

INSPECTION REPORT

EMERSONS GREEN PRIMARY SCHOOL

Emersons Green, Bristol

LEA area: South Gloucestershire

Unique reference number: 131767

Headteacher: Mrs Jan Isaac

Reporting inspector: Mrs Stephanie Lacey
3764

Dates of inspection: 6 – 8 May 2003

Inspection number: 248855

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior school
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Guest Avenue Emersons Green Bristol
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Jon Skidmore
Date of previous inspection:	This is the school's first inspection

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
3764	Stephanie Lacey	Registered inspector	Foundation Stage, art and design, history, English as an additional language and special educational needs.	The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught?
9528	Derek Bowers	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
24019	Ken Parry	Team inspector	Mathematics, information communication technology, physical education and equal opportunities.	How good are the other curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
20009	David Cann	Team inspector	Science, design and technology and geography	How well is the school led and managed?
21003	David Lee	Team inspector	English, music and religious education	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development.
23235	Fred Riches	Team inspector	The work of the special needs unit	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Emersons Green Primary School is a new school with 205 pupils on roll aged between four and eleven. There are nine more boys than girls. There are seven classes, one for each year group. Thirty-two children are in the reception class. Children's attainment on entry to the reception year is wide ranging, but above average overall. There is provision for 15 pupils to attend the resource base for physically disabled and visually impaired children. Seven places are taken up at the moment and pupils are fully integrated into classes. Most pupils come from new housing in Emersons Green. This is mostly owner occupied, with some Ministry of Defence and housing association homes. Last year 16 per cent of pupils joined the school other than at the normal point of entry into the reception class, reflecting the rapid growth of the school in the two and a half years since it opened. It is now almost full, with a few spaces in the older pupils' classes. Eight per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is well below the national average. Seven per cent of pupils do not have their cultural roots in the British Isles, with two per cent of pupils learning English as an additional language. Thirteen per cent of pupils are on the school's register of special educational need, which is a little below average. Eleven of these pupils have a statement of special educational need. This number includes the seven pupils attached to the resource base.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Emersons Green is a good school with some very strong features. The headteacher's very clear educational vision has underpinned the development of this new school. Staff and governors are fully committed to providing for the needs of all pupils. Teaching is good and so pupils achieve well. Standards are rising. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils achieve well because the teaching is good.
- Pupils are very enthusiastic about school, behave very well and get on very well with each other and the staff.
- The headteacher's very strong and inspirational leadership has ensured the rapid and successful development of the school.
- All adults working in the school, including the governors are committed to developing and improving the school.
- Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported and fully involved in the life of the school.
- Provision for pupils attached to the resource base is excellent.
- Parents are very supportive of the school's work.

What could be improved

- Standards, although rising, are not yet as high as they should be in English and mathematics.

The drive to continue to raise standards is clearly identified in the school's own improvement plan.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Emersons Green Primary School opened in September 2000 and this is its first inspection. It has grown and developed rapidly in the last two and a half years. The school has made good progress over this time because the headteacher, supported by very committed staff and governors, provides a very clear lead. A very friendly and inclusive ethos is established. Pupils are happy, keen to learn and consequently standards are rising. People matter at Emersons Green and in recognition of the school's work it received 'Investors in People' accreditation in 2002. There is a constant striving to improve provision and practice and this is exemplified in the staff's commitment to further professional development. The school is in a good position to improve further.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	NA	NA	E	E
mathematics	NA	NA	E	E
science	NA	NA	C	C

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

Similar schools are those with 8% - 20% of pupils entitled to free school meals.

In new schools results of national tests do not give a clear indication of the effectiveness of the school's provision. This is because the pupils have only been at the school for a very short time, some for only a few weeks before they take the tests.

Until 2002 there were no pupils in Year 6. This table shows that standards in Year 6 national tests in 2002 were well below the national average in English and mathematics and that pupils did not do as well as their peers in similar schools. They did better in science, in which standards were average. In Year 2 national tests and assessments for the same year, standards were below average in reading and average in writing, mathematics and science. Pupils did not do as well as their peers in similar schools. The inspection found that pupils, including those with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language, are achieving well because of good teaching. In some sessions higher attaining pupils do not move forward as quickly as they should. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls. Pupils attached to the resource base make excellent progress. Standards are rising throughout the school. By the end of their reception year children are doing better than other children of their age. Pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2 and this year standards are average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Pupils also do well in Years 3 to 6. This year most Year 6 pupils have made very good progress. Standards remain below average in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6. This is because a number of pupils have special educational needs. Standards are broadly average in science in Year 6. Throughout the school standards are broadly average in other subjects, with pupils doing better in design and technology. Standards are below average at the end of Year 6 in information and communication technology (ICT) because pupils have not covered the entire curriculum. There was limited evidence to make a judgement about standards in physical education (PE) for older pupils.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are enthusiastic about school. They work hard in lessons and try to do their best.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils clearly know the difference between right and wrong. They are sensible in class and play together very well at break times and lunch times. A few pupils find it difficult to behave well all the time, but their behaviour is improving and there have not been any exclusions for inappropriate behaviour this year.
Personal development and relationships	Good overall. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff are very good and built on mutual respect. Pupils' personal development is good, with older pupils taking on more responsibility for helping around the school.
Attendance	Satisfactory and in line with the national average. Most absences are associated with holidays taken in term time and long-term illness. Most pupils arrive at school on time.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

Good teaching throughout the school ensures that most pupils achieve well. In the forty-six lessons seen about a quarter were very good, about a half were good, with the remaining quarter satisfactory. One excellent lesson was also seen and there was no unsatisfactory teaching. Strengths include very good planning, very good relationships between staff and pupils, very good support from teaching assistants and good care for individuals. Within the context of this good teaching there are some areas to improve. In some lessons teachers do not challenge the most able enough and as a result they do not make as much progress as they might. In some lessons teachers spend too much time talking to pupils and so there is less time for pupils to engage in purposeful activities. There is some inconsistency in the way in which teachers respond to pupils' written work. Literacy and numeracy skills are both taught effectively and this is helping to raise standards. Planning is securely based on the national literacy and numeracy strategies and identifies the development of skills very clearly. Teachers are often imaginative in their approach and this captures pupils' interest. Teaching is particularly strong in Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language are taught well and are making good progress. Pupils attached to the resource base make excellent progress because of rigorous planning and high levels of liaison between teachers, support assistants and outside agencies.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	A sound curriculum is in place firmly based on the guidance for children in the Foundation Stage and the National Curriculum. It is enhanced by good links with the local community and very good links with local schools, colleges and universities. An emphasis on literacy and numeracy means that time for some other subjects is more limited.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good overall and excellent for pupils attached to the resource base. The way in which resource base pupils are integrated into the life of the school is outstanding. Teachers and assistants support pupils very well.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Pupils are well supported within class. Extra support is provided for pupils at the early stages of learning English.
Provision for pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development and very good provision for their social development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school makes very good provision to ensure that pupils are safe and secure. There are sound procedures in place for assessing how well they are doing and using this information to plan for the future.

Overall there is a very good partnership with parents. Staff are open and friendly and parents find it easy to approach them with queries and concerns. Information provided for parents is of good quality. A few parents help in school and most are very supportive of their children's home learning. The Parent, Teacher and Friends' Organisation (PTFA) is well supported and organises fund-raising and social events.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very effective leadership by the headteacher, who is well supported by the deputy headteacher and two senior teachers, is ensuring the school develops quickly. There is a clear focus on enabling all pupils to do as well as they can.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors work well in the best interests of the pupils. They fulfil their responsibilities effectively through regular meetings, work on sub-committees and planned visits to the school. All statutory requirements are met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Staff and governors have a very clear picture of how well the school is doing through thorough evaluations of the effectiveness of initiatives highlighted in the school's annual improvement plan. Monitoring of teaching is good and is used well to improve practice further.
The strategic use of resources	Human and financial resources are used very effectively. Financial planning is very good and based very securely on the principles of best value.

There are a sufficient number of suitably qualified and experienced teachers and support staff to meet the needs of the pupils. Current funding arrangements for the resource base means that there are more than thirty pupils in two of the infant classes, with extra staff to compensate for this. Other staff, including the administrative staff, lunch-time staff, caretaker and cleaners, also make a significant contribution to the life of the school. Overall the accommodation is good, with more storage needed for the equipment of pupils in the resource base. Resources are currently satisfactory, with orders for more books and equipment planned.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What some parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children are happy at school. • The school expects their children to work hard. • The school is well led and managed. • The school is helping their children to become more mature. • Their children are making good progress. • Teaching is good. • Behaviour is good. • They feel comfortable about approaching the school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information about their children's progress. • Homework arrangements. • Size of classes in reception and Year 1. • Storage for resource base children's equipment.

One hundred questionnaires, seeking parents' views about the school's work, were returned. Thirty-two parents attended the meeting held for them before the inspection. This good response reflects parents' support for their children's education. The views in the boxes above are drawn from the questionnaires and the meeting. The inspection fully endorses parents' positive views. It found that the written reports to parents give clear information about pupils' achievements, but do not always state clearly whether they are doing as well as they should for their age. It found that homework arrangements are satisfactory overall, with scope for further discussion with parents about the best way to organise it for different age groups. The inspection agrees with parents that the number of pupils in the reception class and Year 1 is too large. It also found that there is insufficient storage for resource base children's equipment in the classrooms.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

Starting school

1 Since the school opened, pupils have been admitted into the school in all year groups, although there were no Year 6 pupils in the academic year 2000 to 2001. The knowledge, skills and understanding of children starting school in the reception class have been wide ranging over the last three years, but above average overall. This has not been the case in older pupils' classes and many of the pupils were not working at the levels expected for their age when they started at Emersons Green. A few also had behavioural and emotional difficulties.

Standards in national tests

2 In 2001, in the May after the school opened in the September, only pupils in Year 2 took national tests in English and mathematics. They were also assessed in science. Last year, in 2002, pupils in both Years 2 and 6 undertook tests and assessments in all three subjects. In new schools standards in national tests are not a reliable indicator of either the school's provision or pupils' achievements for the first few years. This is because pupils have only been in school for a short time and school policy and practice has not been fully established.

3 There has been clear improvement over the two years in standards at the end of Year 2 in writing and mathematics, with standards average in both subjects in 2002. Standards remained below average in reading. All pupils reached the level expected for their age in science in 2002, which put them in the top five per cent of all schools, but few did better. Higher attainers did not do as well as they should have done in any subject. Pupils did not do as well as those in schools with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals. Predictions for this year's national tests are higher and more optimistic. Year 2 results look set to rise both in reading and writing. These Year 2 pupils will be the first group to be tested who joined the school from the start.

4 At the end of Year 6 standards in the 2002 tests were well below average in English and mathematics and average in science. An average proportion of pupils reached higher levels in mathematics and science, but higher attainers did not do so well in English. Pupils were well behind their peers in similar schools in English and mathematics and did as well as them in science. The school has set challenging targets for the current year, which it is likely to meet.

Inspection findings

5 Currently pupils throughout the school are making good progress and achieving well. Standards are not as high as one would expect given the above average attainment on entry to the reception class. This is because the school is so new. Many pupils joining the school in other year groups have had ground to catch up. This has been the case particularly in older pupils' classes.

The Foundation Stage

6 Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well because they are taught effectively. They are making good progress in the development of their personal, social and emotional skills and are also doing well in the areas of communication, language and literacy and mathematical development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. They are making steady progress in the development of their physical and creative skills. At the moment the outside area is not used sufficiently to help children to make progress in these

areas. Nearly all are on line to exceed the early learning goals¹ in all areas of learning² by the end of their reception year and many are already working within level 1 of the National Curriculum.

Years 1 and 2

Literacy and numeracy

7 Pupils also make good progress in Years 1 and 2. Standards are average overall in all areas of English by the time pupils reach the end of Year 2, with some achieving higher levels, both in reading and writing. Standards are also average in numeracy, with almost all pupils reaching the expected level 2. Higher attainers are not always challenged sufficiently, especially in mathematics. The school has also identified this as an area for development.

Other subjects

In most other subjects, including science, pupils reach the levels expected for their age and do better in design and technology.

Years 3 to 6

Literacy and numeracy

8 Pupils make good progress through Years 3 to 5 and very good progress in Year 6. Standards are below average overall at the end of Year 6 in both English and mathematics. This is because there is a significant group who have special educational needs and are a little behind their peers. Nonetheless some other pupils reach high levels in reading and writing. The teaching of pupils in Years 5 and 6 in sets of similar ability for mathematics and English has made a good contribution to their good progress.

Other subjects

9 Pupils reach average standards in science and in most other subjects. They do better in design and technology. In information and communication technology they reach the levels expected for their age in the areas studied, but have not covered the full curriculum. Only one physical education lesson was timetabled during the inspection. Standards seen were average and almost all pupils swim 25 metres by the time that they leave the school.

Reasons for rising standards

10 There are several factors that have helped to raise standards so far. These include:

- good teaching and a particularly cohesive approach to planning, which ensures that pupils are building on skills, knowledge and understanding from previous years;
- very challenging teaching in Year 6;
- very good support from teaching assistants, especially for pupils with special educational needs;
- the use of 'catch-up' programmes to help pupils who are a little behind. These include strategies such as 'ALS' (Additional Literacy Strategy) and 'booster' groups.

Reasons why standards are not higher

11 Similarly there are several factors to account for lower standards than one would expect in a school where children entering the reception class are doing very well for their age. These include:

- disruption in older pupils' education. All have been to at least one other school and many have had several teachers since they started at Emersons Green because

¹ Early learning goals establish expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage.

² The areas of learning are: personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development.

classes grew quickly and had to be split. Small classes and good teachers helped to compensate for this.

- a large group in the current Year 6, who were behind levels expected for their age when they joined the school
- sometimes a lack of challenge for pupils. Although teachers know their pupils well they do not always expect enough of them. This is particularly true of the higher attaining pupils for whom the work that teachers set is often not challenging enough to ensure they make sufficient progress.
- assessment procedures, although in place, are not yet fully implemented. As a result pupils' targets for improvement are not always as focused as they might be.

The school has already identified these last two points as areas for development.

Progress of pupils with special educational needs

12 Thirteen per cent of pupils, including seven attached to the resource base, are formally identified as having special educational needs. Included within this group are seven pupils with statements of educational need attached to the resource base, a further four pupils with statements of educational need in the main school and sixteen pupils on School Action or School Action plus. Most of the pupils not attached to the resource base have moderate learning difficulties and a few have emotional and behavioural problems. In addition to these pupils there are also others who are not yet reaching the levels expected for their age, but who are supported effectively in class. This is most apparent in Year 6, where a large group began the year behind their peers.

Progress of pupils attached to the resource base

13 Pupils with statements of educational need attached to the resource base make excellent progress towards the targets listed on their education plans. They make equally successful progress towards the targets for physical, social and academic development. For example, a Year 1 physically disabled pupil took part fully in a class gymnastics lesson, climbing and balancing on apparatus alongside peers with the close support of an additional teacher. In another instance, a Year 3 pupil with additional speech difficulties explained to her assistant how she paid for an object with 14p with a 20p coin and counted on from 14 to 20 to find her change. Pupils with cystic fibrosis and cerebral palsy make very good progress through regular physiotherapy sessions provided by their trained assistants. A reception pupil, using a 'Tellus' computer and a series of learned symbols, interacts very successfully with his ability group and his assigned assistant using eye movements. All pupils attached to the resource base spend the large majority of their time within mainstream classes, attached to similar ability groups for literacy and numeracy lessons and mixed ability groups for other aspects of the curriculum. Their excellent achievement is a direct result of extremely well organised planning and deployment of teaching and support staff and sensitive prompting, questioning and encouragement.

Progress of pupils with special educational needs in the main school

14 Overall, pupils with special educational needs make good progress and very good progress when they are working in small groups with adult support. This is because work is planned well to meet their learning needs and because teachers and support staff give them very good support. In Year 6 this year, for example, most of these pupils have made great strides during the year. A significant factor in pupils' good progress is the contribution of the teaching assistants. In a Year 5 literacy session, for example, the assistant skilfully pulled pupils ideas together to help them to design a leaflet. She was encouraging and supportive and gave pupils the confidence to participate. Another factor that has made a difference is the use of special catch up programmes, such as the additional literacy strategy. In conversation with a group of Year 4 boys, who were working in this group, it was apparent that they found it helpful and had made good progress.

Progress of pupils learning English as an additional language

15 Pupils learning English as an additional language make the same good progress as their peers. They are all fluent English speakers and do not feel that they have any difficulty in understanding their teachers or each other. One pupil, who joined the school last September not knowing any English, has made excellent progress in acquiring his third language as a result of the good support provided.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

Attitudes

16 Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good throughout the school. Pupils are eager to come to school and show keen interest in lessons and other activities. Children in the reception class are secure and happy and clearly understand what is expected of them. Throughout the school pupils concentrate well, work hard and co-operate very well when they work in small groups. In the playground at break times, they play amicably together, although there is not much equipment for them to use. Older boys have used their initiative and adapted their football games so that they do not interfere too much with other pupils who prefer a quieter break.

17 Pupils attached to the special needs resource base show high levels of enthusiasm for their work. They show interest and concentration within the groups they work alongside. They relate extremely well to all resource base staff and to their class teachers. Their positive attitudes and the obvious pleasure they take in their learning within the mainstream class environment results in pupils without physical disabilities showing very positive attitudes of friendship and care towards their physically disabled peers.

Behaviour

18 Behaviour is very good and has improved considerably since the school was opened nearly two and a half years ago. The youngest children in the reception class clearly know the difference between right and wrong. Pupils are very clear about expectations and show high levels of respect for the school rules. High standards of behaviour are a consistent feature in lessons, the playground and dining hall. Occasionally, a few pupils provide extra challenge to both teachers and other pupils, but the established procedures for dealing with such incidences mean that they do not disrupt the calm and business-like atmosphere prevalent in the school. These pupils are identified with special educational needs in relation to their behaviour and have targets set to help them to improve. As a result of the school's positive approach to managing pupils' behaviour, only three fixed-term exclusions have been used in the last year and there have been none this year. School records show that the behaviour of this very small group is improving. Very few instances of bullying are reported; where they occur, the school has rigorous procedures for eliminating it. Pupils reported few such incidences but felt confident and well supported when they did.

Relationships

19 Relationships between adults and pupils are very good. All staff show a warm, friendly and supportive approach that sets a good example to their pupils. Pupils are polite, helpful to one another and to visitors. Everyone accepts pupils from the resource base spontaneously as friends. All pupils are mindful of how their actions can impact on others; if they fall short, established routines are in place to remind them of their responsibilities.

Personal development

20 Pupils' personal development is good, particularly as they get older. They take responsibility for administrative jobs around the school, and where they can, they take on more leading roles; for example the poetry book project. Pupils presented the headteacher

with a full set of accounts showing how every penny had been accounted for, organised the editing and then helped sell the books. Although there is not yet a school council in place, pupils share their opinions with their class teachers about school life; Year 6 pupils requested of their teacher whether they could sit at tables for their literacy lessons rather than the carpet, and as a result, they felt valued and able to concentrate harder on their learning.

- 21 There are several other opportunities where pupils use their initiative; for example:
- writing, costing and publishing a poetry book which pupils sold to raise money – part went to a charity and the rest was used for buying staging;
 - some pupils attend the theatre regularly with a teacher;
 - community projects, for example the environmentally-friendly 'BATPHONE' structure by the school entrance;
 - producing mosaics for the local library and helping to design street signs in the newly built village.

Attendance

22 Attendance is satisfactory and is close to the national average for primary schools. Most absences are for medical reasons but, in addition, some families take holidays during the term. Registration procedures are prompt and thorough. Punctuality for almost all pupils is good throughout the year.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

23 Overall the quality of teaching is good and ensures that most pupils achieve well. In the lessons seen about a quarter of the teaching was very good and excellent, about a half was good, with the remaining quarter satisfactory. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen. This is a very strong picture and reflects the commitment of all staff to establishing good practice and doing their best for the pupils.

- 24 Some strengths underpin all the teaching these include:
- very good planning. Teachers plan carefully for sessions and take care to address the learning needs of the different groups of pupils within the class. Clear learning objectives are set for each session and these are usually shared with pupils at the outset. Teaching assistants are given clear guidance about their role in particular sessions.
 - very good relationships between staff and pupils.
 - very good support from teaching assistants. Teaching assistants make a significant contribution to the teaching and learning, working especially effectively with pupils who have special educational needs. They are highly motivated and work closely with teachers to provide sensitive and caring support that not only promotes pupils' learning but also their successful integration into whole class activities.
 - teachers value all pupils as individuals, whatever their needs, and take great care to identify those who need additional support. They question and prompt skilfully, ensuring that pupils of all capabilities are involved in whole-class discussions by phrasing questions in different ways. These particular strategies were used well in a Year 1 numeracy lesson, when pupils were involved in counting tasks. All pupils felt secure and were keen to answer to show their understanding.
- 25 In the very good and excellent lessons particular strengths include:
- challenging lessons that move at a good pace so that pupils strive to improve and much is achieved.
 - very good subject knowledge. This was especially evident in the very good music and art lessons and excellent English session seen.

Within the context of good teaching overall there are some areas for development in the satisfactory lessons. These include:

- consistent challenge for pupils, especially higher attainers. Higher attaining pupils are not always fully challenged by the work set for them and the school intends addressing this issue as part of its programme of development.
- balance between time pupils spend listening to the teacher and the time they spend engaged in purposeful activities.
- consistency in the way in which teachers respond to pupils' written work.

Teaching of children in the Foundation Stage

26 Children in the Foundation Stage are taught well and this enables them to make a good start at school. The teacher and support assistants obviously enjoy the children's company and the very good relationships between staff and children form a firm foundation for children to learn and make progress. Tasks are very well planned and ensure that children experience all the areas of learning. There is a particular focus on helping children to develop their early communication, language, literacy and numerical skills and this means that most of them have already reached the early learning goals at the end of the reception year. In some sessions children spend too much time listening to the teacher and not enough in purposeful tasks. In the lessons seen the quality of teaching and learning in the activity part of the session was the strongest feature. The teachers and support staff challenge individuals and small groups well at these times and they move forward quickly. There is scope for expecting more of pupils who are engaged in independent tasks at these times.

Teaching in Years 1 and 2

27 Most of the lessons seen in Years 1 and 2 were of good quality. Teachers engage with the pupils in a lively and interesting way and this helps pupils to maintain concentration and enjoy what they are learning. In the introduction to sessions in Year 1, for example, the teacher calls on 'Walt' the whale to tell the pupils what they will be learning in the lesson. Sensible routines have been established and pupils understand what is expected of them. Sometimes pupils spend too long on the carpet listening to the teacher. In a few lessons higher attainers were not challenged sufficiently.

Teaching in Years 3 to 6

28 In Years 3 to 6, the quality of teaching in lessons seen ranged from satisfactory to excellent and were predominantly good. Teaching is particularly strong in the oldest pupils' class and is a factor in these pupils' very good progress this year. The specialist music teaching is also very good and ensures that pupils achieve very well in lessons. Homework arrangements throughout the school are satisfactory. It is used well to support pupils' work at school, but there is more scope for involving parents more closely. At the moment not all teachers give clear information to pupils and parents about how successfully homework tasks have been tackled. Pupils' home-school diaries show that most parents are fully involved in supporting their children at home.

Teaching of literacy and numeracy

29 Good teaching of both literacy and numeracy skills ensures that pupils make good progress. Particular strengths include strong teaching in Years 2 and 6 and in literacy the use of imaginative strategies to excite and involve pupils. Phonics is well taught. In numeracy, teachers show good subject knowledge and in some lessons resources like an overhead projector, protractors, individual white boards and markers and well-chosen websites are used well to move pupils forward. In most classes, essential mathematical vocabulary is shared and displayed in order to extend pupils' understanding. There is more scope for challenging higher attainers in both areas.

Teaching of pupils with special educational needs

30 The quality of teaching for pupils who have special educational needs is good. It is based on very good relationships between staff and pupils. Teachers and assistants know the pupils well and are skilful in both supporting and challenging these pupils. Work is planned well. Class teachers draw up the pupils individual education plans in consultation with assistants, parents and pupils and these are reviewed termly. Consequently pupils move forward well and make good gains in their learning.

Teaching of pupils attached to the resource base

31 The quality of teaching and support for pupils with physical disabilities attached to the resource base is excellent. Rigorous planning and high levels of liaison among all teachers and assistants result in all pupils achieving extremely well in all aspects of their learning. Teachers and assistants work together to ensure a fully inclusive approach to the pupils' education, deploying staff and organising teaching groups, resources and furniture to provide optimum opportunity for the pupils to participate fully. The additional teacher or assistant always available alongside the pupils ensures their full participation in both the class and group activity elements of lessons. Teachers and assistants observe and assess pupils' involvement in listening and class participation. They question and prompt while pupils are writing or actively involved in pursuits to ensure that pupils communicate what they understand or what they are doing. Their relationships with pupils are outstanding. They show sensitivity as they apply a judicious balance of support and challenge.

Teaching of pupils learning English as an additional language

32 Pupils learning English as an additional language are taught well. All are now fluent in English and do not need any extra support in order to understand what is being taught. One pupil, who joined the school in September, received extra support until he was confident in using and understanding English.

Teaching of higher attaining pupils

33 Higher attaining pupils work on more difficult tasks than their peers and in some lessons are grouped with pupils of similar ability. This goes some way to helping them to achieve well. However, in some sessions not enough is expected of them and although they do well, they could do better.

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

34 A good deal of effort has been put in to ensure that the school meets its intention to provide a broad, balanced and rich curriculum that is relevant to the needs of all of its pupils. Currently, arrangements are satisfactory overall but with some significant strengths already firmly established. Suitable emphasis is placed on the development of numeracy and literacy skills throughout the school with a strong emphasis on pupils' personal development. The curriculum provides equality of access and opportunity for all pupils. A good range of visits and extra-curricular activities and very good community links enrich the provision. Very good partnerships with other schools and institutions are used effectively to support pupils' learning and links with pre-school groups and local secondary schools prepare them well for entry to the school or transfer to the next stage of their education. The school is well placed now to move forward by continuing to refine its provision.

The Foundation Stage curriculum

35 National guidelines for the Foundation Stage curriculum are being fully and successfully implemented. This ensures that children experience a wide range of learning experiences that enables them to make good progress in developing their basic and personal skills. It prepares them well for the National Curriculum.

Curricular planning

36 In Years 1 to 6 pupils have access to all the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. All statutory requirements are met, including the act of collective worship and the demands of the Locally Agreed syllabus for religious education. Quite rightly, there has been a suitable emphasis on developing literacy and numeracy skills throughout the school. In these two areas teachers use the national strategies consistently to support the good teaching and learning seen in all classes.

37 In other subjects, planning frameworks have been put in place to provide teachers with advice about what is to be taught in each year. Most are based on national guidelines published by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, including science and ICT where provision is good. The well-equipped computer suite enables whole class teaching of computer skills and as a result standards are rising rapidly. A good start has also been made on the use of ICT to support and extend pupils' learning in other subjects.

38 However, in most subjects there has not been enough time yet to adapt the guidelines to ensure that they meet the particular needs of teachers and pupils at this school. In physical education, for example, they do not provide teachers with a clear enough overview of the particular skills to be developed year on year as pupils move through the school. Teachers' half-termly and weekly plans based on these frameworks are detailed and thorough. They provide clear information about what they expect pupils to learn, key teaching points and the associated knowledge and skills to be taught. The headteacher and subject leaders regularly monitor these plans and as a result the quality is consistent throughout the school.

39 The school agrees that it is time now to refine the curriculum by ensuring a better balance between the subjects. For example, the core subjects of English and mathematics have generous amounts of time allotted with all pupils studying literacy and numeracy for at least an hour each day. Some numeracy lessons seen were considerably longer than the recommended times. This has the effect of squeezing the time that is available for the rest of the curriculum, making it difficult for teachers to deal in sufficient depth with the content planned.

Equal opportunities

40 Equality of opportunity is very good, with all pupils having access to the full curriculum. Teachers are very good at encouraging all pupils to become fully involved in the daily life of the school and to take advantage of the opportunities offered. A notable feature is the way that pupils with very specific needs, including pupils from the resource base, receive individualised and often very specialised support so that they can learn alongside their classmates. Teachers regularly check pupils' progress in literacy and numeracy and a range of booster and other programmes are being used to raise standards and improve their access to the curriculum. Grouping of pupils helps cater for different abilities in most lessons. In mathematics and in English there is a system of setting according to attainment levels in Years 5 and 6. Parents, pupils and teachers report that this arrangement is successful in meeting the wide-ranging needs of pupils and the inspection found that grouping and setting helped pupils to achieve well. Pupils with special educational needs have full access to the curriculum as do those from minority ethnic groups and those for whom English is an additional language. All pupils have open access to sport and extra-curricular activities.

Provision for pupils with special educational needs

41 All pupils have full access to all areas of the curriculum. Pupils are effectively helped to work on the full range of the subjects offered by support within class. This support is a combination of extra adult help together with specially planned work. The school also runs some special programmes to help pupils to improve their literacy skills. At these times the assistant and pupils work in a small teaching room away from the rest of the class.

42 The curriculum for pupils attached to the resource base is excellent. The teacher in charge of the base ensures that each pupil has a well-focused individual education plan that relates to the curriculum being followed by the pupils' year group. Through carefully timetabled support, the pupils have full access to the class curriculum and the necessary additional support to help them focus on the targets noted. As a result of this highly structured curriculum planning, pupils receive their full curriculum entitlement and the specialist support they require in order to achieve successfully alongside pupils of similar academic ability.

43 Staff attached to the resource base are an excellent example of the school's fully inclusive provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. In the way they relate to pupils attached to the base and to pupils working and playing alongside those who are physically disabled, they provide exceptional role models for the pupils. Through their unobtrusive, but highly effective presence alongside class teachers in lessons, they enable able-bodied and disabled pupils to work and play together successfully. They promote very positive attitudes towards disability throughout the school community.

44 Pupils learning English as an additional language follow the same curriculum as their peers, with extra support provided for pupils when they are at the early stages of learning English. There is room to celebrate these pupils' achievement more extensively by providing dual textbooks, for example.

Additional activities including visits and visitors

45 Visiting sports coaches, staff and parents are involved in organising a good range of additional activities outside lesson times. These not only extend and develop pupils' skills but also provide them with opportunities to follow their particular interests alongside pupils from other classes. Many activities are seasonal and others depend on the skills and expertise of current staff but amongst others they have included science, drama, dance, gardening and recorders. Sporting activities include athletics, football and hockey.

46 An interesting programme of visits and visitors supports pupils' learning in all classes. For example, good advantage is taken of the school's location to visit a Tudor house and museum in Bristol, a mosque and a Roman settlement in Caerleon. There are regular visitors to assemblies from representatives of local churches and other visitors have included artists and theatre groups who have helped pupils to develop their skills. While these activities support and extend pupils' classroom experiences they are also important in promoting their personal development. In addition they are an indication of the school's commitment to provide a broad and stimulating curriculum.

Links with the community

47 The school has been proactive in establishing good links with the community and pupils have been involved in a number of local projects. Their artwork is displayed in the local park and the library and is to be used for signposts in the neighbourhood. Local as well as national charities are supported and through these an ongoing relationship has emerged with a local trainer of guide dogs for the blind. The Out of School club is an interesting initiative that many parents find helpful. Originally started in conjunction with a neighbouring primary school, the venture is now run by play leaders and parents having secured funding to ensure

its continued success. A dance group performs at the Mangotsfield Festival and the school has a stall to raise its profile in the local area. However, the school has yet to explore fully the opportunities presented by the locality as a resource for pupils' learning. On a wider scale there are useful links with the global community via the Internet and through headteacher and teacher visits and links with Australia, Thailand and Denmark.

Links with partner institutions

48 Links with local schools and other educational establishments are very good. Liaison with pre-school providers and with secondary schools prepares pupils well for entry to the school and for transfer to the next stage of education. These links with local secondary schools are extended to include opportunities for older students to take up work experience placements at the school. The headteacher and subject leaders report that the local network of primary schools provides a useful forum for the exchange of ideas and for their mutual support. In addition the school, as a Partnership Promotion School, works closely with the University of West of England and the Teacher Training Agency, reflecting its commitment to teacher training.

Personal, social and health education

49 Current arrangements are satisfactory. There is a basic whole school framework to guide teachers in their planning and each class makes use of sessions such as circle time to explore values and beliefs and to address areas of conflict. These contribute well to the very good relationships seen in all classrooms. The school has identified this as an area for development. The intention now is to develop a whole school programme that deals also with issues such as healthy eating, drug awareness, sex education and citizenship. This is currently being addressed satisfactorily.

50 Arrangements to develop pupils' personal development across the school are good. The arrangements made for pupils to grow spiritually, morally and culturally are equally good. Provision for their social development is very good.

Spiritual development

51 Provision for the spiritual development of pupils is good. In addition to the opportunities provided in religious education lessons and daily assemblies, there are several occasions for pupils in their lessons to reflect on their own beliefs, emotions and values. Year 6 poetry written in the style of Wilfred Owen gets to the heart of understanding human feelings and emotions and how they impact on people. Pupils really capture the desolation, anger and frustration of soldiers in World War One in their writing. Year 2 pupils show horror when the teacher, in role as 'Owl Mother' from a story, answers a pupil's question that she feeds on baby rabbits. Equally, pupils all sigh 'Aaahhh!' when the story ends with Baby Owl saying 'I do love my Mummy!' In an assembly, pupils quickly make links between Ghandi's non-violence philosophy and the same needs in their school. Pupils' responses to Ted Hughes' poetry about making the world a better place comment of 'guns that fire feathers' and 'a knife that cuts you gently and lets your troubles flow away'. These discussions that pupils have with their teachers provide opportunities for them to develop their self-knowledge. They understand tolerance of individual difference by learning beside physically disadvantaged and visually impaired pupils. The school has developed a safe and secure environment where all pupils can flourish, respect others and be respected. Behaviour is now very good; the occasional challenging behaviour from a small number of pupils is better understood and tolerated by others. The co-ordinator for religious education is planning to develop spirituality across the curriculum over the next year, enabling staff to understand how to improve the subject further.

Moral development

52 Provision for the moral development of pupils is good. Pupils are involved in setting rules for their class; they also uphold them. Staff provide very good role models for pupils. They

work very hard to resolve conflict and to encourage respect between all school members. The rewards and sanctions system is well understood by pupils, staff and parents; it works effectively with the vast majority of pupils. The school is an open, secure environment where pupils feel safe to express their views and opinions, and where they become increasingly confident about knowing right from wrong.

Social development

53 Provision for the social development of pupils is very good. Overall, pupils are very well behaved, polite and generally articulate to adults and in class. All respect each other mainly because of the very good quality of relationships. Many classes work collaboratively in lessons, sharing resources amicably and supporting each other's learning through small group and paired work. Older boys have used their initiative and adapted their football games so that they do not interfere too much with other pupils who prefer a quieter break. Pupils from the resource base are fully integrated and accepted by all. The values of the school are visible in every classroom and most are aware of the vision statement '*Learning together, achieving together*'. Pupils have some responsibilities in classes and around the school; older pupils take on more, for example in the poetry book project. Although there is no school council, the school plans to start one in the near future. Older pupils benefit from residential trips where they learn greater independence and how to live with others, albeit briefly. The numerous dramatic and musical productions arranged by the school all contribute to pupils' confidence and self awareness; raising money for charities and working to improve the local environment all promote pupils' growing awareness of their wider responsibilities in the community.

Cultural development

54 Provision for pupils' cultural development is good. Knowledge of their own culture is promoted through activities such as theatre visits, Maypole dancing, visiting musicians, Book Fairs, involvement in community arts and history projects, dramatic and musical productions and links to schools in other countries. Older pupils have experienced an impressive range of drama – visits to the theatre include '*Oliver*', '*A Christmas Carol*', '*Watership Down*', and '*A Midsummer Night's Dream*' among others. Pupils' studies in religious education help them to understand their own Christian tradition as well as others, for example Islamic and Hindu customs. In art, they learn about aboriginal culture.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

Health, Safety and Care of all pupils

55 The school has very good procedures for the care, safety and security of all of its pupils. The comprehensive policy for health and safety is supplemented well by detailed policies on drugs education, Internet access, prevention of violence at work, arrangements for educational visits, manual handling operations involving children, administration of medicines, child protection and asthma. All adults are familiar with these procedures and this was illustrated well during the inspection when staff and parents accompanied pupils on a trip to a Tudor house in Bristol.

56 The health and safety governor and headteacher are active in monitoring all aspects of health and safety. The findings during their regular half-termly assessments are reported fully to governors. There are very good arrangements for first aid and administering medicines. All medicines are kept securely and pupils' medical conditions and requirements are recorded well. All staff are informed of these medical needs. The fire appliances, electrical and PE equipment are all tested regularly. The school facilitates the out of school club that provides for the care of children before school.

57 All staff working in the resource base show exemplary levels of care for the pupils. The teacher in charge has developed highly effective relationships with staff from other support agencies, including occupational and physiotherapists, educational psychologists, medical and local education authority staff. All offer positive support to staff and pupils attached to the base.

Child Protection

58 All members of staff are familiar with the comprehensive child protection policy and procedures. These are discussed with all new members of staff when they join the school. The procedures work well.

Measures to promote good behaviour and prevent oppressive behaviour

59 The behaviour policy includes clear sanctions and rewards and is understood by children staff and parents. This has helped children to moderate their behaviour and also recognises those children who behave well in school. Staff reviewed behaviour recently and concluded that there has been good progress on the use of card systems, class rules, children monitoring their own behaviour and on 'listening rules'. Incident book records are analysed by individual and by group. The pupils involved record in their own words 'What happened', 'Who was involved', 'What will happen next', 'How can I make things better'. The responses are honest and most pupils gain from this experience. The pupils are responsible for agreeing their class rules annually and they respond to these well. There is a system of communication to parents about behaviour. They are informed of problems at an appropriate stage though not necessarily on isolated minor infringements.

60 There is a good bullying policy and guidelines for parents. Parents are encouraged to share concerns with the staff and these are dealt with immediately. The school has very positive relationships with outside agencies including therapists, educational psychologists, the inclusion and behaviour support team.

Measures to promote good attendance

61 Attendance is monitored closely by the teachers and administrative staff. Absences are followed up by 9.30am each day. Computerised recording of attendance is used to track any patterns of absences or lateness. The school receives very good support from the education welfare officer. In all of its publications the school stresses the importance of avoiding holidays in term-time.

Assessment

62 The quality and use of assessment to monitor pupils' academic progress is satisfactory. The school's arrangements for assessment are good in literacy and numeracy but are in need of development in other subjects. The school properly administers the local baseline assessment as children enter the school as well as national tests in Year 2 and Year 6. In addition, pupils take the optional literacy and numeracy tests in Years 3 to 5 and these results are monitored to review their progress and identify those who need extra support. The tracking of pupils' progress from year to year is good and under further development. Pupils' results are recorded in literacy and numeracy and used well to help teachers establish targets and predict pupils' attainments. Staff are undergoing training to use a computer based system for entering and displaying this data which will improve access to the information as well as help management evaluate the school's overall performance.

63 Assessment information is analysed well to identify areas for school development and in mathematics it is used well to set pupils into groups of similar ability. Teachers have agreed to focus on the development of specific skills in literacy, numeracy, science and ICT. This ensures that in these aspects, pupils' progress is monitored well but assessment of pupils'

attainments in other areas of information and communication technology is not yet established satisfactorily.

64 Within each class, teachers have their own systems for reviewing pupils' progress and have a good knowledge of how their pupils are developing. Teachers use a variety of assessments, mainly at the end of topics, to monitor pupils' learning in science and foundation subjects but they do not record results in a consistent way. As a result information is not passed on in a format that makes it easy for teachers to compare pupils' attainment from class to class. The deputy headteacher and the leaders of the foundation subjects guide staff on appropriate assessment tasks but they are aware of the need to improve these further and establish consistency across the school. Staff are involved in a programme of improving 'assessment for learning' which places a valuable emphasis on raising pupils' own awareness of how they are developing.

65 While there is a developing programme of exchanging information on the levels pupils attain, staff still need to increase their skills and confidence in levelling work in both core and foundation subjects. Teachers are gathering portfolios of moderated pupils' work which is a helpful guide for all staff to improve their expectations of what pupils can achieve. In addition, on the first day of each month, pupils complete a piece of work in literacy and numeracy, which is designed to build up a picture of their developing skills over time. However, the type of work completed is often very different and the value of this exercise is not always served well by a degree of inconsistency in the tasks set.

66 Pupils with special educational needs are assessed carefully. These assessments form the basis for their individual education plans, which are reviewed each term by staff, parents and pupils. This means that all parties have a clear view of how well the pupil is doing.

67 The assessment of pupils attached to the resource base is excellent. All staff working alongside pupils complete monitoring sheets which relate to targets on the pupils' individual education plans. These assessments are kept in each pupil's folder and all adults working with the same pupil have access to the plans and monitoring records. Parents and pupils are fully involved in termly reviews of progress and staff are currently introducing pictorial self-assessment charts, which involve even the youngest pupils in regular checks on how well they are doing as they work towards particular targets.

68 Pupils learning English as an additional language receive appropriate support. When a non-English speaker was admitted at the beginning of the year, for example, he had some extra help from a visiting teacher until he was fluent in English. Only two per cent of pupils are learning English as an additional language.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

Parents' views of the school

69 The school's partnership with parents is very good. In the questionnaires all parents felt that their children like school. The vast majority also felt that:

- behaviour in the school is good;
- that the school expects the children to work hard and is helping them to become more mature;
- they get the right amount of homework;
- teaching is good;
- the school is well led and managed;
- the school works closely with parents, including providing good information on how well the children are getting on.

Almost all would feel comfortable approaching the school. These very positive views were reinforced at the meeting for parents before the inspection. Over half of the parents returned the questionnaires and over 40 parents attended the meeting. All of the evidence gathered during the inspection strongly confirms these very positive aspects of the school.

70 A few parents feel that the school does not work closely with them. The inspectors concluded that the staff work extremely hard to communicate well with parents. The school is very inviting and friendly. Staff recognise that a few parents are not satisfied about the subject grouping arrangements or the issuing of sanctions cards for their children. Some parents feel that their children do not get the right amount of work at home and that the school does not provide an interesting range of additional activities. The evidence does not support most of these views. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities through clubs, outside visits and visitors to the school. The homework is mostly regular and at a level outlined in the school's guidance, with more work needed on feeding back to parents and children on how well homework tasks are undertaken.

71 Eighteen percent of parents in the questionnaire replies did not feel well informed about how their children are getting on. The annual reports are thorough but do not always give a clear enough picture of whether pupils are doing as well as they should for their age. However, the results of standard tests (SATs) are given to parents and for the older children teachers give levels in their work-books and indicate what they should do to move to the next level.

The information provided by the school

72 The prospectus is very thorough and informative. It is well presented and covers key aspects of school life, including the curriculum, in good detail. Parents are made clear of expectations of good behaviour and attendance. The annual report to parents is also informative and gives a good picture of activities during the previous year. Newsletters are sent out every Friday and these cover a very wide range of topics including curriculum information, staffing developments and the results of parental surveys. Teachers also send out newsletters each half term which give the parents more detailed information about what is going on in their classes. Daily messages are written on a board in the front lobby and copies of newsletters and information posters are displayed on a second board. Each child has a home-school diary that parents and staff use to communicate anything that is not of a confidential nature. Evidence during the inspection shows that parents use the reading record books actively and regularly.

73 The annual pupil reports are very good overall. All areas are covered in very good detail and realisable targets are set. There is a clear invitation for parents to arrange an appointment to discuss the details of the reports. Parents and pupils actively take up the opportunity to add their own comments. Attendance information is included but there is no indication of levels of attainment. Parents are kept informed about the Additional Literacy Scheme, Early Literacy Support and Further Literacy Support strategies and if and when their children are participating in these initiatives.

74 Parents of pupils in the main school, who are formally identified with special educational needs, are fully involved in discussions about their child's progress. They appear satisfied with the provision made. It is not always made clear to parents how well their children are doing in relation to the levels expected for their age. This means that parents of pupils who are behind their peers, but not identified with special educational needs are not always aware of their child's difficulties. One parent felt that he was informed late about his child's needs, but is happy with the current provision.

75 The school holds regular open meetings to discuss areas like 'Vision and Values'. Information evenings have been held on induction, 'Jolly Phonics', sex education, school camp, SATs and the organisation of classes. These are held at different times of the day to accommodate as many parents as possible.

Parents' support

76 The home-school agreement was drawn up with the help of parents. All parents were issued with copies when the school started and then each year to new parents. Almost all parents sign and return these agreements each year. There is very good support by most parents for children at home and staff are currently looking at ways of enhancing this aspect of partnership. Many parents give support in lessons, particularly for the younger classes. Others, who may be unable to come into school regularly, prepare new resources at home. Parents give very good support for school trips, sports days, concerts, plays and special assemblies. The Parents, Teachers and Friends' Association (PTFA) is very active in organising social events and fund-raising. It is supported well by other parents and raises a lot of money for the school. Coffee mornings for parents every Thursday were set up originally to help parents new to the area make new friends but it has been so successful that it has been continued as a feature of the school week. The cook makes biscuits and sells coffee and the profits go into the PTFA funds. A member of staff organises about 10 theatre trips a year for staff, children and parents. These are supported well and help to cement relationships further.

77 There are good arrangements for informing new parents about the school and helping children to settle in. These include visits for children in the summer term before they start, meetings for parents and visits to local pre-school providers.

78 Parents of pupils attached to the resource base are extremely positive about their children's placement in the school and about their social, emotional, physical and academic progress. Parents are particularly appreciative of the commitment of the staff, both attached to the base and throughout the school, for their approachability and readiness to keep parents fully informed and respond to their queries and concerns.

79 Two related areas of concern expressed by parents, and echoed by teachers, are the size of classrooms and storage space for equipment such as wheelchairs and walking frames. Currently, pupils attached to the resource base are in the reception year and Years 1 and 3. As they get older, their equipment and the larger furniture in classrooms for older pupils will take up more space. It will clearly be necessary to plan carefully with the Local Education Authority at the time of admission, in order to ensure that the mobility needs of disabled pupils can be met in the long term through to Year 6 within the classroom and storage space available.

80 The other parental concern also relates partly to the issue of space, but also to staffing. Currently, both in the reception class and in Years 1 and 2, pupils attached to the resource base and their assistant or additional teacher join a full class of 30 pupils. The school is in negotiation with its supportive local education authority to address the practical and organisational issues surrounding this arrangement. Whilst both the able-bodied pupils and the physically disabled pupils clearly benefit greatly from the school's inclusive teaching approach, there are anomalies in the arrangements. Firstly, the nationally agreed limit for class size is in essence exceeded, although with appropriate and well-organised support. Secondly, the organisational and planning demands on the class teacher are clearly greater than would be the case if the total class size were limited to thirty. And thirdly, should the school choose to limit the total class size to 30, it would lose revenue and therefore reduce staffing, clearly having a negative effect on all pupils. The situation appears unique to the school because of its innovative approach to inclusion. It therefore requires innovative

thinking and negotiation in order to provide a positive solution with a funding arrangement that supports the highly successful, innovative approach to inclusion for physically disabled and visually impaired pupils.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

81 The head teacher provides very good leadership for the school. She has worked closely with governors and staff to lay strong foundations for the new school and she is well respected by staff, governors, parents and pupils. She and governors have appointed a highly committed staff team who provide a good quality of education for pupils. Importantly, the headteacher's leadership has established a very open climate in which staff easily discuss and develop their professional skills. They have a strong commitment to evaluating the effectiveness of their work and to raising pupils' attainment. This is reflected and supported by the school's accreditation by 'Investors in People'.

82 The headteacher is well supported by her deputy and senior staff with whom she consults regularly. They review the school's progress towards its agreed targets and have established very good management systems by which the school's performance is closely monitored. Performance management procedures are well established and set clear goals for the staff's professional development. Under the deputy headteacher's guidance, staff follow a well-managed programme of professional development to increase their skills, linked to their own and the school's identified areas of development. Regular staff meetings help all staff to be involved in assessing the school's progress and agreeing the next steps for improving pupils' learning.

83 The headteacher delegates responsibilities very well to her staff team who respond enthusiastically to taking on the clearly defined roles assigned to them. The management of the curriculum is very good for the core subjects and information and communication technology, but is not yet fully developed throughout all foundation subjects. The school has had many areas to develop since its creation less than three years ago and has wisely concentrated on priorities within a manageable programme of developments. In literacy, numeracy and science, subject leaders monitor planning closely and have been involved in lesson observations with the headteacher. They are effective in sharing comments from these procedures with all staff and in establishing areas for whole school improvement. In other subjects, while planning has been monitored and evaluated there has not yet been as much time to observe lessons and influence teaching methods.

School development planning

84 The school development plan is a very good document, which sets details for improvements, timings and costings. Priority areas are clearly identified and action plans are included. It is valuable as a means of keeping governors and staff fully informed of areas for improvement as well as providing a comprehensive review of the school's progress towards its declared aims. Staff, governors and parents are consulted in preparing the development plan and staff and governors regularly review the progress of the plan.

A commitment to inclusion

85 One of the major strengths of the school is its commitment to provide equality of opportunity for all members of the school community, including pupils and staff. 'Learning Together, Achieving Together' is at the heart of the Vision and Values statement and is firmly embedded in the day-to-day life and work of the school. It is clearly demonstrated in the strong team spirit that underpins the work of the school. The headteacher is justifiably proud of what has been achieved in a relatively short time in order to establish the highly inclusive

approach seen in all classrooms. It reflects clearly her determination to ensure pupils' all-round development.

Work of the governors

86 Governors take a close interest in the school's affairs and fulfil their responsibilities well. They meet regularly and have a well-organised committee structure, which is effective in monitoring the school's finances, premises and curriculum. The chair of governors is a regular visitor to the school and he is well supported by a very active team of governors who visit the school and maintain an effective programme of monitoring. Governors have subject areas, which they make their special focus, and maintain a close check on these which includes visiting classes to observe teaching informally. The governing body have joined staff in training but have not as yet carried out a thorough evaluation of their own performance and effectiveness.

The leadership and management of work with pupils who have special educational needs

87 The leadership and management of the work with pupils who have special educational needs are very good, with some excellent features. The special needs co-coordinator has a heavy workload. She has a full-time class commitment and is also the English subject leader and a member of the senior management team. Within these constraints she undertakes her role very effectively. Records are very well organised and all arrangements for annual reviews of pupils' statements meet statutory requirements. The monitoring of individual educational plans is excellent and provides very clear guidance for class teachers. Staff are deployed well and supported very effectively. The draft policy meets statutory requirements and governors are fully and effectively involved in discussions about provision and progress.

The leadership and management of the resource base

88 The leadership and management of the resource base for pupils with physical disabilities and visual impairment are excellent. The teacher in charge of the base provision is highly organised and efficient. Through her calm, organised approach, she has built a highly motivated team of support assistants and developed excellent relationships with all class teachers. Together with the SENCO and headteacher, she has developed procedures for full inclusion and thorough assessment. Governors with responsibility for Special Educational Needs receive comprehensive information and are therefore able to offer effective support. The school accounts rigorously for all funding for the work of the Base and that attached to the stated provision for individual pupils. The teacher in charge has built up the full confidence of parents in the work of the Base. It is a model of inclusive provision.

Financial planning

89 The annual financial planning and budget setting are very good. Staff and governors, with very good support from the local authority finance department, have managed the rapid growth of the school and the introduction of the resource base very well. The budgets are closely linked to the school's priorities and there has been good attention to important details during this period of expansion. For example, the headteacher and governors recognised that the school needed additional learning support in the first few years because of the academic profiles of some of the older children who have transferred from other schools. Consequently the school appointed an additional teaching assistant this year and will continue with this support next year. The headteacher prepares the draft budget with the help of the finance administrator and local authority finance officer. The governors are then involved fully in refining and finalising the budget. Good use is made of IT to support this planning. Staff and governors look at budget implications for the next year but there is no longer-term financial planning at present.

90 A combination of factors has resulted in a very healthy reserve at the beginning of the current financial year. These include some of the start-up money and the rapid growth in pupil numbers. Each year there have been good allocations of funds for staff, educational resources and the premises and grounds. There is now a clear plan to use some of this reserve to help with the school's further growth and development. These positive initiatives include a plan for the deputy headteacher to be freed of responsibility for a class for the next year to concentrate on areas for development. Further reserves will be used to provide for the retention of the post of the additional teaching assistant, the appointment of a finance administrator and a significant level of training for all staff. These initiatives are clearly focused on the priority to raise standards.

Principles of best value

91 The staff and governors make very good use of the principles of best value in their expenditure decisions. There is wide consultation between staff, governors and parents (through the PTFA) with joint working parties preparing projects. Staff carry out cost-benefit analyses for priorities in the school improvement plan and they review the effectiveness of training. These reviews inform decisions on future training. Staff seek good value for money in purchases and ways of reducing costs. For example, negotiating with suppliers for less frequent invoicing will reduce administration costs. Competitive tendering is fully in place. The school has anticipated the national initiative of giving teaching staff non-contact time through wise appointments of teaching assistants and the finance administrator. The headteacher monitors service contracts closely and this has resulted in changes to the cleaning arrangements and grounds maintenance. Very good use is made of external funding and support from local companies, trusts and the PTFA. A local insurance company provides volunteers for 'community projects' and has helped develop the outdoor facilities. The school has also received additional income from being a Partnership Promotion School. Good use is made of comparative data from the county to help the school check how well it is doing in a wider context.

92 All earmarked funds, including income for the resource base and special needs is accounted for properly and used for the intended purposes. In both of these areas the school spends additional money from its main budget. The governing body is briefed well and regularly monitors the school's spending. There has been no financial audit yet by the local authority but the finance office works closely with the school. The administrative staff provide very good support for staff, pupils, parents and governors. There are very good routines in place and the school runs very smoothly.

Value for money

93 Overall the attainment of the pupils on entry to the school and the socio-economic circumstances of their families are above average. Taking these factors together with the good teaching, good personal development and progress of the pupils and the excellent resource base, the inspectors have concluded that the school is giving good value for money.

Staffing

94 Since the school opened nearly three years ago, teachers have been appointed rapidly to cope with growing pupil numbers. This has put a huge emphasis on ensuring very good induction procedures for all staff. Now there is some stability and a good match of teachers who are trained and experienced to meet the demands of the curriculum. There is an effective balance of experience and expertise; indeed, several teachers support national and local education authority initiatives from time to time. The school achieved 'Investors in People' early in the proceedings; this has undoubtedly ensured that all staff's continuing professional development remains an important priority. This expertise and training is successfully incorporated into the school's development cycle – all staff are expected to evaluate their training both in curricular and 'value for money' terms. Support staff have many

opportunities to develop professionally. They provide very good levels of support and expertise for pupils, particularly those with special educational needs. They have a real impact on improving pupils' learning. The site manager, his staff and the administrative team take real pride in their roles; they rightly feel a very valued part of the school team.

95 Performance Management is effectively embedded into the school improvement cycle. Both school and individual objectives are co-ordinated to ensure a cohesive approach to improvement. Students who train from the University of West of England (UWE) report that they feel very well supported in school both by their school professional tutors and all staff generally.

96 The resource base is efficiently staffed and very well resourced. All staff attend specific training sessions to extend their skills, responding to the needs of current pupils and those preparing for admission in the coming academic year. The teacher in charge and several assistants also readily involve themselves in additional training in their own time, in order to further their professional expertise.

Accommodation

97 The school's accommodation is good. The new building is light and airy, almost entirely carpeted which quietens the school considerably. This enhances pupils' learning. The hall has a high ceiling and is acoustically poor. Special adaptations have been made to accommodate pupils with physical and visual difficulties – Braille door signs, wide corridors, some tactile paving and bright paintwork are examples. Some teething problems with the building still remain, but overall the accommodation allows the curriculum to be taught effectively. The accommodation in the resource base area is very good, with a physiotherapy room and accessible toilet and shower, as well as the group room. There is, however, insufficient storage space for wheelchairs and walking frames, plus other large equipment. While space in classrooms with younger pupils is adequate for the mobility needs of pupils attached to the resource base, very careful organisation of furniture will be required for pupils accessing classrooms with older year groups.

98 Outside, the grounds are attractively landscaped with seating and shaded areas, a conservation area, field and a generous amount of play area. Classrooms are neat and tidy, well organised and contain attractive displays of pupils' work, reflecting the business-like approach to learning that pervades the school. The ICT suite is housed in a central area and shares this space with an expanding library.

Resources

99 Overall, the provision of learning resources is satisfactory and adequate to meet the demands of the National Curriculum, and of pupils with special educational needs. In design and technology and information and communication technology, they are good. The ICT suite complements machines in every classroom, although very few classroom computers were used during the inspection period. In all other areas resources are adequate. The school is aware that the present provision of library and classroom fiction books is low and barely satisfactory – they are doing all they can to improve. New resources arrive almost daily, particularly books, and there are well-publicised plans to continue spending on learning resources to improve provision.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

100 In order to build on the work of the first two and a half years the headteacher, staff and governors need to:

- 1 Raise standards further in English and mathematics by:
 - Expecting more of pupils and raising the challenge for higher attaining pupils particularly;
(Reference paragraphs: 3, 4, 6, 11, 25, 123 and 127)
 - Consolidating the procedures for assessment:
 - ensuring consistency from class to class;
 - supporting teachers in assessing pupils' work against National Curriculum levels;
 - implementing a clear policy for responding to pupils' written work;
 - identifying clearly the next step in learning for groups and individuals;(Reference paragraphs:11, 25, 38, 62-68, 123, 137, 141, 152, 167 and 171)
 - Readjusting the timetable to provide:
 - shorter more focused numeracy sessions in all classes;
 - sufficient time to cover all subjects in sufficient depth;
 - more opportunities for pupils to experience a range of learning styles.(Reference paragraphs:25, 39, 131 and 176)
2. Implement the school's existing plan for improvement
In addition to aspects of the points identified above this already includes:
 - plans for the raising of standards in all subjects and particularly English, mathematics, science and ICT;
 - further work on the school's provision for personal, social and health education;
 - further development of the school's teaching and learning policy, including work on 'assessment for learning'.

Minor area for development

To work carefully together with the local education authority to negotiate funding, admission, staffing and accommodation arrangements that support long-term provision for pupils attached to the highly successful resource base for physically disabled and visually impaired pupils.

(Reference paragraphs:80 and 97)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	46
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	38

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	9	25	11	0	0	0
Percentage	2%	20%	54%	24%	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	205
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	16
Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	11
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	23
English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	5
Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	30
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	8

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.7
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	12	17	29

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	12	12
	Girls	15	15	15
	Total	26	27	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (86)	93 (73)	93 (86)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	12	12
	Girls	15	15	17
	Total	27	27	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 (86)	93 (86)	100 (86)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	10	12	22

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	6	5	9
	Girls	8	9	11
	Total	14	14	20
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	64 (n/a)	64 (n/a)	91 (n/a)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	5	5	7
	Girls	9	9	9
	Total	14	14	16
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	64 (n/a)	64 (n/a)	73 (n/a)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

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

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	190	3	0
White – Irish	1	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	2	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	2	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	1	0	0
Chinese	2	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	1	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 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23
Average class size	30

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	203

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2002 - 2003
	£
Total income	573,767
Total expenditure	531,727
Expenditure per pupil	2,784
Balance brought forward from previous year	102,347
Balance carried forward to next year	144,387

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2.4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	7.4

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	210
Number of questionnaires returned	100

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	66	30	3	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	53	39	5	3	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	42	50	7	1	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	31	50	15	3	1
The teaching is good.	51	41	3	1	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	40	42	15	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	61	30	5	4	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	65	30	2	1	2
The school works closely with parents.	44	41	9	3	3
The school is well led and managed.	60	35	0	4	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	60	34	2	3	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	36	39	9	3	13

Percentages are rounded up or down to the nearest whole number and may therefore not total exactly 100.

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

101 Children start school in the September after their fourth birthday. When they are assessed in the first half term it is clear that, although their skills, knowledge and understanding are wide ranging, they are doing better than expected for their age in their personal and social development and in their communication, language, literacy and mathematical development. They do well in their first year in school because of the good teaching and support. This year most are on target to reach the early learning goals in all areas of learning well before the end of the reception year, with many already working within Level 1 of the National Curriculum.

Personal, social and emotional development

102 All children have settled well into school and are confident and happy. Very good relationships between children and staff are evident and this sets a firm foundation for children to grow in independence. Consequently children have made good progress in this area because the teacher and support staff are friendly and supportive. Children show obvious enjoyment in their work. They listen carefully to the teacher and respond enthusiastically in whole class sessions. Sometimes they are over exuberant at these times, but the teacher manages them well. When they are engaged in practical activities they are fully involved and persevere well with tasks. Sometimes they play together and at these times usually manage to share sensibly and take turns. In one outside session, for example, two children negotiated how they could share one of the wheeled toys. Children have opportunities most days to engage in independent play activities. They organise themselves well and select from a range of tasks. There is more scope to increase the challenge and widen the opportunities available for independent play. Currently, for example, the outside area is not being used sufficiently for this aspect of children's learning.

Communication, language and literacy

103 Children achieve well in this area because of good teaching. Most communicate confidently with staff and each other. Particular care is taken to support a child attached to the resource base who communicates predominantly through eye pointing and symbols. Children enjoy books and most read simple words. In one session, for example, children worked on reading 'tricky' words and many confidently read words such as *me, she, the, be, do and was* in the introductory part of the session. All children take home reading books and library books to share with parents and carers. This has a significant impact on their good progress. Home-school diaries show that most children regularly look at books with their parents at home. Children have firm favourites and talked to an inspector about books that they had at home, which they particularly enjoyed. Staff take care to promote a love of reading. Often books are the focus for a topic or unit of work and the teacher takes care to read stories to the children during the day. Space in the classroom is fairly limited, but more could be done to make the book corner an inviting place to browse. Children are also doing well in developing early writing skills. Most write their names clearly and many write independently. Children sometimes make small books about aspects of their work and this helps them to appreciate that writing is for a purpose. Again there is scope for developing the independent writing area to make it more interesting for the children.

Mathematical development

104 Children are doing well in this area, with most well advanced for their age. In the lesson seen the children moved ahead at a steady pace because of sound teaching, however their attainment indicates that overall they have made good progress since September. Most confidently count in twos and to a hundred in tens, for example. In the session seen some pupils were adding and taking away numbers up to ten, managing this with support from the teacher and assistant. Their work shows that higher attaining children are confident in recognising numbers to 100 and estimate and count numbers to 30. Lower attaining pupils work with numbers up to five. Children also learn about shape and their work shows that they have learnt about triangles, squares, circles and rectangles. In the session seen children worked on the computer to make symmetrical patterns. Resources are readily available to the children and there are some colourful displays. There are sand and water trays available for the children, but these were not being used for mathematical activities during the independent play sessions.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

105 Much of the work in this area is based on a topic and this makes it interesting for the children. This term they are learning about growing things. The role-play area has been turned into 'Rosy Red Garden Centre' and the children are planting seeds to see what happens. During the week of the inspection children looked at various fruit and learnt that they contained seeds. They also used their senses to investigate the characteristics of different fruits. This lively approach helps children to be fully involved in learning and enjoy what they are doing. Children also did well in a session about the Parable of the Sower. Their responses were recorded in a large floor book and showed that they understood the story. In some aspects of the work related to children's knowledge and understanding they do very well as a result of very strong teaching. This was the case in an ICT session in which children used the computer suite to add and remove objects from bar charts.

Physical development

106 Children make steady gains in their physical development because of sound teaching and provision. In one session seen they used the apparatus in the hall to move over and under it with safety and control. Most managed to jump confidently from the apparatus and used it with control and co-ordination. One of the children from the resource base with physical difficulties was fully involved and managed well because of the very good support that she had. In this well structured lesson, there was scope to challenge children further by providing more guidance about refining their movements. At other times children use the enclosed garden area for physical activities. They use the space well, but there are limited opportunities for their free play. At the time of the inspection only wheeled toys were available. Within the classroom children have opportunities to develop their hand and eye co-ordination. A range of puzzles and construction kits are available and children also use small tools such as pencils and scissors confidently.

Creative development

107 Within the area of creative development some aspects are stronger than others. Children make sound progress in developing their musical skills and imaginative skills through role-play and good progress in developing their artistic skills. Progress in this area is limited to some extent by the size and arrangement of the classroom and the limitations of the outside area. There is a designated role-play area within the classroom, but no provision for role-play activities in the outside area. Musical instruments are not always available for the children to use independently and the organisation of the art area does not make it easy

for children to select from a range of media or materials. Nonetheless children's artwork shows that they use paint boldly and photographs show them using a range of media. In a music session seen children selected from a range of instruments to accompany the story of 'The Hungry Caterpillar'. Many named the instruments correctly, but overall there were limited opportunities for children to participate. A highlight of the session was the contribution made by one of the resource base children, who showed the class an instrument that he had made at a weekend music club and played them a recording of his performance.

Strengths:

- *very good relationships;*
- *very good support from teaching assistants;*
- *good planning.*

Areas for development:

- *the outside area (this has been highlighted by the school);*
- *more challenge in independent activities;*
- *book and writing areas.*

ENGLISH

108 Standards are rising and are higher than they were in last year's national tests. Standards are average overall by the time pupils reach the end of Year 2, with some achieving higher levels, both in reading and writing. Standards are below average at the end of Year 6, although there is evidence that, again, standards are rising appropriately. There is a higher proportion than average of pupils with special educational needs, which affects overall performance of the group. There are, however, a small number of pupils in Year 6 who have reached above average standards in reading and writing.

109 Both reading and writing development have been priorities for the school, with rather more emphasis on writing. Small groups have received special help. This has been successful throughout the school. For a time, pupils in Years 5 and 6 were organised for literacy according to their ability. This promoted a quicker rate of progress that continued when pupils returned to being taught in their year groups. The school is aware that it needs to improve the consistent assessment of pupils' reading so that it is more diagnostic and leads teachers securely to what 'next steps' need to be planned to raise reading standards further.

110 Pupils with special educational needs receive very good support in lessons; support staff are well prepared, skilled and sensitive in helping these pupils to make progress. They play a vital part in helping not only *their* pupils, but also others who benefit from extra support from time to time. Pupils learning English as an additional language, have extra help when they need it. In most classes, higher attaining pupils are not always challenged sufficiently. In Year 6, the rate of challenge is high and pupils make rapid progress as a result. Teachers do try to plan work to stretch their higher attainers, but it is not always hard enough to make these pupils persevere; it does not always catch their interest and motivate them to try harder. There is no significant difference in the attainment of girls and boys.

Speaking and Listening

111 Overall speaking and listening skills are slightly above average, although some year groups are better than others. There are many opportunities in school for pupils to involve themselves in drama and musical productions, to attend theatres and to watch visiting experts in school. All these activities support their growing speaking and listening skills. Infant pupils discuss their work with eagerness, confidence and some excitement. They listen well to their teachers and to each other when they work in groups. Junior pupils listen

thoughtfully to their teachers. Their opinions are sought by adults and valued; as a result they speak with increasing confidence and coherence. They respond sensibly to questions and many make very perceptive comments during discussions. When teachers create more opportunities for speaking and listening by making use of paired or small group work, pupils respond more effectively. This increasing use of paired-partner work in most classes is improving pupils' skills in speaking and listening. They discuss enthusiastically in their groups and report back seriously when asked.

112 In Year 2, the teacher's use of *'hot seating'* (where an adult or child adopts the role of a character from a book, or focuses on a particular point of view, then answers impromptu questions from the class) motivated pupils in one session to ask searching questions about the book they were studying. When in role as *'Owl Mother'*, the teacher admitted to eating baby rabbits, pupils were outraged! One pupil in role as another of the book's characters answered a range of pertinent questions with great expertise, showing a deep understanding of the book's characters and story. Support staff also support this work well by involving themselves in discussions and helping pupils form opinions. Older pupils also express themselves confidently. In a Year 5 design and technology lesson, pupils used specific language to describe features of moving toys, for example *'reciprocating movement; rotary and linear levers'*. In a Year 6 English lesson, pupils talked confidently about the poet's use of *'juxtaposition, personification and assonance'*.

Reading

113 Reading standards in the infants are in line with those expected nationally. There are some good readers, but there are also some who could make better progress if their difficulties were evaluated more rigorously. This is also true for junior pupils, where standards overall are slightly below average; in the lower juniors, standards are gradually rising. In the upper juniors, higher levels of pupils with special educational needs affect overall levels. In Year 6, progress is rapid, albeit from a lower base, and in Year 5, standards are also rising.

114 Younger pupils have a good grounding in phonic skills, sounding out words skilfully and starting to spell simple words correctly. In a Year 1 lesson, a pupil successfully identified *'ginger'* as an example of a word with 'er' in it, then managed to spell it by breaking up the syllables. Most infant pupils talk confidently about their favourite characters, and their best stories, but some remain unenthused and reflect a mechanical approach to reading. Older pupils show a similar profile – most very confident and enthusiastic, others focusing on their current books rather than including a range of different authors. Some older higher attaining pupils read challenging books, for example *Midwinter Watch* by John Gordon, retelling stories confidently, explaining favourite characters and predicting next steps. One pupil described how he liked a particular author's use of simile and metaphor in his stories.

115 Pupils are encouraged to take books home to share with parents and carers; this helps them make progress. Their home-school diaries are used to list books read. They serve the purpose of being general notebooks keeping home and school informed about other matters as well as reading, but because of this, they have lost some of their effectiveness as reading assessments. Older pupils and their teachers do not always keep a check on pupils' progress through reading books; consequently, opportunities are lost for them to work together for further improvement.

116 Literacy hours contain group-reading activities that are well managed and planned, but frequently not rigorously assessed. This is rightly highlighted for improvement and will ensure that teachers are much clearer about how to improve pupils' reading from one week to the next. The reading scheme is rightly used to provide a systematic approach to reading, but more opportunities could be planned for pupils to read a wider range of books. There are

few book corners in classrooms that celebrate the richness and diversity of books, their authors and the subjects they write about.

117 Pupils' research skills are mixed. They are reasonably confident on computers, using the Internet competently. The school library is only just being set up; some books are on display and being used, but many more books are on order to supplement improvement in this area. Classrooms need many more books for pupils to read and enjoy. A good start has been made and staff are well aware of deficiencies. It is an important priority for improvement in the school improvement plan.

Writing

118 Infants' standards in writing are in line with those expected nationally. They are becoming increasingly confident, writing simple poetry, stories, accounts and descriptions, letters and lists. Higher attaining pupils show their widening vocabulary, for example in a re-telling of 'Cinderella', one girl writes of the Ugly Sisters being '*very self-centred.*' Pupils are starting to use simple punctuation accurately, and their handwriting is consistently formed although not usually joined. They spell simple words accurately and make a good stab at more complicated ones. Pupils who find writing difficult are supported with writing frames (*prepared sheets that help a pupil plan their approach to writing and complete the task*) and support staff help sensitively and effectively.

119 Juniors' standards in writing are just below average, but showing signs of improvement as a result of much development work by staff in writing across the school. Pupils are encouraged to write for different audiences. Older pupils have written their own poetry book for sale within the school and the local community. Others have had their work published in an anthology organised by the Young Writers Poetry group in a book called '*Hullabaloo.*' One pupil writing in the style of Wilfred Owen about World War One writes '*It was me/It was me who killed a boy named Jake/But no-one seemed to care/Except the woman with the white hair.*' As pupils progress through the juniors, they develop their writing skills appropriately, but in Year 6, they make increasingly rapid progress because they are challenged more rigorously, their work is assessed more thoroughly and their targets for improvement are part of daily teaching and learning.

120 Pupils use their writing skills in other subjects, for example in Year 3 history where they write about a visit to '*Carleon*', a Roman town, or in design and technology where pupils have written about their current projects with a high degree of skill and understanding. Support staff help effectively where pupils find writing difficult, and again there is good use of writing frames to help them make progress. The school has identified the development of writing in other subjects as a priority for further improvement next year.

121 Most pupils have their own collection of well-produced writing that shows the range and quality of their work. This shows how pupils improve as they get older; it also shows how writing is valued in the school – pupils are rightly proud of their work when asked about it. Their editing and drafting skills improve so that by Years 5 and 6, they are used to doing this.

122 Overall teaching standards for infant and junior pupils are good, although the quality ranges from excellent to satisfactory teaching. High quality teaching is reflected in pupils' progress, positive attitudes to learning, very good behaviour and enthusiasm for English. The best teaching in both infants and juniors, but particularly in Year 2 and Year 6

- is very well planned, differentiated and resourced;
- uses imaginative strategies to excite and involve pupils – *hot-seating* and paired-partner work;
- includes effectively planned and expert help from support staff who promote better progress with the pupils they work with;

- challenges pupils so that they have to think very carefully about their work; they feel as if they have worked really hard by the end;
- reflects very good relationships, knowledge of both pupils and the subject;
- is very well organised; pupils are well managed and there is no time wasted;
- assesses pupils' work and capabilities clearly, telling them how to improve, what their next targets are and when they will be assessed.

123 Within a positive picture of teaching, some areas exist to develop. These include

- teachers explicitly sharing their expectations of the quality and quantity of work with pupils, making it clear that they expect improvement from day to day;
- teachers challenging higher attaining pupils further so that they increasingly reach beyond their capabilities rather than remaining comfortable within them;
- teachers assessing pupils' work more thoroughly so that it leads clearly to improvement;
- marking could be more rigorous and demanding, targets could be more vigorously monitored and evaluated.

Planning for the future

124 The subject leader has a clear agenda for improvement; she has a firm grip on what needs doing, but she needs support from others in order to ensure higher standards. Her subject knowledge and leadership are very good, and these underpin a clear overview of the subject and how it needs to improve and develop.

Strengths include

- *good teaching;*
- *very good planning;*
- *a clear way forward to improve reading and writing;*
- *rising standards;*
- *clear and very good leadership.*

Areas for development include:

- *book corners in classes;*
- *more diagnostic and meaningful reading assessments;*
- *higher degree of challenge in teaching, especially for higher attainers;*
- *quantity of books.*

MATHEMATICS

125 Standards in Year 2 are average with almost all pupils reaching Level 2, the level expected for seven-year-olds. Two years ago standards in Year 2 were well below average so there have been rapid improvements since then. The school recognises that these standards are not yet as high as they should be because too few pupils attain the higher Level 3. In Year 6, standards of work seen during the inspection are below average. However, teachers' records show that these pupils have made rapid gains during the past year. Standards are higher than they were in 2002 statutory tests. All of them have made good progress and many have made up a lot of lost ground to attain expected levels. The teaching of pupils in Years 5 and 6 in sets of similar ability has made a significant contribution to these gains.

126 The school is alert to the individual needs of all pupils and has set up useful procedures to monitor their progress carefully. Most pupils are now achieving well. This applies to pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language.

There are no significant differences in the standards attained by boys and girls. The factors leading to this good achievement include:

- consistently good teaching;
- extra support for individuals in all classes and for groups of pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 'booster' sessions;
- thorough planning based on the National Numeracy Strategy;
- the clear focus for teaching provided by whole school and class targets.

These are already contributing to the rising standards seen in Year 2 and Year 6.

127 However, teachers do not always expect enough of higher attaining pupils and as a result many are not achieving as well as they should be. This has already been identified by the school as an area for development as part of its school improvement plan. Although all teachers plan a variety of tasks at different levels, activities for the more capable pupils usually involve, for example, simply working with larger numbers. Not all teachers are using the numeracy strategy to its full potential to look ahead at the key objectives for the next age group to identify the next steps in learning.

128 Although there is room for further development, the school has made a good start on the use of information and communication technology to support teaching and learning in mathematics. For example, data handling skills are being developed systematically through the use of increasingly demanding software as pupils move through the school. In Year 1, they record favourite foods, pets and colours on pictograms while in Year 6 they use spreadsheets and a supermarket website to plan a party. Opportunities to use and apply their mathematical knowledge in other subjects such as design and technology and geography are not as well planned. Also, there are too few opportunities to carry out open-ended investigations. This restricts their development as independent learners and has a particular impact on the work of higher attainers.

129 By the end of Year 2, most pupils develop a secure knowledge of the place value of each digit in numbers to 99, confidently adding and subtracting to 20 and beyond. They are familiar with the associated symbols and use them correctly to make up number sentences. They estimate and measure with reasonable accuracy and tell the time to the quarter-hour. They recognise the properties of common two and three-dimensional shapes and construct block graphs. A minority of pupils works confidently with numbers to 1000 and uses decimal notation in dealing with money problems. By Year 6, most pupils acquire a range of methods to add, subtract, multiply and divide and show a sound understanding of the relationship between these operations. They calculate area and perimeter and construct and interpret line graphs. In the current age group a significant minority is working below these expected levels although as a result of sensitive teaching and encouragement they demonstrate good attitudes to their work and apply themselves well. A few pupils are well set to attain higher standards by the end of the year.

130 Teaching and learning are consistently good throughout the school. The major strengths in all lessons seen were the very thorough planning undertaken by all teachers and the sensitive support provided by teaching assistants. Effective management and control of pupils was also a feature of all lessons. It is based on the good relationships and caring atmosphere that exist in all classrooms and is reflected in pupils' positive responses, good behaviour and their enjoyment of the tasks that teachers plan for them. Teachers' knowledge of mathematics is good and this shows in their clear explanations and other interactions with pupils. In Year 6, the teacher made very effective use of a variety of resources to support and extend pupils' learning about angles, including an overhead projector, protractors, individual white boards and markers and well-chosen websites. With the strong support of teaching assistants she was able to ensure that pupils remained on task and sustained their interest well. In Year 2, pupils made good gains in their number skills, effectively reinforced

by the opportunities provided by the teacher to talk about their particular strategies. As in most classes, essential mathematical vocabulary was shared and displayed in order to extend pupils' understanding.

131 All lessons lasted at least an hour and often considerably more. Some pupils' concentration began to lapse towards the end of these lengthy sessions, and particularly in the younger classes, the review phase of the lesson lost some of its impact. A weakness occurred in other lessons when teachers found it difficult to challenge pupils of all abilities with suitable questions in the mental mathematics starter session.

132 Mathematics is well led and the subject leader provides good support for colleagues. She has observed lessons with the headteacher and provided useful feedback to improve the quality of teaching. She takes full advantage of training opportunities for herself and other teachers and responds positively to the advice and guidance available within the local education authority. She is fully aware of the need to develop her monitoring role by sampling pupils' work and continuing to observe teaching in order to maintain a clear view of standards and provision throughout the school. Assessment procedures are good and they include half-termly and annual tests to check pupils' understanding and recording sheets to track pupils' progress. They have not been in place long enough to have an impact on standards.

Strengths:

- *good teaching;*
- *pupils' enthusiasm for learning;*
- *consistent implementation of the numeracy strategy;*
- *good leadership.*

Areas for development:

- *standards in Year 6;*
- *challenge for higher attainers;*
- *continued development of assessment to help identify the next steps in learning;*
- *opportunities to use and apply skills in investigational work and in other areas of the curriculum.*

SCIENCE

133 Standards at the end of both Years 2 and 6 are broadly average as they were in the 2002 national assessments and tests, but higher attaining pupils do not do as well as they should at the end of Year 2. Generally pupils make steady progress through the school. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and attain levels which are in line with those expected. In last years' tests in Year 6, boys did better than girls but in the current year there is no significant difference.

134 The quality of teaching is good and throughout the school, pupils' learning is securely based on practical activities. There is a strong emphasis on investigational work, which helps pupils to understand the concepts. In Year 2, for example, pupils identify those materials which are natural, and those that are man-made. Pupils have a sound understanding of the principles being taught and apply their understanding of fair testing in examining how well different materials can stretch. More able pupils suggest ways of testing materials in carrying out a stretch test on different fabrics. They are good at measuring their results and observing patterns in their tables of results. Pupils in Year 3 construct tests to measure the absorbency of different kinds of paper. They are given a very well designed template to guide them through the process of setting up the experiment, making predictions, recording equipment, methods and results and drawing conclusions. In Year 5, pupils

examine how sound is transmitted. The teacher's clear planning included different tasks for pupils of different ability and questioning was well adapted to make all pupils think. Year 6 pupils examine how to construct and record circuits and experiment with wiring components in different ways to vary the level of current. By Year 6, pupils have a clear understanding of what constitutes a fair test and work well with each other in discussing ways of setting up an experiment. They have a sound understanding of all the aspects of the subject. Pupils respond well to the tasks set for them. They co-operate easily with one another in carrying out activities and share equipment sensibly.

135 Pupils are broadening their knowledge and understanding well. In Year 1 pupils know that materials can be sorted in a variety of ways, such as bendable, hard or waterproof. They know the names of parts of the body and understand the stages of human development from babies into adulthood. They know that animals and plants need food and pupils extend this knowledge in Year 2 in their study of healthy eating. However, higher attaining pupils do not achieve the more advanced levels in their knowledge of life and living processes. Year 6 pupils have a sound understanding of all the aspects of the subject. They have a good grasp of life and living processes and know how micro-organisms can cause food to decay. They display a good knowledge of how materials can be changed and which are reversible and which non reversible. They have a firm understanding of how electrical circuits are constructed and the forces of motion. They present their findings well in tables and graphs, some of which are prepared with the use of information and communication technology. Good use is made of their mathematical skills in recording measurements and their literacy skills are employed soundly in writing up their predictions, procedures and conclusions from experiments.

136 Teachers and support assistants provide well-focused help for pupils with special educational needs who benefit from guidance on vocabulary and help with practical tasks. Teachers probe the understanding of more able pupils through good questioning but do not always provide activities that develop their insight into the subject. In most lessons, teachers identify vocabulary in their planning and present it to pupils in the form of lists and displays. Generally teachers encourage pupils to use the vocabulary accurately in their written and spoken activities. The use of worksheets sometimes distracts from rather than reinforces pupils' learning but in the main activities are chosen well to increase pupils' understanding. In the best lessons there is a good balance between teachers' instruction and opportunities for pupils to contribute, ask questions and complete their own investigations.

137 Assessment is being introduced effectively but is not yet established consistently to cover all aspects of the subject. Tests at the end of study units provide teachers with a good guide to pupils' progress but results are not recorded in a consistent fashion to help staff compare information. The subject leader maintains an effective monitoring role, looking at pupils' work and teachers' planning and making lesson observations with the headteacher. She has a clear vision of how she wants the subject to develop and is committed to helping colleagues raise standards. She has analysed test results in Year 6 and has shared these with teachers to ensure that weak areas are addressed in teaching. Resources are good and good use is made of information and communication technology for recording and presenting findings. However the school has no computer-linked equipment for recording sounds, temperatures or light to help pupils develop their experimental work.

Strengths

- *good teaching based on developing pupils' practical experiences;*
- *end of unit assessments;*
- *focus on developing pupils' skills and knowledge especially in fair testing;*
- *template to guide pupils' recording of experiments*

Areas for development

- *lack of challenge in the tasks set for more able pupils;*
- *inconsistency in the way assessment information is recorded;*
- *no computer based equipment for recording data.*

ART AND DESIGN

138 Only one lesson was timetabled during the inspection. Based on this and examples of pupils' work teaching is sound and standards are broadly average at the end of both Years 2 and 6, with some examples of high quality work. Pupils of all abilities achieve well.

139 The school has worked hard to put planning frameworks in place, so that pupils develop their skills knowledge and understanding in a systematic way. The school is using national guidelines, supplemented by a published scheme. There are also some guidelines for teachers for the development of skills in different aspects of art.

140 The curriculum is enriched by contact with working artists. This helps pupils to appreciate the diversity of creative work, as well as providing experiences for them to participate in investigating and making. Pupils have worked with a sculptor, for example, to cast their hands in plaster in preparation for metal hands, which will be attached to trees around the school. Another artist worked with pupils to design tiles to be used in the new village library. When the school first opened pupils worked with a sculptor to design the 'bat phone' sculpture at the front of the school, which is part of a sculpture trail running from Bristol to Bath. Pupils also learn about internationally renowned artists. Reproductions are displayed in the main corridor and pupils' work shows that they have based their own work on paintings by Mondrian, Picasso and Van Gogh.

141 Pupils' work shows that they have had experience in using a range of media in order to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding. Good attention has been paid to the use of oil pastels, for example, with work in this medium in almost all year groups. Older pupils, particularly, blend the pastels well and in the hall there are some sensitive examples based on the work of Van Gogh. Observational work, especially using pencil, is not so well developed. Sketchbooks are not used sufficiently to help pupils to experiment and develop their skills. There is also evidence of painting, printing, three-dimensional work, collage and fabric work. Generally teachers make good links with other subjects and the work based on Aboriginal art in Year 4, shows a good attention to learning from other cultures. There is not yet as much evidence of pupils developing their skills as they move from one year to the next. When the assessment procedures are established fully it will be easier for teachers to track pupils' progress in the development of skills.

142 In the lesson seen in Year 1 pupils achieved a good deal because they were taught very well and did better than one would expect for their age. They used a variety of materials to weave patterns. Some used looms and others used triangular or rectangular frames. They did very well because the session was very well planned, the teacher had very good subject knowledge, there were good levels of adult support and a great deal was expected of the pupils. On this occasion the subject leader, who is responsible for the provision for the resource base pupils, led the teaching. Pupils' work and teachers' planning indicates that the overall quality of the teaching is sound, with some good features.

143 The subject leader has other management responsibilities and art is not a focus for development this year. Nonetheless there are sound plans in place to develop the subject and a draft policy is awaiting approval by governors. The subject leader is developing the resources available and there are sufficient to meet the needs of the National Curriculum.

She provides good support for staff and leads the teaching in some sessions. She enhances the curriculum offered by organising a weekly art club for pupils attached to the resource base and a seasonal after school club for older pupils.

Strengths:

- *good use of local artists;*
- *very good achievement in some sessions because of very strong teaching*

Areas for development:

- *observational drawing;*
- *assessment*

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

144 Pupils attain standards which are above national expectations by the end of Years 2 and 6 and they make good progress. Pupils are taught a good balance of design and making skills with a variety of materials and tools. Tasks are well chosen and presented to ensure that pupils of all abilities receive help according to their particular need. All pupils are fully included in learning activities and develop their literacy and numeracy skills well. They make good use of information and communication technology to extend their understanding and the quality of their work.

145 For each project, pupils follow a design and make process at the appropriate level. Pupils regularly record their ideas which gives them good opportunities to improve their writing and increase their vocabulary. Year 2 pupils' designs for a variety of puppets are labelled with relevant information concerning the materials to be used and the stages of production. Pupils disassemble puppets to understand the ways in which they might construct their own versions and make good decisions about the type they feel capable of completing. Pupils' own evaluations of their models indicate they have reflected carefully on the methods they have employed. In designing Joseph's coat pupils prepare their ideas on computer. Some more able pupils evaluate their work in sentences and indicate ways in which they might improve them. Pupils plan and prepare drinks and meals and in the summer term they construct model vehicles with axles.

146 Descriptions of designs by pupils from Year 3 to 6 pupils show greater detail and more complex construction methods. Interesting displays show competently made slippers, purses and musical instruments. Pupils take pains to examine articles in order to evaluate good design against a variety of criteria and learn to identify the best methods of making their own models. In Year 4 pupils carefully observe how cogs and levers can be used to make moving wooden toys. Under their teacher's guidance they accurately use vocabulary such as 'cams' and 'pivots' and understand the principles of transferring rotary into linear movement. In Year 6, pupils evaluate commercially made biscuits and consider the designs of the product and packaging as well as the fat and calorific content. They plan and produce their own clearly setting out the ingredients and methods in a way which others could follow. In designing and making slippers pupils learn from disassembling items to identify the materials used. They carefully record the measurements and discover what happens when they are not accurate. They discuss and record their evaluations of their own finished products in mature detail.

147 Teaching and learning are good. Good lessons are characterised by detailed planning which promotes pupils' good achievement and positive attitudes. In a lesson on creating moving parts in a pop-up book, the teacher's clear explanations ensured that all pupils understood the objectives and applied themselves well. Teachers are good at using the last

part of a lesson for pupils to explain their work. This allows pupils to share their successes and learn from each other's problems. Pupils extend their speaking skills well when evaluating the success of a design or explaining a mechanism. Teaching provides very good opportunities for developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills in their activities. In Year 6, pupils calculated the cost of producing their biscuits and presented the information using information and communication technology. Pupils write well in evaluating the appearance, comfort and safety of the slippers made. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and provided with help to spell words and make their articles as necessary. In a good lesson, pupils worked safely and responsibly at sawing and drilling under the teacher's calm class management and good timing of different elements of the lesson. Good attention to safety is evident in pupils' correct use of a vice to hold materials firmly. A very positive aspect of the planning is that pupils learn to work together very cooperatively in groups and develop their social skills well as a result. Pupils use computers in their recording of plans and decoration of some models.

148 The subject leader has made a competent start to organising the subject. She has made good use of colleagues' expertise to obtain guidance on planning and the use of information and communication technology. Resources are helpfully arranged so that they are easily accessible for pupils to choose from.

Strengths:

- *well planned lessons which maintain a balance of instruction and activities;*
- *good use of literacy and numeracy skills in recording findings and completing tasks;*
- *thorough investigations of materials and construction methods, especially in Year 6.*

Areas for development

- *monitoring of teaching and standards;*
- *assessment.*

GEOGRAPHY

149 Pupils' attainment is in line with national expectations by Years 2 and 6. Progress is satisfactory overall for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and higher attainers. Pupils who have special educational needs are well supported by teachers and teaching assistants. Consequently they make good progress.

150 Many topics provide good opportunities for fieldwork in the local area, which keeps pupils interested and the subject relevant to them. In Year 1 pupils walk around school and the immediate area looking at housing and different local facilities. They draw their homes and write about where they live. In Year 2 they note features such as traffic movements and safety as well as street furniture. They compare it with the seaside town which they visit in the summer. Pupils learn about land use by making comparisons between the seaside and their own urban area and compare their features. They develop mapping skills, showing features such as railways, roads, buildings, and physical features such as the beach and the sea. Pupils correctly used a key to illustrate the location of the different parts of the United Kingdom. They develop a satisfactory understanding of an overseas location through their study of Mexico.

151 Pupils develop their mapping skills and knowledge of the environment further in Years 3 to 6. They use aerial photographs to identify the impact of sea erosion. They learn about the weather in different countries and use their literacy skills to write accounts of life in India. These tasks create interest and pupils work hard and achieve well. Pupils understand the water cycle and the impact of rivers on the landscape. They have a sound knowledge of the

way settlements have sprung up and appreciate the importance of preserving the environment as new localities are developed. In Year 6 teaching introduces pupils to gathering information from the Internet in order to identify elements of different environments around the world. They have a good understanding of technical language and employ it well. Pupils describe desert areas as representing a risk of starvation and talk about the lack of vegetation in the Antarctic.

152 Teaching is satisfactory. Teachers use and repeat precise technical terms, which helps to develop pupils' vocabulary although the quantity of new expressions introduced can sometimes be too many. Good questioning stimulates discussion and support by the teacher and classroom assistants keeps pupils interested and learning. Some work is based too closely on work sheets, which has an adverse effect on the development of literacy skills. Teachers make good use of the local area and field trips, which add interest to pupils' learning as well as promoting their social and cultural awareness. Teachers have made good use of books to introduce Year 1 pupils to life on a Scottish island and in this and other classes, pupils' reading skills are well developed through the subject. Resources are limited and there is not enough video material to help teachers extend pupils' understanding of different localities. The use of information and communication technology is satisfactory for research and in helping pupils handle data and record and present their findings with the aid of the digital camera. Management and leadership of the subject are satisfactory but procedures for recording pupils' achievements are not yet organised consistently as it has not yet been a focus.

Strengths:

- *good use of visits to stimulate pupils' interest and understanding;*
- *good development of mapping skills.*

Areas for development:

- *the way assessment is recorded;*
- *over use of work sheets;*
- *lack of resources especially video material.*

HISTORY

153 Two lessons were timetabled during the inspection. An inspector also accompanied Year 4 pupils on a trip. Based on these, pupils' work and teachers' planning standards are broadly average at the end of both Years 2 and 6. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and higher attaining pupils achieved well in the lessons seen.

154 The school has worked hard to put a sound curriculum in place and the current assignation of history study units to different year groups will ensure good coverage of the National Curriculum programmes of study. The school is using guidance from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority together with a published scheme to plan their work. This has established clear planning for the development of historical skills through the school. As teachers become more familiar with the materials they realise that they will be able to use them with increasing imagination.

155 The school makes good provision for pupils to develop their chronological understanding. In Years 3 to 6, for example, there are time lines in all classrooms showing the sequence of different periods in British history, acting as a constant reminder for pupils. Pupils also make their own time lines in relation to different study units and in Year 5 particularly there is a good emphasis on this aspect of the work.

156 Helping pupils to develop a knowledge and understanding about the past is tackled well in all year groups. In Year 2, for example, pupils have learnt about Florence Nightingale and the Great Fire of London and in Year 6 pupils have looked at life in Ancient Greece, with some evidence of pupils working independently. In a session seen in Year 3 pupils learnt about the countries in Northern Europe involved in World War at the outbreak in 1939. Pupils discussed how they might have felt. One said *'I would feel that the world might end.'* In a session in Year 4, pupils built on a trip the day before to the red Lodge Tudor House in Bristol to compare the differences between a poor and rich Tudor home. They managed this well and all had clearly learnt a good deal about Tudor life from the visit.

157 Pupils are supported well in finding out about the past by looking at primary sources. Trips are a focal point for many of the study units. In the trip that Year 4 pupils made to the Tudor House, for example, they looked carefully at contemporary furniture and artefacts to make judgements about what life would have been like. Year 2 pupils visit Weston-Super-Mare in relation to their work on holidays in the past and the school has purchased some replicas of Victorian buckets and spades to help the pupils to appreciate the changes over time. Pupils also use books as a basis for research and are guided by staff in the use of appropriate questions.

158 Elements of historical work needing further development are awareness that the past is interpreted and represented in different ways and the way in which pupils record and present their work. At the moment quite a large proportion of the work is worksheet based. Some of these are of good quality, but work is not always well-presented. There is more scope for pupils to work independently.

159 Overall pupils' work indicates that the quality of teaching is sound with some good features. In the lessons seen the teaching ranged from good to very good. A particular strength in the teaching are the ways that teachers try to bring the past alive. This is not only evident in the trips planned, but also in the use made of drama. In Year 1, for example, 'Lady Mowbray' visited the class to discuss her castle home and banquet with the pupils. The school are working with the University of West of England to trial a new unit of work on castles. An area for development is the way in which pupils record and present their work.

160 The subject leader is very interested in the subject and has a clear view of what has already been achieved and what needs to be done next. Resources are generally satisfactory, but the development of these is a key area for future development.

Strengths:

- *use of trips and drama to bring the past alive;*
- *pupils' interest in the subject.*

Areas for development:

- *resources;*
- *work on historical interpretation;*
- *pupils' organisation and presentation of work.*

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

161 Only two full lessons were seen during the inspection. Judgements, therefore, have been based also on discussions with the subject leader, teachers and pupils, samples of pupils' work, teachers' plans and records, displays and resources. These show that standards in Year 2 are average. Because of the significant gaps in older pupils' experiences they are in a 'catch-up' situation. As a result of good teaching, although overall standards in Year 6 are currently below average, pupils achieve well and reach expected levels in the areas they cover. The comprehensive action plan shows that the full curriculum will be in place by 2004.

162 The school has faced significant challenges in information and communication technology since it opened. These include:

- setting up a computer suite and building resources;
- providing support and training for staff;
- implementing a framework based on national guidelines to guide teachers' planning.

The school's response has been managed well with a carefully thought out action plan to guide this rapidly developing area.

163 Teachers have done well to keep pace with these developments and have responded enthusiastically to the raised national expectations. The well-equipped suite is in use for much of the day and lessons focus clearly on developing pupils' basic computer skills. Classroom based computers, however, are under-used so these opportunities for pupils to practise their skills are being lost. Teachers are alert to any issues regarding equal opportunities and use available support well to target pupils who need extra help. In addition, specialist hardware and software have been provided to meet the particular needs of pupils in the resource base. As a result, pupils of all abilities achieve well, including those who have special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language. There is no difference in the standards attained by boys and girls.

164 The consistent implementation of the planning framework ensures that pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding will build year on year as they move through the school. The current class targets relating to data handling demonstrate this clearly and teachers make good use of them to provide a sharp focus in lessons. In Year 1, for example, pupils collect data about favourite foods and pets and use a graphing package to create a pictogram, while in Year 2 they are introduced to databases. In Years 3 and 4 they use more sophisticated databases to sort, search and identify a group of objects. In Years 5 and 6 working with spreadsheets and using formulae to carry out calculations successfully extends their learning.

165 In addition, pupils in Years 1 and 2 are introduced to the basic skills of communicating and handling information. They begin to learn editing skills, using the shift key for capital letters, backspace to delete and with support they save, print and retrieve their work. They use suitable software to create pictures and incorporate them into their writing as in Year 2 where they record their work on building materials in science. Good examples of pupils practising these skills were also seen in design and technology when they used the computer to help them design playground equipment in Year 1 and Joseph's coat in Year 2. In their use of the keyboard and mouse they learn the rudiments of modelling and control. In Year 3, pupils made good use of the digital camera in their study of the school grounds that resulted in an article being published in a local teachers' journal. In Year 4 it is used during a visit to a Tudor house to provide materials for follow-up work in the classroom, while in Year 5 pupils use it in science to record their observations of the growth of cress seeds. In Year 6 they produce multimedia presentations, successfully integrating text, graphics and sound files linked with work on the Greeks and Romans.

166 Although only two lessons were seen, in Year 3 and Year 6, it is clear from these and the other evidence that teaching and learning are good throughout the school. In both lessons, teachers were very secure in their knowledge of information and communication technology. This enabled them to give clear explanations and deal quickly and confidently with requests for help and guidance. In both lessons pupils were enthused by the teachers' choice of activity and they co-operated well with their partners, sharing the equipment successfully. In Year 6, the opportunities for pupils to discuss their work with talk partners at key stages in the lesson was particularly effective in reinforcing the main teaching points.

167 The subject leader provides good leadership and strong support for colleagues, making good use of advice available locally and nationally. The subject is well managed and developments have been well planned. For example, the planning framework is very sensibly being phased in according to an agreed timescale with training for teachers and the acquisition of resources keeping pace. There are currently no formal procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress in order to establish precisely what they know, understanding and can do.

Strengths:

- *good teaching;*
- *well planned development of the subject;*
- *good leadership providing good support and guidance for staff;*
- *good resources, including the well-equipped computer suite;*

Areas for development:

- *continuing to develop the use of ICT across the curriculum, including the use of classroom based computers;*
- *continuing to implement the planning framework to ensure full coverage;*
- *devising an accurate and manageable assessment system.*

MUSIC

168 Standards in music for pupils aged seven and eleven are broadly in line with those expected for pupils of this age. It has not been a major priority for development since the school opened nearly three years ago; currently, the headteacher is 'caretaking' its management. However, there is much that is good going on, although equally room for improvement in the assessment of standards.

169 Every junior class is taught recorder by a visiting music teacher; some pupils receive tuition in clarinet and flute. This has a very positive impact on standards. The school places high importance on pupils' involvement in musical productions and performances, for example, singing in the cathedral, carols by candlelight, and musicals produced in school. Two lessons were observed from teachers and two from the visiting recorder teacher. All were of good or very good quality and resulted in pupils making good progress. Lessons were enjoyable, active, well planned and challenged pupils to improve their performances further. Pupils behaved very well, concentrated brilliantly and involved themselves thoroughly in the activities. Every attempt is made to meet pupils' special educational needs; in a junior lesson, percussion instruments are available for those unable to blow into a recorder. As a result, pupils make very good progress because they are involved and supported really effectively by support staff.

170 In a lesson seen Year 1 pupils quickly picked up the difference between high and low sounds, both vocally and on tuned percussion instruments. They enjoyed being the conductor, and other pupils followed instructions faithfully and with enthusiasm. One pupil recognised that high notes come from the smaller bars on the xylophones, and that sound lasts longer from one instrument because *'its metal and it vibrates'*. Year 2 pupils quickly associated speed and rhythm to signify different animals or human moods. With the visiting teacher, Year 5 pupils remembered specific vocabulary, for example *'ostinato'*. They read and recognise notes from charts, reproducing them on their recorders. They play at three levels: melody, bass beat and descant. One Year 3 pupil explains *improvisation* succinctly as *'making it up as you go along!'* During the inspection, infant pupils came into assembly whilst Year 3 were concluding their lesson, their eyes widened with interest and pleasure as they watched the junior class play their recorders in three parts. It was a good start to the assembly. Singing in assemblies and in class is enthusiastic, tuneful and well timed.

171 Standards could be higher, however, because currently pupils are not regularly assessed in their musical development. Whilst the National Curriculum requirements are followed and well planned, assessments of pupils' work are not yet consistently made to ensure rising standards across the school. This is highlighted in the school's improvement plan where professional development in music is planned to increase teachers' confidence; the acting subject leader is also considering use of tapes and photographs to support more useful assessments of pupils' abilities.

172 Music is used as a stimulus in art where pupils draw and paint what they feel or imagine when they listen to particular music. In design and technology, pupils have made their own musical instruments; this work also links closely to science work on 'sounds'. Pupils' involvement in musical shows like *'Joseph'* promotes their speaking and listening skills, confidence and self-esteem.

173 Despite the absence of the permanent subject leader due to maternity leave, there are clear plans for musical development. Resources are sufficient to teach across the school, although there is a planned programme to improve this provision. Music appreciation is now a regular part of daily assemblies, and many CDs have been purchased to improve the quantity and variety of music available for pupils to listen to, much of it reflects different cultural backgrounds. The school is in a good position to move forward.

Strengths

- *teachers' and pupils' enthusiasm for music*
- *good planning and very good support for pupils with special educational needs*
- *musical links across the curriculum*
- *recorder teaching in the juniors*

Areas for development

- *assessment*
- *resources*
- *teacher expertise*

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

174 Two lessons were timetabled during the inspection, gymnastics in Year 1 and dance in Year 2. Pupils of all abilities achieved well and pupils from the resource base achieved very well because of the excellent provision. Based on these lessons standards are broadly average at the end of Year 2. It was not possible to make a judgement on standards at the end of Year 6, although teachers' records show that in swimming almost all pupils meet or

exceed the expected 25 metres before leaving the school. Other judgements are based on the limited evidence provided by these lessons, discussions with staff and teachers' planning.

175 In Year 1, pupils showed expected levels of control and coordination for their ages to perform a variety of balances on the floor and on the large apparatus. They worked enthusiastically, listened closely and followed instructions carefully. In Year 2, they worked successfully as individuals and with a partner to create a simple four-movement dance phrase. They responded imaginatively to both music and key vocabulary such as stormy, frozen and flowing taken from an earlier brainstorming session linked with the theme of water. Most pupils found this very challenging but tried hard and persevered well. Both lessons were well structured with a suitable warm-up, opportunities for pupils to practise their skills individually, in pairs and in groups and a calm cooling down phase before returning to the classroom. Both teachers were good role models, fully involved in the lessons from start to finish. Teachers' stated objectives for the lessons were not specific enough to provide a sharp focus for teaching or to help them suggest ways in which pupils might improve their performances.

176 The subject leader is enthusiastic and has identified a number of areas for development. However, there have been no opportunities yet for teachers to discuss and agree a whole school approach to the subject or to assess training needs. National guidelines have been adopted but units of work, for example in athletics, dance, games and gymnastics have not been allocated to particular age groups as in other subjects. In addition, the subject leader quite rightly believes that the guidelines do not provide sufficient guidance for teachers in the systematic development of skills year on year. There is also an issue concerning the amount of time that is available to the subject. In many cases, and particularly during the terms when swimming is timetabled there is not enough time to cover the programme in sufficient depth. A good range of extra-curricular activities is provided by teachers and visiting coaches.

Strengths:

- *enthusiastic subject leader;*
- *extra-curricular activities;*
- *pupils' interest and enthusiasm.*

Areas for development:

- *a framework to ensure full coverage and a scheme of work to guide teachers' planning;*
- *identify and address staff training needs;*
- *timetabling.*

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

177 The new local agreed syllabus for religious education is not due for publication until January, 2004. This has affected the development of planning for religious education. At present, teachers use national schemes of work alongside the existing local authority syllabus for their planning and this provides a satisfactory interim arrangement. Pupils complete an appropriate amount of work, although there are gaps in Year 6. Teaching is good overall.

178 Infant and junior pupils' achievements in most aspects of the subject are similar to those expected in the locally agreed syllabus for pupils of this age. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language receive the help they need to play their part in lessons.

179 By the end of the infants, pupils recognise the key features of the Jewish religion, explaining words such as *'Torah, synagogue, ark, shabbath, rabbi'* confidently. In one Year 2 lesson, pupils knew Jews cannot touch the words on scrolls because, as one pupil reported *'it's the word of God and therefore its very precious!'* Although only one lesson was observed in the infants, its quality was good. The teacher provided a range of objects for pupils to look at; she used a 'big book' about Judaism that pupils were very interested in, and she allowed pupils to discuss their work in pairs and partners. This involved them more and created more interest for them, especially where they were supported. The teacher had brought in some of her own precious things to reinforce pupils' understanding of the Jewish faith. They remembered that they received precious gifts at their own christenings as they learnt why the objects were precious to their teacher. They showed suitable respect and quickly made the link between their own precious things and those in the Jewish faith.

180 In both lessons seen in the juniors, teachers used drama to help pupils understand difficult ideas. In one, pupils dramatised parts of the story of Abraham, Sarah and Isaac, whilst in the older junior class, a very exciting start to a lesson on the organisation of the Bible meant that pupils became involved right from the start and maintained their interest despite the rather academic nature of the lesson. The teacher had prepared an 'ancient manuscript' in a tray of sand, asked pupils to pretend they were archaeologists and had just discovered parts of the Bible. Pupils were entranced and captivated by this imaginative start. They entered into the spirit of things with gusto and real enthusiasm, behaving really well and working together positively. Consequently pupils in both classes made sound progress in their understanding.

181 Pupils' work across the juniors shows work on Islam, the Ten Commandments, Hinduism, and Christianity. Some comparisons across the major religions are also in evidence. Although work in Year 6 is rather patchy, most classes have covered appropriate topics. Year 5 pupils recently visited a mosque. They learned a lot from this visit and recorded their work in an interesting display. The pupils visit a church and receive visitors to the school to lead assemblies. There are good links with other subjects, for example in design and technology pupils designed Joseph's coat of many colours. Equally, pupils have recently been involved in the musical production of *'Joseph'*.

182 The subject leader is keen to develop spirituality across the curriculum and has made a start in this work. She has a clear view of what needs doing to improve the subject and provides sound leadership. Highlighted for development are the creation of long term planning frameworks to link with the new syllabus, and the implementation of assessment procedures to ensure that teachers know how to raise their pupils' attainment further. The subject leader is aware that ongoing training needs to be provided to maintain teachers' levels of confidence and subject expertise. Resourcing levels at present are sufficient to teach the subject; the emphasis is on artefacts and books that help to bring the subject alive for pupils.

Strengths

- *teaching;*
- *pupils' responses;*
- *resources and visits;*
- *links with other subjects.*

Areas for development

- *assessment;*
- *long term planning frameworks when the new syllabus is introduced;*
- *ongoing professional development for teachers;*
- *consistent coverage across all year groups.*