targets.

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				Key
	All schools			similar schools	
	2000	2001	2002	2002	
Reading	C	C	A	B	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Writing	D	C	A	B	
Mathematics	A	E	A*	A*	

Similar schools are those up to 8 per cent of pupils entitled to free school meals.

In mathematics in the 2002 National Curriculum assessments for pupils in Year 2 the school's results placed it in the top 5 per cent of all and similar schools nationally.

Current inspection findings judge that the school is sustaining well above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2. In science, standards are above average. Standards in information and communication technology meet national expectations. In art and design and in geography standards exceed expectations for seven-year-olds. In design and technology, history and physical education, standards meet expectations. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement about standards in religious education and music.

Current inspection findings judge that, by the end of Year 4, standards in English, mathematics, science, art and design, and geography exceed expectations for nine-year-olds. In English, standards are better in reading than in writing. In design and technology, history and physical education, standards meet expectations. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement about standards in religious education and music.

By the end of the Foundation Stage, children make good progress and meet the expectations of the Early Learning Goals by the end of reception. More-able children exceed expectations. By the time they start Year 1 most are established as confident readers and writers.

Pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements of special educational need, make very good progress in their learning. They receive effective support from their teachers and the dedicated efforts of learning support assistants.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils show very positive attitudes to school and lessons. They clearly enjoy school and are prepared to work hard.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils behave well in lessons, at breaks and lunchtimes and when moving around the school.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults are excellent. Older pupils support younger pupils especially well and this is recognised and valued by parents.
Attendance	Satisfactory. There is little unauthorised absence. However, punctuality is an issue, with pupils arriving late and disrupting the start to the day.

The way in which pupils relate to each other, especially older pupils supporting younger ones, including those with very specific learning difficulties, is an outstanding feature of the school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is a strength of the school and makes a very effective contribution to the high standards it achieves.

Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good; it makes a significant contribution to the good progress children make in their learning. The teacher and the learning support assistants plan a wide range of activities for children that are challenging and successfully meet their different learning needs.

Strengths of teaching in Years 1 to 4 include detailed planning which meets the different learning needs of pupils in the class and the sharing of learning objectives with pupils at the start of lessons. Relationships are excellent between pupils and teachers. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and contributes to lessons being exciting, challenging and fun. However, expectations of pupils' use and application of handwriting and spelling skills are inconsistent.

The teaching of literacy is good; teachers implement the National Literacy Strategy most successfully in lessons. The key skills of reading and writing are taught well, although pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to write at length. The teaching of numeracy is good. Teachers implement the National Numeracy Strategy most effectively. The teaching of key skills in number is particularly strong.

The teaching of information and communication technology is satisfactory, with strengths in whole-class teaching when introducing new programs. Teachers plan successfully for the subject to support pupils' learning in most lessons and in most subjects. Pupils are given useful opportunities to use and apply their skills in information and communication technology when working in other subjects.

The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good. Teachers and learning support assistants are aware of the targets in individual education plans and ensure that pupils' work is matched to them.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. In Years 1 to 4, pupils receive their full entitlement to the National Curriculum. Relationships with the middle school are very good. The provision of extra-curricular activities and for personal, social and health education is good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good; individual education plans are good, with clear, realistic and challenging targets. The co-ordinator for special educational needs and the learning support assistants provide high quality support.
Provision for pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good and makes a positive contribution to pupils' excellent relationships and very good behaviour. Provision for pupils' social development is very good. Effective e-mail and Internet links with schools in other countries make a strong contribution to pupils' awareness of other cultures.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very well; pupils are well cared for in the school. Child protection procedures are fully in place, and health and safety issues are monitored rigorously.

Parents who attended the meeting and who returned questionnaires were very positive about the standards achieved in the school and the fact that their children are happy there. However, they expressed some considerable concerns about communication with the school, particularly in relation to the homework policy. The school has effective procedures for assessing pupils' learning and using the results of information gathered to plan pupils' future work.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school. His day-to-day management skills are good. There is a shared commitment amongst staff to succeed and to continue to raise standards; for example, they recognise the need to improve standards in spelling.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. All statutory responsibilities are fulfilled. Governors are hard working and supportive, and have a very clear understanding of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The headteacher and his colleagues have a thorough and detailed understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Very good; funding for special educational needs is used efficiently.

The accommodation is currently adequate for the pupils in the school, although the hall is inadequate for the teaching of apparatus work in gymnastics. Staffing levels and resources are good and effectively support pupils' learning. The significant strength of leadership and management is the way in which all pupils are fully included in the day-to-day life of the school. The school applies most successfully the principles of best value in its spending decisions.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching is good. • They are comfortable in approaching the school with questions or problems. • The school has very high expectations of their children. • Their children like school. • The school helps their children to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information on the progress their children are making. • The school working more closely with them. • The range of activities provided outside of lessons.

Forty-seven parents attended the meeting with the registered inspector and 73 questionnaires were returned. Inspection findings support the positive views of parents, and judge that the school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities for its size and age range. However, findings support the views of parents that the quality of information on pupils' progress and the homework policy is unsatisfactory.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

Foundation Stage

1. Children enter school with standards that are average for the local education authority. As the result of good teaching they make good progress and by the time children start Year 1 they meet the expectations of the Early Learning Goals¹ in all areas of learning. More-able children exceed expectations. Children with special educational needs make good progress in their learning because of the high quality support given to them by a dedicated team of learning support assistants.

Years 1 and 2

2. The results of the 2002 National Curriculum assessments for pupils in Year 2 placed the school in the top 5 per cent of all schools and similar schools nationally in mathematics. In reading and writing, results were well above the national average and above the average for similar schools². In mathematics, the proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 3³ was in the top 5 per cent for all schools; results were well above average in reading, average in writing. In the teacher assessments for science, the results placed the school in the top 5 per cent of all and similar schools, and at the higher Level 3 they were well above the national average. In all subjects there was no significant variation between the standards achieved by boys and girls.
3. Current inspection findings confirm that the school is sustaining these high standards as the result of good teaching and high expectations of what pupils can achieve. By the end of Year 2, standards are well above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics, with those in science above average. There is no significant variation between the standards achieved by boys and girls. The school has improved standards in reading, writing and mathematics since the previous inspection, when they were 'above average', and maintained the 'above average' standards in science.
4. By the end of Year 2, standards in information and communication technology meet national expectations. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement on standards in religious education. In art and design and in geography, standards exceed expectations for seven-year-olds. In design and technology, history and physical education, standards meet expectations. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement on standards in music.

Years 3 and 4⁴

5. By the end of Year 4, when pupils leave the school, standards in English, mathematics and science exceed expectations for nine-year-olds. In English, standards in reading are higher than those in writing, as pupils have insufficient opportunities to write at length. In art and design and in geography standards exceed expectations for nine-year-olds. In information and communication technology, design and technology, history and physical education, standards meet expectations. There was insufficient evidence to make a

¹ QCA (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority) has produced a set of 'Early Learning Goals' for children in this stage of education. These outcomes are a set of skills, knowledge and understanding that children might be expected to achieve by the age of six. There are six areas of learning: personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical development and creative development.

² Schools with up to eight per cent of pupils entitled to free school meals.

³ It is the national expectation that pupils should achieve Level 2 and above in the Year 2 National Curriculum assessments.

⁴ Pupils leave the school at the end of Year 4 and transfer to middle school.

judgement on standards in religious education and music. In English, mathematics and science good standards have been maintained since the previous inspection.

6. Across the school, pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans. They receive very effective support from teachers and learning support assistants to ensure that they are fully included in all lessons and make the progress of which they are capable. More-able pupils make good progress and achieve high standards because the school has a detailed and fully implemented policy for the identification and teaching of gifted and talented pupils.
7. The school has demonstrated clearly that it can meet and exceed its targets. Inspection evidence is consistent with the school having the leadership, management and quality of teaching that will enable it to sustain the high standards achieved.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. The majority of parents expressed satisfaction with these aspects of their children's education. Views expressed at the parents' meeting and their responses to questionnaires were very positive. Inspection findings confirm parents' views that pupils' attitudes to learning, and their values and personal development are very good. Pupils are keen to learn and show positive attitudes towards the school and, as a result, achieve high standards. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection.
9. Behaviour of pupils in classrooms, around the school and in the playground is good. They are courteous to visitors and all adults working in the school. They look after younger pupils and understand the clear code of conduct. Bullying is very rare. The school is a happy and harmonious community and this has a positive impact on pupils' personal development. Behaviour in lessons is consistently good because pupils know that their teachers have high expectations of behaviour. Pupils behave well in assembly and at lunchtime. There have been no exclusions in the past year.
10. Personal development is very good, and relationships are excellent and a strength of the school. Pupils support each other and take turns, for example, when working together on a science investigation. They co-operate with each other and work well together in pairs and small groups. Pupils show independence and initiative when engaged in investigative tasks, and often research topics at home via the Internet. During lessons, pupils do not interrupt each other, sustain attention for long periods, and concentrate well on tasks. They show respect for the contributions of all class members, including those with special educational needs.
11. Pupils have very good relationships with their teachers and other adults working in the school and know they can turn to them for help. Pupils enjoy each other's company at lunchtime and break-time, and are sensitive to the needs of other pupils, including those with hearing impairment. Pupils with special educational needs are very well included in school life and are not left out in class or play activities. Older pupils enjoy taking responsibility for the care and welfare of younger ones, and are good role models. For example, an older girl took the hand of a younger boy who had fallen down and led him to the first-aid point. Pupils are given responsibility for the care of equipment and resources in lessons and carry out their tasks diligently.
12. The majority of pupils arrive at school punctually and come into school in an orderly manner when the bell is rung. However, a minority arrive up to 10 minutes late each day. The efficiency of registration varies from class to class. In some, registers are called swiftly and sent to the school office promptly. In other classes, registration is not completed until up to 15 minutes after the start of school, making it difficult to monitor and thus follow up persistent lateness.

13. Attendance is close to the national average and is satisfactory. The incidence of unauthorised absence is very low. Authorised absence is slightly higher than average and is the result of some parents taking family holidays during the summer term. Absence is carefully monitored and recorded, and systems are in place to follow up all unauthorised absence.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

- 14 The previous inspection judged that the quality of teaching was 'satisfactory or better in 88 per cent of lessons, with 15 per cent very good or better'. Although 12 per cent was judged 'unsatisfactory', there was no key issue, nor did the report identify clearly where and why there was unsatisfactory teaching.
- 15 Taking into account all inspection evidence, teaching is judged to be good and making a significant contribution to the high standards pupils achieve in English, mathematics and science and to their very positive attitudes to learning. The proportion of unsatisfactory teaching has dropped, with only one lesson in physical education judged to be unsatisfactory. Here, in a dance lesson the teacher over-directed the pupils and gave them too few opportunities to be creative.
- 16 The teaching of children in reception is good and has an impact on the good progress made. Relationships are excellent and the teacher and learning support assistants work together very effectively to support children's learning. There is a significant strength in meeting the learning needs of all children, including those with special educational needs and those who are more able. The teaching of the key skills of reading, writing and number work is good, with the result that children show good skills in these areas when they join Year 1.
- 17 The teaching of literacy is good and makes a strong contribution to the high standards achieved. The National Literacy Strategy is implemented effectively. The key skills of reading and writing are taught successfully. Reading records are good and analyse carefully pupils' strengths and areas for improvement, for example in reading with greater expression. However, despite being taught handwriting skills on a regular basis, pupils are not expected to apply these skills when writing in English and other subjects.
- 18 The teaching of numeracy is good and has a strong impact on the high standards achieved. Planning is thorough with clear and appropriate objectives identified. A particular strength is the use of prior assessment to determine the work undertaken, and the planning for different levels of ability. This ensures that, on most occasions, all pupils are suitably challenged and are fully included. This is particularly so for pupils with special educational needs or with hearing impairment. Explanations and demonstrations are clear so that pupils understand what is expected of them. The National Numeracy Strategy is implemented successfully.
- 19 The teaching of information and communication technology is satisfactory, with examples of very good teaching. In the best lessons, teachers make very good use of demonstration and explanation to teach pupils how to use a new program, for example in Year 4, where a new graphics program was introduced. Teachers plan successfully for the use of information and communication technology in most lessons, including literacy and numeracy. Good use is made of classroom-based computers and those in the school's small IT-suite.
- 20 In the best lessons, teachers share the learning objectives with pupils and this immediately engages their interest and involves them in their own learning. For example, in a Year 3 lesson on information and communication technology, the objective was how

to use a new spelling program. By the end of the lesson, most pupils knew how to load the program because they were fully involved from the start. Lesson introductions are good, with teachers showing good subject knowledge and clear explanation and demonstrations. In a lesson on information and communication technology in Year 4, the teacher made very effective use of a laptop computer connected to a projector to demonstrate the features of a new graphics program.

- 21 Planning for the main part of lessons is a strength, particularly where work is planned carefully to meet the different learning needs of pupils. For example, in a literacy lesson in Year 2, more-able pupils had to write their own set of instructions, with no adult support. With teacher support pupils of average ability had to write a set of instructions for playing 'Snakes and Ladders'. Less-able pupils and those with special educational needs had to write a set of instructions, linked to a sequence of pictures, for making a cup of tea. These pupils were supported effectively by the learning support assistants. As a result of such good planning, all pupils made clear progress in the lesson and completed their work to a good standard.
- 22 The final or plenary part of the lesson is used effectively by teachers to assess the progress pupils make in lessons. In many plenary sessions, pupils have good opportunities to apply their speaking and listening skills when talking to the class as their 'audience'. For example, in a literacy lesson in Year 2, pupils had to read their instructions to the rest of the class. In a literacy lesson in Year 4, the teacher made good use of the question, 'What have we learned today?' and expected pupils to give her examples of sentences written in the past, present and future tenses.
- 23 A significant strength of most lessons is the contribution made by the team of dedicated and hard-working learning support assistants. The quality of support they give ensures that pupils with whom they work make good progress in lessons. Learning support assistants work in close partnership with class teachers. Teachers make good use of resources to support pupils' learning, including those which pupils bring in themselves. In Year 1 a 'Show and Tell' lesson was good because, through skilful questioning, the teacher encouraged pupils to talk in more detail and depth about the objects they had brought in to show.
- 24 Pupils' work is marked regularly, although teachers are not consistent in telling them how they can improve their work. In addition, marking does not reinforce expectations that handwriting, spelling and presentation should be of a high standard. For example, titles are not underlined with a ruler and pupils print their writing. Yet in handwriting lessons they show the ability to produce neatly and correctly joined letters. The use of homework is inconsistent across the school and confirms parental concerns over homework provision.
- 25 Time is not always used effectively in lessons. For example, a numeracy lesson lasted 50 minutes instead of the 60 shown on the timetable because pupils had to drink their milk. The start to each day is not sufficiently rigorous, particularly in the range and choice of activities pupils are expected to do in the period between registration and assembly.

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

25. The quality and range of the curriculum are good, and promote the schools aims. The curriculum includes all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. It meets all statutory requirements and offers pupils a good range of opportunities, including in extra-curricular activities. Long- and medium-term curriculum plans are in place for all subjects. These are well structured and designed in co-operation with the staff of the middle school to which the pupils will transfer at the end of Year 4. This ensures that pupils progress steadily and systematically with their development of knowledge, skills and understanding, and that unnecessary repetition is avoided. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been effectively implemented and have had a positive impact upon the standards achieved in English and mathematics.
26. Suitable allocations of time are given to all subjects, but additional time spent on handwriting and spelling in some classes has not had sufficient impact on improving standards in these aspects of literacy. Occasionally, poor timing means that lessons in one subject over-run and teaching time for another subject is thus eroded. Policies on inclusion and equal opportunities are very effectively put into practice, and ensure that all pupils experience equality of opportunity and are fully included. This is a strength of the school.
27. The quality and range of learning opportunities for children in the Foundation Stage are satisfactory, and all the required areas of learning are covered. However, daily and weekly planning is not sufficiently focused on the Early Learning Goals, and the class timetable shows National Curriculum subjects rather than the six areas of learning. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good throughout the school. They have equal access to all aspects of the curriculum, which is adapted in most lessons to ensure that they make good progress. The school complies fully with the requirements of the Code of Practice for pupils with special educational needs.
28. The school successfully promotes personal, social and health education through regular lessons and within subjects such as science and religious education. For instance, Year 3 pupils learn about healthy eating and dental hygiene in science lessons about teeth. The governors have agreed that sex education will not be formally taught in the first school.
29. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities for boys and girls in Years 3 and 4. This includes a choir, art and clay clubs, chess and gymnastics. Rugby is planned for later this term. A good range of visits and visitors linked to subject areas, including citizenship, enhances the curriculum well. Pupils learn about citizenship in a variety of lessons and look at life in a range of cultures. Resources are carefully chosen to reflect positive images of our multi-cultural world. Year 4 pupils have a residential visit, which enhances the provision for geography and science, and all pupils make visits to local museums and places of interest, which support work in history and pupils' cultural and social development. The school enriches the curriculum with a wide variety of other activities. A recent successful event was a week which focused on India and which included the visit of an Indian dancer, who worked with groups of pupils and taught Indian dance movements to traditional Indian music. A sculptor has visited the school and motivated the pupils to attempt modelling work in three dimensions. A 'South America Week' is planned for the near future.
30. The school has very good links with the middle school to which pupils will transfer. Teachers plan co-operatively with middle school colleagues and staff from the middle school contribute to teaching and support in the first school. Middle-school teachers visit the Year 4 pupils before the pupils make a day visit themselves to the middle school in

the term before they transfer. There are also good links between the Foundation Stage and local playgroups, with liaison visits taking place regularly. These very good links with partner institutions ease the transfer from one stage of education to the next.

31. The good provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development reported in the last inspection continues. Spiritual development is good. Teachers look for opportunities in their teaching to encourage pupils to reflect on the world around them. In Year 1, for instance, pupils looked with fascination and delight at the way a bird's nest is constructed, and looked with wonder at a fossil found by one of their classmates. The Year 4 class marvelled at the way in which a computer program worked, and responded with cries of 'Wow!' while they watched, engrossed, as the teacher demonstrated the capability of the program. The school incorporates spiritual opportunities naturally into many aspects of its life. An example of this is when pupils reflect on feelings and emotions in a citizenship lesson on 'Right and Wrong'. This gives them valuable opportunities to think about their own feelings, actions and needs, and those of others.
32. The provision for moral development is good. The very caring approach of all those working in the school makes a significant contribution to pupils' moral development. All adults are very good role models and provide consistent examples of how everyone in the school community should behave towards one another. Pupils have many opportunities to explore and develop moral issues within the curriculum. For example, in their geography lessons pupils look at the consequences of litter and pollution. This encourages them to consider the effect of their behaviour and that of others on the wider community. The success of the school's efforts is clearly seen in the overall attitudes and standards of behaviour throughout the school.
33. The provision for the social development of pupils is very good. Pupils have many opportunities to work co-operatively in lessons and to develop independent attitudes to learning. From an early age they are given responsibility for taking registers and helping in the classroom. They look after younger pupils in the playground and show positive attitudes to hearing-impaired classmates and others with special educational needs. One Year 4 pupil took the trouble to seek out a hearing-impaired friend who had been working away from the class with a specialist teacher and let her know that the puppet she had made had been held up and praised by the teacher. Pupils in one of the infant classes supported a classmate with special educational needs as he participated in a question and answer game. Learning support assistants make a good contribution to social development by emphasising sharing and fairness in the activities they supervise.
34. The school's contribution to pupils' cultural development is good. Pupils have many opportunities to develop awareness of their own culture. They visit local museums and places of interest, and celebrate Christian festivals. They learn about other faiths and the festivals celebrated in them. There are good opportunities for pupils to communicate with teachers and pupils in other countries through e-mail links. Italian children have visited the school with their teacher, and a Japanese student undertook a placement at the school, bringing with her examples of traditional Japanese clothing and talking about Japanese culture. 'India Week' and 'South America Week' provide opportunities to celebrate cultural diversity through art, music and dance.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

35. The care and support of the pupils remain strengths of the school, as they were at the time of the last inspection. Procedural systems have been tightened up and the governors provide a source of expert information in several areas.
36. The school has very good procedures for child protection, the lack of which was a key issue at the last inspection, and for ensuring pupils' welfare. The co-ordinator for special educational needs, as the person named to liaise with the child protection agency, has ensured that the whole staff has been recently trained. She is well supported by the knowledgeable chair of governors, who is a child protection expert in her own right. The child protection policy is up to date, following a revision in July 2002. Welfare and first-aid systems are good. All staff are aware of the medical conditions of particular pupils and know what to do in case of an emergency. There are sufficient staff with first-aid certificates, and first-aid boxes are placed in appropriate positions around the buildings.
37. The school has good and thorough systems for the health and safety of the pupils. The health and safety committee is co-ordinated by a governor with expertise in industry. He is methodically reviewing all practices and ensuring that they are reflected in clear written policies. A recent risk assessment by the County of Somerset raised a few minor issues, which the committee already has in hand to address. Fire equipment is checked regularly and fire drills are held at least each term. One concern is that the perimeter wall is very low in places. The health and safety committee is planning to heighten it because of the increasing numbers of pupils with special educational needs who attend the school.
38. The promotion and monitoring of attendance are good. Registers are completed properly at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions. The school administration officer sends round an absence book to each class early each morning and rings home the same day to check on those pupils absent from school without a reason. Pupils with particularly good attendance or who have improved attendance are rewarded positively in prize assemblies. However, the school is not sufficiently organised to improve punctuality. Not only does the bus sometimes arrive late, but also there are a significant number of parents who drop off their children after the start of the school day. Some teachers do not use the registers rigorously enough to record latecomers, so that pupils and families can be informed of results and reminded of the importance of a punctual school start.
39. The school has good procedures for promoting and monitoring good behaviour, as it did at the time of the last inspection. The headteacher is effectively setting the tone of respect for others in the school. Rather than aiming for regimented behaviour without thought, the school is encouraging pupils to make moral choices and to treat others as they would expect to be treated themselves. The school and class rules are in evidence around the buildings. They are eye-catching, colourful and appropriate for first school pupils. On the rare occasions when pupils seriously misbehave, parents are encouraged to work with the school to support improvement. Since the last inspection, the school has reviewed the way it deals with bullying and systems are now very effective. The new anti-bullying policy is in the process of being sent to all parents, but the behaviour policy still needs some work in pulling the effective practices together into a coherent document.
40. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are good. The new deputy headteacher has set up very organised systems to collect data on national and internal tests and to compare how particular cohorts of pupils compare with others and with those in other schools. He has devised a clear plan to set out when assessments, such as a diagnostic spelling test, are used in each class and when the results should be evaluated and fed into the curriculum. As mathematics co-ordinator he has set up a pilot assessment procedure to closely monitor how pupils cope with particular numeracy test

questions. The results have proved valuable in pointing out where there are particular gaps in learning.

41. In the core subjects of mathematics and literacy the school has used results well to decide where the learning emphasis is to be for the next year. After the previous year's Year 2 test results, the school realised that spelling needed more of a boost and so set about effectively developing a new spelling strategy. This year writing has become a high priority in literacy because last summer's tests exposed a weaker performance in writing than in the other activities. However, assessment in science and the foundation subjects⁵ is not sufficiently established to help teachers organise and adapt their curriculum planning to produce the best learning for their particular class of pupils.
42. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress are satisfactory. In most classes the teachers are adept at informal assessment, remember how each pupil has been performing, and know what he or she needs to do next. In English, accurate assessment means that all pupils have their own literacy targets in their exercise books, but this good practice is not extended to other subjects. Formal assessment is not detailed enough to be able to identify accurately what each individual pupil needs to do to improve in each subject. Consequently, end-of-year reports are not sufficiently informative for parents. Parents find it difficult to help their children when targets are as vague as 'to continue to build up English skills' or 'to look for ways to improve his own learning'.
43. The school has very good procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development. The inclusion of all pupils, hearing impaired or not, in the life of the school is impressive. Most pastoral assessment is informal and based effectively on the staff's knowledge of the personal needs of each pupil. Personal, social and health education is taught comprehensively across the whole school. These lessons include the opportunity to discuss sensitive issues and learn how to cope with moral dilemmas. In a Year 2 'Circle Time'⁶ the teacher carefully explained that people might have different views and perceptions about certain actions, but that each could be perfectly valid. The older pupils have the chance to take on responsibilities, such as organising assembly music and delivering the milk to classes. The school council provides a useful forum for pupils to learn about rights and duties in a community. The preparation of Year 4 pupils as they move on to the middle school is excellent. The support ranges from teachers in both schools discussing the pastoral needs of the pupils and ensuring that the curriculum moves on smoothly, to pupils visiting each other and setting up 'buddy' friendships. By the time the pupils leave Weare, they are well prepared to cope with life beyond a first school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

44. The school has satisfactory links with parents. These have deteriorated since the last inspection because a significant number of parents are finding it difficult to adjust to another management style following the retirement of the long-serving former headteacher. A very good number of articulate parents returned questionnaires and attended the pre-inspection meeting. It is extremely clear that parents are very supportive of their children's education and are very keen to see them achieve well at school. Parents particularly like the high expectations of work, the way the school helps their children become mature and responsible, the ease with which they can approach the school with questions and, overall, the caring and family spirit at Weare. The inspection team concurs with all these positive views.

⁵ [Art and design, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education](#)

⁶ During Circle Time pupils discuss personal and general issues. [One pupil at a time speaks in take turns to speak](#), and no-one interrupts. Pupils feel confident that they can talk freely and openly, and that the teacher and other pupils will listen.

45. A substantial number of parents have concerns, several of which stem from what they perceive as a lack of communication. Many parents are stalwart members of the local community and busy professional people so expect to be informed promptly and in plenty of time about school issues and activities. The inspectors agree that there are specific areas that need clearer information, but overall the quality of information provided for parents is good. The school has reacted very effectively to recent worries about inconsistent communication. The school website is a very useful source and both the newsletters and annual governors' report are interesting, accessible and informative. It is good to see that the governors explained in this year's report what action had been taken on issues raised at last year's AGM. The headteacher makes a point of always being available to parents in the playground at the end of the day. In response to parents' concerns, the governing body has thoughtfully created a new role of 'communication governor', with the brief to ensure a smooth flow of information between home and school.
46. However, there is still need for tighter information in some academic and curriculum areas. The school now provides regular information about what is being taught each term in each subject. However, there has not recently been a curriculum evening to let parents find out more about or participate in what their children are learning. Most teachers set regular and appropriate homework, according to the school's policy, but there are not enough details given to parents of Year 3 pupils about the difference in expectations when they are in Years 3 and 4. As at time of the last inspection, end-of-year reports do not give a clear message about how each pupil has progressed in each subject. In addition, targets for improvement are not specific enough to let parents help with their children's learning. Linked with the lack of a pre-arranged meeting in the summer term to discuss individual reports, the information provided to parents about their children's progress is unsatisfactory.
47. A very large number of parents feel that the range of clubs and activities is not sufficient. The inspectors do not agree and judge that the amount and variety of extra-curricular activities are satisfactory for a small country school where the majority of pupils are under seven years old and getting them home may be difficult. Some parents believe behaviour is not good, but the inspection team finds that the school is working well and effectively to maintain good behaviour.
48. The contribution of parents to their children's learning at school and at home is very good. Homework is supported well and nearly all pupils read with their parents regularly. Parents' attendance at school events and meetings to discuss their children's progress is very good. The impact of the parents' involvement on the work of the school is also very good. Although the parent-teacher association continues to organise successful social and fund-raising events, it is not as active as it was at the time of the last inspection. However, parents who are working and busy are generous in their financial support of the school trust fund. Overall, parental support continues to be a strength of the school and is a major factor in the high attainment of their children.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

49. The leadership and management of the headteacher and key staff are good. Much of the headteacher's work has been aimed at building a team capable of taking the school forward. He has been successful in this and the senior management team, which includes those with responsibilities for assessment and special educational needs, shows clear educational direction and is beginning to have a positive impact on standards. Whilst the headteacher's personality and leadership style may be different from what some parents had expected, he is leading by example, inspiring and motivating staff, and managing change to improve the school.

50. All staff have clear job descriptions and some responsibility for leading and managing subjects. They are encouraged to contribute to the school's development, both formally at staff meetings and informally through discussion. Where possible, time is set aside for matters such as lesson observations in their subject. Support staff are valued for the effective and important contribution they make. They too have regular meetings with the headteacher or deputy headteacher and have a forum for putting forward their views.
51. The school has very clear aims and values, and they could be said to 'hit you in the face', almost literally! Acronyms are used, such as 'SCIPP' (Supportive, Caring, Independence, Positive self-image and self-confidence, Pride in achievement), and these are displayed everywhere in the school. Even pictures of a glass with some liquid in it state, 'Half full, not half empty!' All this shows a clear pride in the school and indicates that all concerned are striving for the best possible outcomes. The desire to create a positive ethos has done so.
52. Most members of the governing body are fairly new to the position. Whilst this may deny it the experience of 'older' members, it has produced a very enthusiastic and dynamic group of people who bring considerable expertise, and are intent on doing their best for the school. They analyse their own needs and those of the school. For example, they realised that they needed more expertise in health and safety issues, and needed to improve communication. To that end two new governors were appointed with those skills. They are taking advantage of the very good training opportunities offered by Somerset local education authority, and are making a good contribution to the school's development. They are fulfilling all their statutory duties very effectively through a good structure of committees, all with appropriate terms of reference. They have links with teachers for subjects and aspects, and the headteacher regularly provides them with up-to-date information. This, together with the fact that many have children at the school, enables them to have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. At their meetings they regularly look at where the school is now and where it needs to be. For example, at present they are considering the possibility of creating a computer suite. They also have long-term plans, such as the provision of a nursery.
53. The school has put into operation a rigorous system for monitoring and analysing standards. The results of National Curriculum tests have fluctuated recently and were particularly poor in 2001. One of the reasons given for this was linked to the high percentage of pupils in this year group with extreme special educational needs, and the school has data to support this view. However, a thorough analysis of test results, leading to revised planning and emphasis, has produced exceptionally good results in 2002. This shows that the use of the information gained has had a very strong impact on attainment. In particular, the pupils with special educational needs were very well supported and made very good progress. This reflects the school's very good determination that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with visual impairment, are fully included in all activities.
54. Monitoring and evaluation are having a positive impact on the development of teaching, which has improved since the last inspection. Literacy and numeracy in particular have benefited from the training associated with the introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. The headteacher has a regular programme of lesson observations in each year group, and external agencies, including the local education authority, have been used to ensure the effective development of teaching. There are good strategies for appraisal and performance management, and all statutory procedures are in place. All teachers have targets, both for personal development and to meet the school's needs. A governor's committee sets targets for the headteacher, which are agreed, achievable and measurable. The system is very well thought out and governors regularly monitor progress towards these targets.

55. The chairperson of the finance committee is very effective and knowledgeable. She has a background in finance and local education authorities, and is a great asset to the school. She leads a committee that meets regularly to ensure that the school's finances are kept in good order. The finance officer is very efficient and provides the headteacher and finance committee with monthly printouts of the state of the finances, so that any necessary adjustments to spending can be made. A good deal of consideration is given to all educational priorities, which are then supported through careful financial planning. The school's spending decisions clearly relate to priorities for improvement and benefit for pupils. For example, the school spends a far higher percentage of its money on learning support assistants than most schools. However, the benefits to the pupils are carefully monitored and have been an important factor in the recent very good progress made by pupils with special educational needs. All specific grants are allocated and spent in the appropriate manner. The school makes good use of new technology in all financial matters, as well as electronic mail, data analysis, assessment and pupil records.
56. The finance committee is always mindful of the principles of best value. They make comparisons with local schools and schools nationally, in terms both of attainment and costs. They have a programme of self-evaluation where they justify all their spending decisions. For example, when the swimming pool needed a new boiler, not only was the best price sought, but other schools with swimming pools were also contacted to see how they managed the finances for their pool. Similarly, the committee always looks closely at cleaning and kitchen contracts to ensure best value.
57. The management of special educational needs is very good and contributes significantly to the progress pupils make in their learning. The co-ordinator for special educational needs strives diligently to support pupils and has established a very effective partnership with learning support assistants in providing for pupils' needs, some of which are very specific and complex. Funding is used efficiently and there are very effective links with outside agencies. At present the co-ordinator has no private room in which to interview parents, nor does she have access to a telephone in the current 'office space'.
58. There is an appropriate match of teaching staff to the needs of the school, but a very good number of well-trained support staff. The accommodation is not ideal, but adequate. The library has separate fiction and non-fiction areas and is in the process of being redeveloped. The size and height of the school hall do place limitations on the work carried out in physical education and it is not really fit for that purpose. In addition, the storage of physical education equipment and other furniture around the side of the hall further limits its size and, if great care is not taken, could lead to health and safety issues. There are adequate learning resources in all areas, with good resources in the core subjects of English, mathematics, science and religious education, and very good resources for special educational needs.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

59. In order to raise standards and improve the quality of education for its pupils, the headteacher, staff and governors should:
- (1) (a) provide them with more opportunities to write at length and reduce the use of commercially produced photocopied worksheets; (b) improve the consistency of teachers' expectations that pupils should use and apply the skills taught in spelling and handwriting lessons, and review the amount of time allocated to handwriting in some classes; (c) improve the consistency of teachers' marking, particularly in telling pupils how they can improve their work; (paragraphs 17, 24-26, 81, 83 and 98)
 - (2) through in-service training, improve teachers' knowledge and understanding of the teaching of physical education and ensure that they implement fully the school's health and safety policy in relation to physical education lessons; (paragraphs 137-140)
 - (3) work with parents and pupils to improve punctuality at the start of the day and examine closely how the start of the day and all lessons are used to maximise pupils' learning (paragraphs 12 and 38).

In addition, the governing body may wish to consider the inclusion of the following in its action plan:

- to provide the co-ordinator for special educational needs with a private office for interviewing parents, and a telephone; (paragraph 57)
- to ensure that in the Foundation Stage the timetable and daily planning are linked clearly to the Early Learning Goals (paragraphs 27 and 74).

THE WORK OF THE HEARING-IMPAIRED UNIT

60. The unit for pupils with hearing impairment is very good and has maintained the high standards shown at the last inspection.
61. Pupils make good progress in the light of their special educational needs and work very hard to overcome their severe language delay, which is a consequence of their deafness. Pupils in the unit frequently have additional special educational needs, such as dyspraxia and specific language difficulties, which also affect their overall level of achievement. Until a cochlear implant four years ago, one pupil had almost no access to sound. When pupils first come to school, speech is often unclear and their access to the curriculum is very dependent upon specialised support. By Year 4 they have made good progress and their speech is much clearer and usually understood by other pupils and staff. With the improvement in speech, sentences become more ordered, although difficulties with language rules remain. Literacy skills and vocabulary develop. For example, in a literacy lesson that focused on 'giving instructions', one pupil, unprompted, counted in order from 'first' to 'fifth' in order to sequence the various steps to be taken. Another pupil confidently answered mental arithmetic questions in the whole-class setting and worked at a level in mathematics that is about average for the Year 4 class. In a small group they made progress in understanding the language of shapes and developed an understanding of symmetry.
62. Pupils in the unit are very hard working and have increased their ability to concentrate for longer. They are often noticeably more tired than their peers towards the end of a lesson. This is due to the additional effort and concentration needed for listening and processing language, as well as coping with the specific demands of the lesson itself. The excellent relationship they have with staff in the unit provides a very good basis for learning and they show no resentment at the repetition of words and phrases, which is an essential part of their learning. Frustration and immature behaviour arising from a lack of clear hearing of words are well dealt with by staff, and pupils made good progress in developing social skills and relationships.
63. Teaching is very good. The very experienced teacher in charge of the unit works with pupils in a range of different settings, one-to-one in withdrawal sessions and in a variety of groups, which include mainstream peers. The many strengths of teaching include:
- an understanding of the effects of a profound hearing loss on learning and child development;
 - very good use of radio transmitters by staff and pupils;
 - the good work of the learning support assistant in the unit, who is very clear about what is required of her in a lesson;
 - very clear articulation and tone of voice by the teacher to make her speech as accessible as possible to deaf pupils;
 - the provision of visual and tactile cues to aid comprehension;
 - the use of cued articulation when necessary;
 - a thorough knowledge of pupils' language needs, which helps her to anticipate many of the difficulties experienced by pupils.
64. Occasionally, the effectiveness of the teaching is limited by the structure of a lesson. For example, a Year 4 science lesson on temperature lasted for 90 minutes. This very long lesson involved three stages of involved discussion with several learning objectives before practical work could begin. Ensuring that pupils understood the discussion inevitably took a long time for hearing-impaired and lower-achieving pupils, the practical work was shortened and there was no time for a plenary session. This limited the gains in understanding of some of the pupils.

65. Pupils in the unit have full access to the whole curriculum. Although there is daily withdrawal for specific language teaching, lessons are planned to relate to those of the peer group. For example, a literacy lesson was spent partly in the whole-class group and partly in the unit. Pupils' language work was planned to enable them to feedback at the whole-class plenary session the next day. A major feature of curriculum organisation is the planning for inclusion. This meets the needs of the hearing-impaired pupils, who are helped to develop independence skills as well as social skills that will enable them to make friends and companions in the wider peer group. It also enables their hearing peers to develop an understanding of hearing-impaired pupils. Pupils in the unit experience the whole range of learning settings, from individual withdrawal lessons in the unit to unsupported work with the whole class. Of necessity they frequently work in small groups, but the composition of these groups varies, as does the member of staff supporting them. There is reverse integration when some of the peer group join them in the unit for a lesson. The Teacher of the Deaf also fulfils a whole-school role, team teaching with a class teacher, acting as the science co-ordinator and taking assemblies, which also emphasises the integration of the unit within the whole school.
66. The unit as a part of the whole school makes very good provision for the assessment and care of pupils. Detailed plans identify half-termly objectives and strategies. Progress against the objectives is logged on a daily basis and teaching strategies are developed. Annual reviews are thorough and progress across the year is shown. There is an excellent audiology policy and hearing aids are regularly checked to monitor their performance. Speech and language therapists and specialist audiologists also contribute to the excellent in-school assessment. The unit also receives very good support from the Nottingham Cochlear Implant Team and the Somerset Hearing Impairment Service, which maintains and funds the unit. Arrangements for performance management are very good and there is a close liaison between the Service and school management when setting objectives. Overall, the unit is very well managed. The very clear philosophy of natural auralism and integration provides a very clear focus for teaching. The school ensures that pupils make good progress and develop secure language and comprehension skills before the transition to the middle school. Support for pupils in the transition is excellent.

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	30

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	0	2	12	16	1	0	0
Percentage	0	6	39	52	3	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)	143
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	7

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	7
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	15

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	0
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	0

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.3
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.6
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	14	12	26

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	14	14	14
	Girls	12	11	12
	Total	26	25	26
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	100 (88)	96 (78)	100 (75)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	14	14	14
	Girls	12	12	12
	Total	26	26	26
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	100 (84)	100 (88)	100 (84)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British - Indian
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
143	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
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)	5.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24
Average class size	29

Education support staff: YR – Y4

Total number of education support staff	13
Total aggregate hours worked per week	256

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
	£
Total income	338,590
Total expenditure	346,119
Expenditure per pupil	2,490
Balance brought forward from previous year	33,895
Balance carried forward to next year	26,366

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	2
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 51%

Number of questionnaires sent out	143
Number of questionnaires returned	73

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	45	47	7	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	27	52	13	0	8
Behaviour in the school is good.	22	60	18	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	17	54	16	4	9
The teaching is good.	28	64	5	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	21	41	23	11	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	44	48	5	0	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	34	50	8	1	7
The school works closely with parents.	23	35	33	8	1
The school is well led and managed.	11	52	16	5	16
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	33	55	7	3	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	11	28	28	15	18

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Personal, social and emotional development

67. As a result of good teaching and very effective support from learning support assistants, children settle quickly and happily into the day-to-day routines of the reception class and of the school. By the time they start Year 1 they meet the expectations of the Early Learning Goals. Children enjoy school and at the start of each day settle quickly for registration. They listen carefully and answer the teacher politely. In lessons they listen attentively and know the importance of putting their hands up to answer a question and of listening to others. When working in groups all children, both boys and girls, relate well to each other. Children work equally well on those occasions where they choose to be independent and show good concentration, for example when using a construction kit to make a chair for 'teddy' to sit on at the 'picnic'. Children show good levels of independence when changing for physical education lessons. They behave well when moving around the school and play a full part in assemblies, where they join in enthusiastically with singing.

Communication, language and literacy

68. Progress in this area of learning is good and children meet the expectations of the Early Learning Goals by the time they start Year 1, with more-able children established on the early levels of the National Curriculum. Teaching is good and contributes successfully to the good progress made. In lessons children listen attentively to their teacher and to their learning support assistants and are happy and confident when answering questions. The teaching of the key skills of reading is good. Children know their initial letter sounds and, for example, are confident to go to the whiteboard and point out the sound 't' in the word 'teddy'. They respond well to the challenge of the teacher when asked to find words beginning with 't': 'Try and write the whole word. Most of you can do this. I want at least three'. Because the teaching of letter sounds and other early reading skills is good, most children are established on the school's reading scheme by the end of reception. Children know that books are read from left to right and more-able children know the terms 'author' and 'title'. The teaching of writing is good. By the end of reception, children write their names unaided and most write sentences unaided, which are mainly accurately spelt, with capital letters and full stops.

Mathematical development

69. As the result of good teaching of the basic skills of number and measurement, children make good progress and, by the time they start Year 1, meet the expectations of the Early Learning Goals. More-able children exceed expectations and work comfortably within the early levels of the National Curriculum. Children read, write and order numbers to 10, with many doing so to 20 and beyond. They show a good understanding of 'one more than' and 'one less than'. Children order, for example 'teddy bears' in order from shortest to tallest and know common two-dimensional shapes, including circles, squares and rectangles. In one lesson observed, more-able children made very good progress in ordering numbers to 20. They succeeded in the challenging task of building 'towers' of from one to 20 construction blocks and then matching the correct digit card to the correct 'tower'. This is a very good example of how the learning needs of more-able children are met. In the same lesson, children who are still insecure in counting to five worked effectively with a learning support assistant in counting objects and making sets of five.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

70. Children make good progress and, by the time they leave reception, meet the expectations of the Early Learning Goals. Teaching is good and makes a strong contribution to the progress made. Children are given a wide range of activities to support their learning. They are confident in using the mouse and keyboard on the computer, with good skills in 'clicking and dragging', for example in dressing a 'teddy'. Through the study of 'teddy bears' children develop an understanding of 'old' and 'new'. They have good opportunities to use small and large construction kits, and show good skills in making, for example, seats for 'teddy bears'. Through the story *Handa's Surprise* children develop a good awareness of the wider world and animals that live in different countries.

Physical development

71. Teaching is good and, as a result, children meet the expectations of the Early Learning Goals by the time they start Year 1. They show good skills in cutting and pasting, and in using their hands when making items with small construction apparatus. In outdoor play they show confidence in riding tricycles. In the hall, in music and movement, they show a good awareness of space for their age. Children show good imagination in planning their own sequences to interpret *The Teddy Bears' Picnic* and show good movements and facial expressions in the line 'If you go down to the woods today, you're sure of a big surprise'.

Creative development

72. Children make good progress in this area of learning because teaching is good and by the end of reception they meet the expectations of the Early Learning Goals. Children enjoy role-play and respond well to each other when organising a 'Teddy Bears' Picnic'. They successfully apply their mathematical knowledge when they respond to the teacher's challenge to 'set table places' for three teddy-bear guests. Children enjoy painting and show good cutting and sticking skills when making collages of teddy bears. They enjoy familiar songs and rhymes, and during the inspection made good progress in learning the song and accompanying actions for *The Teddy Bears' Picnic*.
73. A significant strength of the teaching in reception is the effective partnership between the class teachers and learning support assistants, particularly in supporting the learning needs of children with special educational needs, including those with statements of special educational need. Because of this effective support, children are included fully in all lessons, and activities are matched closely to their learning needs. Learning support assistants show patience, dedication and high levels of skill in motivating children with specific learning difficulties and take great pride in the often very small but evident steps in progress, for example in learning to pedal a tricycle for the first time.
74. The inspection took place in the autumn term and, taking this into consideration, there were some areas of the reception teaching that were satisfactory rather than good. These were:
- daily and weekly planning not specifically matched to the Early Learning Goals, although termly planning does so;
 - the class timetable showed National Curriculum subjects rather than the areas of learning;
 - an over-emphasis on teaching literacy and numeracy, rather than communication, language, literacy and mathematical development;
 - too great an emphasis on adult-led activities, rather than those which children choose for themselves;
 - insufficient opportunities for outdoor play.

ENGLISH

75. By the end of Year 2, standards in reading and writing are well above the national average and show that the school has sustained the improvement made since the previous inspection. There is no variation between the standards achieved by boys and girls. Because of very effective support from teachers and learning support assistants, pupils with special educational needs make very good progress. More-able pupils make very good progress in reading, although progress in writing is only satisfactory as they have insufficient opportunities to write at length.
76. By the end of Year 4, standards in English are above expectations for nine-year-olds, although standards in reading are higher than those in writing. There is no significant variation between standards achieved by boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress because of high quality support from teachers and learning support assistants. More-able pupils make good progress.
77. The main factors contributing to good standards are:
- the effective implementation of the National Literacy Strategy;
 - good assessment of strengths and weaknesses in the subject, for example the recent identification that spelling, creative writing and handwriting are areas for improvement;
 - good early teaching of key skills;
 - effective teaching of all pupils, with work matched carefully to learning needs;
 - the dedicated efforts of a learning support assistant to help pupils on the ELS⁷ and ALS⁸ strategies.
78. By the end of Year 2 and Year 4, standards in speaking and listening are good. In lessons pupils listen attentively to the teacher and to each other; they value the contributions of their classmates. When working with learning support assistants and parent helpers, pupils listen carefully and respect the additional support they receive. Pupils speak clearly and confidently and willingly initiate conversations. They are very polite in saying 'Good morning' to visitors. In a 'Show and Tell' lesson in Year 1, pupils spoke confidently about the items they brought in to show. For example, one pupil said, 'I've brought in a Bible because we've been talking about the Old and New Testaments. This is the story of Moses (showing the class). I like this story'. In Year 4, pupils spoke clearly and confidently when they read sentences they had written in a literacy lesson to show the use of the past, present and future tenses.
79. Progress in reading is very good because pupils are taught successfully the key early reading skills, particularly the use of letter sounds and picture clues. By the end of Year 2, pupils read accurately and fluently. They use their knowledge of letter sounds and initial blends to read new words. Pupils enjoy reading and talk confidently about books they read. They know and explain the terms 'author' and 'illustrator'. By Year 4, pupils read fluently and with good expression. In stories they show good recall of the plot and talk enthusiastically about the characters. They give preferences for favourite authors and books; for example, 'I like Enid Blyton because she writes adventure stories and I love a good adventure'. Pupils know how to find reference books in the school library and how to use the index and contents to help them find specific information within a reference book.
80. Progress in writing is good, although pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to write at length. Poetry is a stronger feature of imaginative writing than stories and here pupils show good use of vocabulary. For example, in Year 2 a pupil wrote⁹ a 'Magic Box' poem:

⁷ To support pupils who are identified for additional literacy support at the end of term 1, Year 1.

⁸ To support pupils who have already fallen behind in literacy, but who would not otherwise receive any additional support.

⁹ This has been reproduced exactly as written by the pupil.

*'I will put in my box
 My bike that can fly over seaside.
 In my box I would like the sound
 Of the waves.
 I would have in my box two magic eggs
 A grasshopper that jumps in magic snow.
 A roller coaster that goes to the moon
 A Chinese dragon shoots fire from his nose.
 In my box I'm going to Charlies Chokolake Pond'.*

Pupils write mainly successfully for a range of purposes. In Year 1 pupils write clear instructions for making a sandwich. In Year 2 there are further good examples of 'Magic Box' and 'What is red?' poems. In Year 3, pupils show satisfactory skills in planning and writing beginnings to a story and accurate writing in their factual accounts of holidays. In Year 4, pupils write good descriptions of characters in stories, for example Grandpa Chatterji.

81. The school places a great emphasis on handwriting, with evidence that pupils spend considerable time being taught and then practising these key skills. However, teachers are inconsistent in reinforcing their expectations that these skills are used when pupils write in literacy and other lessons. When writing, pupils revert to printing or a mixture of printing and joined-up handwriting. In spelling, the same applies; teachers do not reinforce the expectation that spellings learned should be applied in writing. For example, in Year 3 a pupil, in his reading log, spelt the word 'because' as 'becos' in one entry and 'becuss' in the next entry.
82. Pupils use their literacy skills successfully in other subjects. In reading, they use their reference skills for collecting information, including using the library and the Internet for research. Pupils write up results of science investigations and show good application of skills in their plans, designs and evaluations in design and technology. Skills in information and communication technology are used successfully, particularly in word-processing stories and factual writing.
83. Teaching is good and has a positive impact on the standards achieved. Teachers implement most successfully the National Literacy Strategy. The significant strength of lessons is the quality of planning, which meets the learning needs of all pupils. Learning support assistants work in effective partnership with teachers to provide very strong support for pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements of special educational needs. Relationships are good and teachers have high expectations of pupils' attitudes and behaviour, which results in pupils working hard in lessons. However, there is some over-use of commercially produced photocopied worksheets, including some that are coloured in. Such activities do not successfully develop pupils' writing skills, especially as the 'skills' practised on these sheets are not sufficiently evident in their work.
84. The subject is effectively led and managed. The co-ordinator is aware from an analysis of pupils' work, including the results of National Curriculum tests and optional tests in Years 3 and 4, that standards in spelling and writing need to be improved. As a result she has produced a detailed action plan to address this issue. Resources are good. The library is currently being refurbished and pupils and the school benefit from the support of the librarian from the middle school, who is involved in this as a result of additional funding because the middle school has 'Beacon Status'.

MATHEMATICS

85. Pupils' standards in mathematics are very high at the end of Year 2, and above average at the end of Year 4. The judgement for Year 4 is similar to that of the last inspection, but the Year 2 judgement is vastly improved and puts the school in the top 5 per cent of all schools in the country, based on the Year 2002 National Curriculum test results.
86. The improvement in standards has been brought about through a concentrated effort to raise levels of attainment by all concerned. In particular, the school has:
- prepared pupils thoroughly for the tests by doing practice tests to familiarise them with the procedures;
 - analysed results thoroughly to identify strengths and weaknesses in pupils' knowledge and understanding;
 - used test results effectively to target planning and teaching;
 - placed an appropriate emphasis on the variety of strategies which can be used to make calculations;
 - placed an appropriate emphasis on investigations to deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding;
 - made use of the support allowed in tests, such as a reader for pupils with reading difficulties, thus allowing them to show their mathematical ability.
- These strategies, together with hard work by teachers and very effective support for pupils with special educational needs from teaching assistants, have been instrumental in securing the current achievements.
87. Standards are not universally high throughout the school. Indeed, there is a history of fluctuating results from year to year. For example, although the test results for 2002 were excellent, those for Year 2 pupils in 2001 were particularly poor. The school puts this down to the different abilities of each year group on entry to the school, with this year group having a high percentage of pupils with extreme special educational needs. If those pupils' results were removed from the calculations, the school's results, when compared nationally, would be about average instead of well below. In addition to this, there is evidence to show that pupils are more often than not making good progress from their prior attainment. These explanations are convincing and well founded.
88. By the end of Year 2, most pupils have a good understanding of place value and ordering number. They know, for example, that '83 is $80 + 3$ ', with many knowing that '438 is $400 + 30 + 8$ '. They fill in missing numbers on a 100 square and order a range of numbers from smallest to largest. Many add tens and units, crossing the hundred boundary, and subtract from numbers up to 99. They understand the concepts of half and quarter in shaded shapes and find one quarter of 12 pencils. They have a good basic understanding of multiplication and division, particularly with twos, fives and tens, and respond appropriately to questions, such as 'How many tens make eighty?' They use their knowledge well to solve everyday problems, such as 'Two packets of crisps cost 60p. How much does one packet cost?' When measuring, they start by using non-standard measures, such as a pen or a cube, and progress to suggesting appropriate units to measure their exercise book (centimetres) or the classroom (metres). They recognise a variety of two- and three-dimensional shapes, and sort them according to their properties, for example whether they have triangular or rectangular faces. They have a particular strength in organising and using data, for example by constructing a bar chart of the amount of different vegetables sold by a wholesale greengrocer.
89. By the end of Year 4, pupils develop their number work to include addition and subtraction of three-digit numbers, including carrying and decomposition. They calculate the total cost of a range of articles with given prices. Investigations are used well to develop pupils' understanding of number. For example, they investigate number patterns and find simple rules. They found out that when you form a number from two consecutive digits, reverse them to make another two-digit number, then subtract one from the other, the answer will always be 9. For example, ' $98 - 89 = 9$ '. Pupils are encouraged to find

different ways of calculating. For example, they know that if you want to add 298 to 347 you can add 300 to 347, then subtract 2. Pupils use their mathematical knowledge to solve real-life problems. They worked out the cheapest way to get from Weare to Weston by public transport. They extend their knowledge of the properties of two- and three-dimensional shapes, and use the correct mathematical language. For example, they know that a vertex is a corner and an edge is where two faces meet. They draw lines of symmetry on regular two-dimensional shapes.

90. The mathematics teaching observed was sound throughout the school. However, an analysis of planning and pupils' books, and the evidence of pupils' progress, indicate that teaching is often good. Planning is thorough, with clear and appropriate objectives identified. A particular strength is the use of prior assessment to determine the work undertaken, and the planning for different levels of ability. This ensures that, on most occasions, all pupils are suitably challenged and fully included. This is particularly so for pupils with special educational needs and those with hearing impairment. Explanations and demonstrations are clear so that pupils understand what is expected of them. Pupils are well managed and group work is well organised, ensuring that lessons run smoothly without time being wasted. Pupils are attentive, concentrate well and remain on task throughout. Correct mathematical language is used, and investigative work is undertaken to deepen pupils' understanding. Good contributions are made to pupils' moral and social development through group work and the expectation that they will get on with their work without the direct supervision of the teacher. Learning support assistants provide valuable and effective support for pupils with special educational needs and this has been an important factor in raising standards. Sometimes there are aspects of teaching that need improvement. For example, on occasions the pace of the lesson is not sufficiently brisk to motivate the pupils, and sometimes the activities do not sufficiently challenge them, particularly the more able.
91. Pupils successfully use their mathematics skills in other areas of the curriculum. For example, they measure in science, and in design and technology, and use data to create graphs in information and communication technology.
92. The co-ordinator has been in post for less than a year, but has already had a strong impact on the work of the school and the standards achieved. He has been instrumental in implementing the strategies outlined in paragraph 86 above. He monitors the teaching in mathematics and supports other teachers as and when necessary. He has ensured more consistency in assessment with a new system that operates each half term. Presentation is being improved, particularly in Year 2, with the introduction of books with squared pages. Information and communication technology is used to support mathematics, particularly in the areas of data handling and programmable toys to help pupils understand whole, half and quarter turns. However, information and communication technology is not used enough to support other areas of mathematics. A better cataloguing system, which indicates to teachers what programs are available, would facilitate this. Resources are good in quantity and quality, enabling pupils to take part in practical activities when necessary.
93. There has been good improvement since the last inspection, particularly in the areas of using and applying mathematics, handling data, and procedures to observe teaching.

SCIENCE

94. The last inspection report judged standards in science to be in line with national expectations. The school has improved its standards in science so that pupils now exceed the expected levels, and attainment is good. This improvement has resulted from:

- the drawing up of an effective policy and a detailed scheme of work, based on national guidelines;
 - the adoption of a new and effective model for assessing and recording attainment;
 - the use of investigative and practical approaches to teaching;
 - teachers' improved questioning skills.
95. In Years 1 and 2, the development of pupils' skill, understanding and knowledge is good. Pupils in Year 1 show a good level of understanding of the features and uses of materials, describing the characteristics of a range of items found around school, such as metal, stone, wood and glass. They make appropriate predictions about which fabric will make the warmest coat for the winter, giving good reasons for their choices. For instance, one pupil suggests, 'The cotton will not be warm enough because it is too thin to keep out the cold'. Pupils show what they know by recording in books, and orally. In a game which involved questioning each other about unseen objects in a 'feely bag', pupils used a good range of vocabulary to describe temperature and texture, and demonstrated their developing understanding of the properties of materials. A pupil with special educational needs was well supported by both the teacher and his peers as he described the items he could feel, and participated fully in the lesson. By the end of Year 2, pupils know that light comes from a variety of sources, including the sun. They draw simple electrical circuits, correctly labelled. They understand the need for light, water and soil in order to grow plants successfully. They know that taking exercise and eating the right kinds of food help people to keep healthy. Recording and the presentation of work are good.
96. Pupils in the Years 3 and 4 build on this good foundation of learning, and by the end of Year 4 they have a good knowledge and understanding of scientific facts and concepts. The most able represent series circuits in drawings and diagrams, use precise scientific names for the skeleton and major body organs, and identify changes that take place when materials are heated or cooled. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 produce substantial quantities of work of good quality, and use graphs, charts and diagrams to show the processes and results of their investigations. In a Year 4 lesson, pupils demonstrated their understanding of when a test is fair or unfair, as they measured temperature first by using their hands and then with thermometers. The writing up of their experiments makes a good contribution to the development of literacy and presentation skills.
97. Pupils show enthusiastic attitudes to science in lessons where they are motivated and stimulated. In a Year 3 lesson, for instance, pupils showed fascination and excitement when investigating materials that a magnet will attract. In a Year 4 lesson, pupils listened well to the teacher and each other, and worked purposefully throughout the lesson. Pupils with special educational needs enjoy the practical, investigative approach to science and are well supported by learning support assistants so that they achieve well in relation to their ability. Pupils show respect for adults and their classmates, co-operate well in groups, and treat equipment and resources with care.
98. Teaching in the lessons observed was never less than satisfactory. Overall, taking all the available evidence into consideration, the standard of teaching in science is judged to be good. Planning for teaching is very thorough and detailed, and based on a well-structured scheme. Assessment is an integral part of the scheme and is used to guide future planning for groups and individuals. The provision of a good deal of investigative work is a strength of the teaching, and pupils are challenged and encouraged to exercise initiative when working on practical activities. Teachers question pupils carefully, to check understanding and move them on in their thinking. Pupils are encouraged to predict and hypothesise. Such teaching enhances the development of pupils' investigative skills and stimulates their curiosity and interest in science. The effectiveness of the teaching is seen in the good results pupils achieve in the national tests at the end of Year 2 and in the non-statutory tests completed at the end of Year 4.

Marking of work consists mainly of praise and whilst this is appropriate for many pupils, it omits evaluation and specific target-setting which would move pupils' learning forward even further.

99. The co-ordinator gives effective leadership in promoting the subject throughout the school. She has identified teacher questioning as an area for development in science and this has featured in in-service training sessions. She has worked together with the science co-ordinator of the local middle school to develop and refine the scheme of work and to improve assessment procedures. Time has not been available yet this year to monitor teaching. A portfolio of pupils' work has been compiled, showing examples of work on all topics covered, for staff reference. Resources for science are adequate to meet the planned curriculum and are well organised and maintained.

ART AND DESIGN

100. It was only possible to observe one art lesson during the inspection, so observations of artwork displayed around the school and in portfolios and sketchbooks, together with discussions, form the basis of judgements about standards in art.
101. Pupils attain standards that are above national expectations at the end of Year 2 and pupils leaving the school at the end of Year 4 maintain these good standards. This is similar to the situation reported in the last inspection. The school provides a well-balanced curriculum that covers all elements of the National Curriculum for art, including study of the work of established artists. Well-produced and carefully mounted displays of pupils' artwork enhance the environment of the school.
102. By the age of seven, standards of work exceed those expected in this age group. Pupils understand the properties of a range of media, such as pastels, paint and pencils. They use collage materials to create textured pictures and patterns. Year 2 pupils work co-operatively to create a 'Harvest' collage, making a good link with science and religious education. They mix colours independently, discovering how to produce a variety of tints and shades of blue to create their portraits. In the infant school, pupils are introduced to three-dimensional work through experience of model-making using re-cycled materials and clay. They make good progress and achieve good results.
103. Good standards are maintained as pupils progress through Years 3 and 4. At the end of Year 4, standards are above national expectations. Pupils experience direct teaching of skills and techniques as well as experimenting with materials. A visiting sculptor motivates pupils to work in three dimensions and this increases their knowledge, understanding and learning. In Year 3, pupils develop their colour-mixing skills when working from African textiles to create silhouette pictures. Pupils study the work of Pablo Picasso and produce paintings reflecting his 'Blue Period'. By Year 4, pupils show increasing control of a variety of media. They gain inspiration from music, such as Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*, and use techniques such as marbling to create variety in their artwork.
104. Throughout the school, pupils' skill in observing and recording is promoted. By Year 4, pupils have well developed observation skills. They use these skills in other subjects, such as science, when they illustrate the internal parts of flowers. Pupils talk confidently and with pride about their work in art. They have clear understanding of the techniques they use and give increasing attention to detail and accuracy in their work. They draw, paint and print with confidence and use computer-generated art to produce designs. This aspect of their work is satisfactory.
105. Pupils in Years 2, 3 and 4 keep sketchbooks, which help to give a picture of progress, but at present there are no structured procedures to measure pupil progress in the

development of skills and techniques. The newly designed curriculum plan for art shows teachers' understanding of the need to develop skills and techniques steadily. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, have opportunities to use a suitably wide range of media and this enables them to make good progress in learning about the properties of materials and how to use them effectively.

106. The two co-ordinators for art and design manage the subject well. Close liaison with colleagues in the middle school to which the pupils will transfer ensures that pupils develop skills and understanding in art, which create a good foundation for later work in the subject. The resources for art and design are satisfactory in range and quantity.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

107. By the end of Year 2 and Year 4, standards meet expectations for seven- and nine-year-olds. Pupils, irrespective of ability or gender, make satisfactory progress in their learning. No lessons were observed during the inspection and judgements are based on a detailed portfolio of pupils' work, displays of their work and discussions. There was insufficient evidence to make a secure judgement on the quality of teaching.
108. Pupils successfully apply their literacy skills, for example in labelling their designs and writing evaluations of their finished products. Numeracy skills are used when pupils make accurate measurements of materials or ingredients in food technology. There was insufficient evidence to judge how well pupils use information and communication technology skills in the subject. There is evidence of good links with pupils' multi-cultural awareness when, in Year 2, they do Indian cooking. In Year 3, in textiles, there are good links with African art in the design and making of rugs, masks and beads.
109. In Year 1, pupils show accurate skills in designing and making 'hinges' from card and slit pins to show how body joints move, for example the elbow. This links successfully with pupils' science work on understanding the human body. In Year 2, in food technology, pupils learn about Indian cookery and use recipes to make their own dishes. In Year 3, pupils show good design skills and accurate making skills when they make photograph frames. In Year 4, pupils show a good understanding of moving mechanisms when they design and make 'pop-up' cards and 'pull me' cards. In Year 4, in textiles, pupils show satisfactory sewing skills when making purses, which they have previously designed with clear, well-labelled diagrams.
110. The co-ordinator makes an effective contribution to the management of the subject. There is a clear policy showing how the subject should be taught. The detailed scheme of work showing when the skills, knowledge and understanding should be taught is based on national guidelines. Resources are satisfactory for the teaching of the subject.

GEOGRAPHY

111. During the week of the inspection one geography lesson was observed. Analysing pupils' work in books and in a portfolio of collected examples, together with discussions, provided additional evidence of the standards being achieved. At the end of Year 2, standards are good and exceed expectations for seven-year-olds; this is similar to the findings of the last inspection. By the end of Year 4, standards exceed those seen nationally for pupils of this age. This represents a good level of improvement since the last inspection.
112. In Year 1, pupils study the local area and describe their environment, identifying positive and negative features, such as trees or litter. They follow the adventures of 'Wilfred Bear', who is travelling round the world, and plot his progress on a world map. They compare the environment and climate in the countries he visits, such as Fiji, with their own. Reading Wilfred's regular postcards makes a good contribution to literacy development. Consulting Wilfred's website encourages pupils' interest in information and communication technology. Year 2 pupils study the geography of the British Isles and discover the location of the island of Struay in the Hebrides. They learn about island life and make comparisons with the way they themselves live. Pupils record what they know on maps and in writing, and show their good understanding of issues in a role-play activity. Pupils question each other about island life and living in Weare and contrast the two lifestyles.
113. Pupils in the older classes study tropical countries, such as India, and map work includes planning journeys from India to the U.K. Pupils learn about the differences between homes, schools and climate in an Indian village and those found in Europe. They show a developing understanding of the influence of human beings on the environment and know that people have different points of view on environmental issues. Year 4 pupils make effective use of their geographical skills in history, as they plot the journey of invaders from Rome or Denmark to Britain. More-able and average pupils present their work carefully and achieve good standards. Lower-attaining groups, including some pupils with special educational needs, progress well in relation to earlier attainment, and show what they know and understand by drawing and labelling diagrams and maps. All pupils, including the less able, understand geographical concepts, such as 'near', 'far', 'hot' and 'cold'.
114. The teaching observed was good. Planning was detailed and thorough and subject expertise was high. A good pace was maintained and pupils focused on their learning throughout. A variety of teaching strategies ensured that all pupils were involved. Good teaching results in pupils showing a high level of interest in geography, with older pupils engaging in independent research on topics at home. Information and communication technology is under-used in class lessons.
115. Management of the subject is satisfactory. Teachers are supported by a clear subject policy and a sound curriculum plan based on national guidelines has been negotiated with the middle school the children will transfer to. This ensures that they will develop geographical skills and knowledge that will form a good foundation for later work. There are no formal procedures for assessing pupils' attainment or the progress they have made in geography, and no sampling of pupils' work to check the standards achieved. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' social, cultural and moral development by raising their awareness of other societies and cultures. There are adequate resources to meet the programme of work.

HISTORY

116. Standards in history meet expectations for seven- and nine-year-olds. This represents a continuation of the sound standards reported in the last inspection. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress as they build on their understanding of time passing and the significance of a range of historical events. The progress of the most able pupils is good as they pursue independent research and organise their own historical investigation and recording.
117. Pupils in Year 1 learn about their own early days and consider changes since babyhood. They learn about the lives of children who attended their school in years past and make comparisons with their own experience. They show awareness of change and progress and offer straightforward explanations of why things are not the same as they used to be. Pupils study historical events, such as the Great Fire of London, and record what they know in writing and pictures. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a simple but sound factual knowledge of the lives of people in earlier times. They understand the concept of the passage of time and know that life in the past was different from life today.
118. Year 3 pupils reflect on recent history as they study Britain at war. They record factual evidence about ration books and have opportunities to talk to a grandparent about life as an evacuee. Pupils learn about life in Tudor times and discover facts about life in Tudor London. They compare this with life today and in Victorian times. Year 4 pupils study Roman civilisation and the Roman invasion of Britain, and discover how invaders, including the Romans and the Vikings, influenced and changed the way people led their lives. The more-able pupils make appropriate deductions from evidence. For instance, one pupil who had taken part in a school visit to an archaeological site wrote, 'I think the body they found must have died by being stabbed and then he hit his head as he fell down, because he had two wounds'. Learning is recorded in a variety of ways after studying information from pictures, photographs and reference books. Pupils use information and communication technology, including the Internet and CD-ROMs, to research topics independently.
119. As part of their studies, pupils make a range of visits to local museums and places of interest, including the Teddy Bear Museum and the local World War 2 Museum. As a result of a link with a parent, a television production company has also invited pupils to visit archaeological excavations used in making an educational television series. Such excursions give an additional dimension to pupils' learning through presenting valuable opportunities for them to examine history from primary sources. History makes a good contribution to social and cultural development as pupils interact and study their own culture.
120. All pupils have good attitudes to history and enjoy learning about the subject. They discuss old photographs with real interest and enthusiasm and tell each other about the differences they notice. They treat resources with care and the older pupils take a pride in presenting carefully illustrated work.
121. The quality of teaching was satisfactory in both lessons observed and other inspection evidence is consistent with the quality of teaching being satisfactory overall. Lessons are carefully planned and well resourced so that they meet the objectives of the scheme of work. A portfolio of work is kept, which shows examples of work on each of the topics covered. There is no indication in the work of its quality compared with expectations for pupils at each age, so, whilst it is a useful record, the portfolio is not helpful for assessing pupils' attainment. Teachers maintain informal records, but the assessment and recording of attainment and progress are not well developed or related to National Curriculum levels.

122. The joint subject co-ordinators are effective in their role. Since the previous inspection the curriculum for history has been reviewed and developed in accordance with national guidelines. Resources for the subject are satisfactory. The availability of artefacts from the schools' museum service enhances the provision.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

123. By the end of Year 2 and Year 4, standards meet national expectations. Pupils, irrespective of gender or ability, make satisfactory progress in their learning. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. Pupils benefit from effective links with the middle school, which because of its 'Beacon Status' has additional funding to allow a teacher and a technician to support pupils, particularly in Years 3 and 4.
124. Pupils successfully use their literacy skills in the subject; for example in word-processing poems or lists of instructions. Numeracy skills are used well when pupils create graphs, for example to show the heights of pupils in a class. Good links are made with science, especially in the use of a digital microscope to look at the effects of food and drink on tooth decay. Pupils make good use of graphics programs, for example in Year 3 when they 'paint' a picture of their favourite place.
125. By the end of Year 2, pupils are confident in the use of the mouse and keyboard. In word-processing they know how to add and modify text by changing font sizes and colours, and they know how to import a picture. By Year 4, pupils are confident in word-processing lists showing lost property and in creating newspaper-style reports with banner headlines, such as 'Litter Disease Strikes Weare'. In a good link with numeracy, pupils show good skills in using a graphics program to create tessellations. In Year 4, pupils are successful in entering information into a spreadsheet and converting the information into a graph. In Year 4, pupils use a desktop publishing program with good effect in producing posters to advertise a meeting for parents before the school camp. Pupils' cultural awareness is developed through the school's very impressive Internet and e-mail links with schools in Austria, Germany, Italy, Spain, Finland and the Czech Republic.
126. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory, with examples of good and very good teaching. In the best lessons, teachers make very good use of demonstration skills when using a laptop computer linked to a projector. In a lesson in Year 4 the teacher showed very confident subject knowledge and good demonstration skills in introducing a new graphics program to pupils. There was a significant contribution to their spiritual development when the teacher showed them how by using the 'tile and half drop' feature to create a 'wallpaper' pattern. There were cries of, 'Wow! Miss! That would make brilliant wrapping paper!' When the teacher told pupils that she was not going to save her work and erased it, there were further cries of, 'Don't! Save it! No!' Pupils were highly motivated by the lesson and were bursting with ideas and insisted that when the teacher made a second pattern she should print it out. Teachers make satisfactory use of classroom-based computers to support pupils' learning in literacy and numeracy.
127. The co-ordinator has been in the school for a year and is, in addition, the religious education co-ordinator. He identified that his priority for last year was religious education. However, for this year he has a clear vision and understanding of developments in the subject, including a plan to create a full IT-Suite once a classroom becomes available. He has introduced a useful 'log book' for pupils to show the progress they make in acquiring key skills. Staff have benefited from NOF (New Opportunities Funding) training and are enthusiastic in wanting to include information and communication technology in all subjects. The school has a detailed Internet access policy, which is shared with pupils and parents.

MUSIC

128. Because of the school's timetabling arrangements, where all music is taught on Thursday or Friday, it was not possible to observe any music lessons. It is not, therefore, possible to make judgements about standards or the quality of teaching, or to evaluate improvement since the last inspection.
129. Pupils' singing in assembly is tuneful and enthusiastic, especially in choruses of well-known hymns. Opportunities for simple music appreciation at assembly times are missed. For example, whilst pupils entered the hall for an assembly, a CD of a Chopin waltz was playing, yet no mention of this was made to pupils, nor were they asked whether they knew which instrument was being played. A similar criticism was made at the time of the last inspection. Pupils who learn to play the recorder occasionally play to others during assembly times, but these pupils, and those who learn the keyboard, violin or guitar, make few contributions to music-making in the school. A choir meets weekly at lunchtimes where pupils sing popular songs.
130. The school has itself identified a lack of confidence in teaching music. A start has been made in addressing this with a supply teacher taking some music lessons, while the class teacher observes. Later, the class teacher will take the lessons, with observation and support from the visiting teacher. In this way the teacher's expertise and confidence are being developed. Simple assessment sheets to indicate pupils' achievements are being developed.
131. Pupils have a useful number of musical experiences that contribute to their cultural development. For example, they have had visits from a singer with guitar and banjo accompaniment, and a brass player playing tuba and euphonium. They have been introduced to music from other cultures by an Indian dancer using small handbells, by a player of the tabla and sitar, and by listening to Indian music when they visited a Hindu Temple.
132. The school's scheme of work is based on that recommended by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. There are sufficient resources available, many of good quality, some stored in each class, and some stored centrally.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

133. Although there is only limited evidence of pupils working in physical education, standards meet national expectations at the end of Year 2 and the end of Year 4 when pupils leave the school.
134. By the end of Year 2, pupils have satisfactory control of their bodies when performing the basic skills of travelling and being still. They follow instructions well and work enthusiastically at the set tasks. They find and use space safely on the floor, or on apparatus.
135. By the end of Year 4, pupils are beginning to combine their movements into short sequences. They work at different levels and different speeds, and in different shapes, and many produce thoughtful balances. Working with a partner contributes to pupils' social development and pupils respond well, co-operating sensibly. Swimming records indicate that most pupils are able to swim before they leave the school.
136. Teaching is sound overall, although both good and unsatisfactory lessons were observed. The strengths in teaching are:
- pupils being well managed;
 - good organisation and control;

- moving equipment sensibly and safely;
- all pupils being active and working hard, thus gaining as much as possible from the lesson;
- very effective help from learning support assistants, enabling all pupils to be included in the lesson;
- a good variety of activities to challenge and motivate pupils.

137. Where these are present, pupils work enthusiastically and make good progress.

However, there are unsatisfactory elements that hinder progress, and sometimes have safety implications. They include:

- pupils not being changed correctly for physical activities;
- pupils wearing jewellery or not having long hair tied back;
- the work being totally dominated by the class teacher, allowing pupils no freedom to employ movement in an imaginative way;
- insufficient opportunities for pupils to practise their skills;
- insufficient evaluation of movements performed, either by the teacher or the pupils themselves, in order to offer suggestions for improvements.

Some of these aspects were observed even in satisfactory and good lessons. The school has a clear policy on clothing and the wearing of jewellery that is not being followed.

138. Teachers need some further training to assist them in their planning and teaching, as the way they present the subject indicates some lack of knowledge and understanding.

There is little in school to assist them in their planning of the teaching of ball skills and little is done on team games. There is some reluctance to let pupils use the higher climbing apparatus. Swimming is a strength in the school. Good use is made of the school's own pool in the summer term. Teachers and parent helpers are trained in water safety and some have swimming teacher qualifications. Apart from swimming, where records are kept, there are no assessment opportunities identified and assessment does not take place.

139. The outside facilities are good, with a field, playgrounds and swimming pool, and there is an adequate supply of small equipment. However, the size and height of the hall limit some activities for the older pupils and, with furniture protruding into the hall, there is a safety hazard when pupils are running around.

140. Many of the issues itemised above were mentioned in the last inspection report. The previous issue of teachers not wearing appropriate kit has been addressed, but all the others have not. Insufficient improvement has been made since the last inspection.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

141. During the inspection it was only possible to observe one religious education lesson, so it is not possible to make any firm judgements about pupils' standards, the quality of teaching, or the improvement since the last inspection.

142. Religious education in the school is taught according to the Somerset Agreed Syllabus. The curriculum is taught through a series of topics that relate to the curriculum recommended by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. The topic list has been carefully chosen to link with the work that will be undertaken by the pupils when they transfer to middle school, thus ensuring that pupils build on the knowledge and understanding developed at Weare. Many of the topics are chosen to fit in with Christian religious festivals, such as Christmas, Epiphany and Easter. Other religions are studied, including Judaism, Hinduism and Islam, where pupils look at their special festivals, traditions, signs and symbols.

143. Where possible, activities undertaken in religious education lessons link with other subjects of the curriculum. For example, when looking at the origin and significance of

the Bishop's Mitre, pupils used their art skills to make and decorate mitres which they could wear. As part of a geographical study of India, pupils looked at the Hindu religion and visited a Hindu temple in Bristol. Pupils visit the local church regularly for church services and to study St Gregory and church furnishings, such as the font and Bible stand. Sound contributions are made to pupils' spiritual development and, when they work together, to their social and moral development.

144. Religious education is developing well under the new co-ordinator, who has been in post for one year. The Diocesan Advisor has helped to develop the curriculum and assessment opportunities. There are good resources for teaching the curriculum, such as a large box with artefacts related to Judaism. As and when necessary, good use is made of a loan service from the Diocesan Authority, particularly for artefacts from religions other than Christianity. Monitoring of classroom lessons is due to start shortly, with a view to the co-ordinator developing a greater awareness of teaching and learning.