

INSPECTION REPORT

AVETON GIFFORD C of E (VC) PRIMARY SCHOOL

Aveton Gifford, Kingsbridge

LEA area: Devon

Unique reference number: 113378

Headteacher: Mrs Val Moody

Lead inspector: Mr M Burghart

Dates of inspection: 1st - 3rd December 2003

Inspection number: 255393

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior
School category: Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils: 5 – 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 56

School address: Fore Street
Aveton Gifford
Kingsbridge
South Devon

Postcode: TQ7 4LB

Telephone number: 01548 550262

Fax number: 01548 550262

Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr J Cullen

Date of previous inspection: June 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Aveton Gifford C of E (VC) Primary is a small school in the rural village of the same name near Kingsbridge in Devon. Currently none of the 56 pupils on roll are in reception, but after Christmas five children aged five will join the school. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is well above average and as a result pupils' attainment on entry, whilst representing a wide range, is slightly below average. No pupils speak English as an additional language. There are three mixed age classes with an average of 18.7 pupils in each. The head who teaches three days per week, shares the Years 5 and 6 class with another teacher. There are 3.5 teachers altogether, including a music specialist, partly funded by the church, for one morning a week. The school's performance was recognised with an achievement award from the DfEE in 2001. The school has no hall, but makes good use of the village memorial hall nearby for lunches and some aspects of physical education.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
20865	Mr M Burghart	Lead inspector	Mathematics, Information & communication technology, Creative, aesthetic, practical & physical subjects, Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage.
9644	Mr M Whitaker	Lay inspector	
21992	Mrs J Newing	Team inspector	English, Science, Humanities, Personal, social and health education, Special Educational Needs.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a very good, very caring school with a very good ethos where pupils achieve well in response to very good provision and consistently good teaching. Staff and pupils get on very well together in a school that is very well led and well managed. Although costs are high because of its small size the school gives good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards are good in English, mathematics, science, art, design and technology (DT), history and personal, social and health education (PSHE).
- Provision for special educational needs (SEN) is very good.
- Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are very good.
- The school provides a very good, well planned curriculum, enhanced with very good extracurricular activities.
- Links with parents and the community are very good.
- The staff make a very good team, very well led by the head.
- Access to, and provision for, outside play activities for the Foundation Stage need improving.
- Standards of information and communication technology (ICT), although improved, are still below national expectations by the time pupils leave Year 6.

The school has made good progress since the last inspection in 1998. It has successfully addressed the issues raised (with notable success in planning for the curriculum). Significantly improved monitoring and strategic planning have had very good effects on overall provision. Standards have been raised faster than the national trend and pupils achieve well. Accommodation has been much improved (but pond safety remains an issue). Resources have been developed to give good support to teaching. Provision for special educational needs is now very good where it was unsatisfactory, and provision and standards in ICT are much improved.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	A	D	A*	A*
Mathematics	D	C	B	A
Science	D	E	A	A

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

Although care needs to be taken in interpreting results from such small year groups, it is clear that the school did very well in tests for both seven and eleven year olds in 2003. A* performance puts the school in the top 5% of all primaries for English, and considering well above average levels of SEN, this is a very good achievement. Currently pupils in Years 2 and 6 are above average in English, maths, science, art, DT, history, and personal, social and health education. Standards are at nationally expected levels in music, and in line with the locally agreed syllabus in religious education (RE). There was insufficient evidence to judge attainment in geography and physical education but enough to suggest that provision is at least satisfactory. In ICT standards are much improved and pupils in Year 2 are on target to reach nationally expected levels. Because they have yet to catch up with all that they should have covered Year 6 pupils are not likely to reach nationally expected levels by the end of the year, but work in hand is of an appropriate standard. There were no children in reception at the time of the inspection, but records show that pupils now in Year 1 achieved all the goals expected of them before they were six.

Pupils' personal development in terms of moral and social aspects is very good. Spiritual and cultural development is good. Children are very effectively helped to become mature and act responsibly. They show very good consideration and tolerance of other people and work very well in groups. Behaviour is very good. Attendance is good being better than the national average.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a much improved quality of education and is now judged as very good. Curriculum planning is very good and underpins consistently good teaching. Expectations of work and behaviour are high and pupils respond very well to good levels of challenge and very good questioning. Staff make very good provision for SEN with teaching assistants making a strong contribution. No lessons were unsatisfactory and all teachers had mostly good lessons and nearly nine out of ten sessions (all observed unannounced) were at least good. Teachers are good at planning and delivering work at different ability and age levels in the same class, and involving all pupils in all activities. The much improved learning environment, together with very good relationships and a high commitment to raising and maintaining standards, gives rise to the school's very good ethos.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The head leads the school very well and ensures very clear educational direction. The school is effectively managed through the very good teamwork of head, staff and governors. Much improved strategic planning and use of finances has improved the school's efficiency and makes good use of income to give good value for money. There is good monitoring of standards and the school is well aware of its strengths and areas for development. Improvements to how pupils' performance is assessed are having positive effects on achievement in English, maths and science, and developments are being satisfactorily managed in other subjects. Day to day management is good, with particular success in how good behaviour is encouraged. Governors give very positive support and **their governance of the school is good.**

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Links with parents are very good and parents and the local community have high opinions of the school. The overwhelming response of parents to the Ofsted questionnaire was very supportive, especially of the caring nature and approachability of this small school, and extracurricular activities. Pupils clearly like the school and are proud of its achievements. They show a high level of confidence in staff and this supports very good relationships.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

Although there are no key issues to address the most important things the school should do to further improve are to:

- Continue to raise standards in information and communication technology.
- Further develop assessment of pupils' achievements in subjects in addition to English, maths and science.
- Improve, as intended, access to and resources for, outdoor facilities for the Foundation Stage.
- Improve health and safety arrangements regarding the pond.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Standards are good and pupils achieve well in aspects of English, mathematics, science, art, design and technology (DT), history and pupils' personal social and health education.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- National test results for eleven year olds in 2003 were very high in English (putting the school in the top 5% of all primaries) and well above average in maths and science.
- Throughout the school reading is above average, and for the majority of pupils writing is good.
- The school is aware that standards in ICT for Year 6 pupils are still below what is expected.
- Pupils' good and improving, independent learning skills (very successfully encouraged in PSHE) are used to good effect in art, DT and history, and pupils achieve well.

Commentary

1. Standards have been systematically improved since the last inspection and in the case of the core subjects of English, maths and science progress has been at a faster rate than national trends. Improvements are the direct result of:

- Good planning with all staff working very effectively as a team.
- Assessment which much more accurately identifies strengths and areas for further development with targets set for individuals and for curriculum planning.

2. With small year groups and above average proportions of pupils with SEN standards vary from year to year. Whilst the school's performance in 2003 was high in all three subjects tested for Year 6 and above average in English for Year 2, the school anticipates that pupils presently in these years will reach average levels by the end of the school year. Inspection evidence shows that currently standards are at least satisfactory with pupils achieving well, especially those with special needs. Attainment and achievement are judged above average in English (with noted strengths in writing and reading), maths, science, art, DT, history and personal, social and health education. This is a marked improvement from the last inspection when most subjects were 'satisfactory'.

3. There was too little evidence to confirm standards in geography or physical education (PE) but planning and records show provision is satisfactory with good features in the use of the local environment and in swimming. As far as is possible in such a short inspection it is clear that pupils' performance in music meets national expectations for seven and eleven year olds, and that in religious education it meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus.

4. The school is aware that because of gaps in pupils' previous learning before planning and resources were in place to support the full range of requirements in ICT, standards continue to be below expectations at the end of Year 6. However, provision is now judged as good and it is likely that with sustained improvements year on year pupils presently in Year 4 will meet expected levels by the time they leave the school. Work in hand from Years 5 and 6 is satisfactory. Younger pupils in Years 1 to 4 are already on line to reach nationally expected levels and further improvements should see them exceed expectations in future years.

5. The school is developing a cross curricular approach to learning and this builds effectively on skills of communication and literacy, successfully promoted through pupils' ability to show independence and take responsibility. New planning and provision for PSHE is making a significant contribution to pupils' achievement.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils have very good attitudes to school. They are confident and interested, and keen to take advantage of the opportunities the school offers. Behaviour is very good and pupils' personal development is a particular strength. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very well promoted. Attendance is good.

Strengths and weaknesses.

- Pupils behave very well in all classes and during all activities.
- Pupils' attitudes to lessons and other school activities are very positive.
- Pupils' personal and social development is very good.
- Pupils' awareness of spiritual, moral and cultural aspects is very well developed.

Commentary

6. Pupils' behaviour throughout the school is very good. In lessons, pupils comply with well established basic routines, in assemblies they are appropriately respectful, and at lunch they are polite and co-operate well with lunchtime supervisors. The village hall is used for lunch and for some physical education lessons; consequently pupils have to cross the road several times a day. Well rehearsed routines, together with good, sensible behaviour, ensure that the potentially hazardous undertaking is safely conducted. Very high standards of behaviour are promoted through staff's high expectations and skilled pupil management, and supported by the school's ethos. Pupils work in an atmosphere free of oppression; all, regardless of background or ability, are fully included in all school activities. There was no evidence of bullying or harassment during the inspection. There have been no exclusions during the preceding year.

7. In lessons, pupils demonstrate very positive attitudes. They respond well to challenge and show interest and enthusiasm. They are keen to take advantage of the opportunities the school offers - nine out of ten pupils take part in at least one extracurricular activity. Pupils are happy to devote their lunch breaks to working on improving their Christmas performance in the parish church by practising their recorders or preparing posters on the computers. They are keen to take part in football or netball games against neighbouring schools despite the fact that a limited choice of team players means likely defeat.

8. Pupils' personal and social development is very good and one of the school's outstanding features. Pupils are encouraged from the outset to be independent and take charge of their own learning. A considerable number of pupils from Years 1 and 2 said, in their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, that "choosing" was their favourite activity (this is a part of the day in which they can select an activity). Teachers promote independence by getting pupils to evaluate their own, and each other's work. Personal responsibility is encouraged - pupils discuss their class rules and have a variety of classroom and school duties. They have the opportunity to convince their classmates that they are suitable for membership of the school council. Relationships are very good at all levels. Pupils work well together in pairs and groups and older pupils show particular concern for younger children - at lunch each table has a pupil from Year 5 or 6 to supervise and assist younger children. The family atmosphere of the school ensures that such help is provided in a natural and unforced fashion. Teachers and learning support assistants have very good relationships with pupils, which contribute significantly to children's personal development.

9. Pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development is very well promoted. Good links with the village church and its frequent use for visits and services contribute to pupils' spiritual awareness, as do the appreciation of art and music throughout the school and the extent to which pupils' work in those areas is valued. Moral development is very good - pupils' sense of right and wrong is promoted through the school's golden rules and their own class rules. Rewards, such as the 'child of the week' or the lunchtime supervisors' 'table of the week' are appreciated and seen as fair. The school's very

clear commitment to inclusion and equality make an unequivocal moral statement. Cultural development is very good and emphasised in the curriculum through work in art, music and drama. Pupils are offered activities as diverse as a visit to the theatre to see Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dream Coat, or a visit to a stately home in support of a project on the Victorians. Pupils are made aware of cultures other than their own through a range of activities, including work on Diwali, the visit of an Indian to demonstrate eastern cuisine, or links with the Caribbean island of St Lucia.

10. Attendance at 95.6 per cent is good, being above the national average for primary schools. Unauthorised absence, at 0.2 per cent, is half the national average.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.2	School data	0.2
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete 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	55	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	1	0	0

The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides pupils with a very good quality of education. The curriculum is well planned and is relevant to pupils’ needs and enables pupils to achieve well and make good, and often very good, progress. Staff are careful to plan work at the different ability and age levels in each class and do well to include all pupils in all activities and lessons.

Teaching and learning

Teaching is consistently good and makes a good contribution to pupils’ learning, achievement and progress. All staff work very well as a team and clearly consider pupils’ personal as well as academic development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Work is very well planned in most lessons with learning objectives made very clear to pupils and support staff.
- There is very good teamwork which ensures teaching assistants play a full part in teaching pupils, especially those with SEN.
- Literacy and numeracy are well taught.
- Staff are good at managing mixed age and ability classes.
- Questioning is used very effectively to challenge and involve all pupils.
- Expectations are high.
- Some lessons are overlong.
- Some staff lack confidence in their ICT skills, but this is being improved through in-service training.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 17 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	1	14	2	0	0	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

11. Teachers know their pupils very well and plan lessons to meet the needs of the whole class. Tasks are stimulating and very well matched to prior learning. Teaching assistants are well briefed and support pupils with special educational needs very effectively.

12. All staff were observed unannounced and on several occasions; all had good lessons. They all made very good use of learning objectives established in very good planning to let pupils know what they were learning and to gauge progress through good reference during lessons and in plenary sessions. Very good questioning ensures that all pupils are involved in discussions and that pupils are challenged effectively at their own levels. Staff use questioning very well to get pupils to express themselves and explain their methods.

13. Some parents expressed concerns over how well mixed age and ability classes were managed. Inspection evidence shows that staff teach such groups well by planning work at different levels and working very well as a team to ensure that work is planned on a rolling programme that prevents pupils covering the same thing year on year unnecessarily. Because expectations are high and pupils are well challenged and are extended, pupils respond with positive attitudes and very good behaviour.

14. Very good planning in literacy and numeracy underpins good teaching. Staff are well trained and confident in their delivery. They make good use of assessments in English and maths to set targets and modify planning and as a result pupils make good progress and achieve well, often reaching above average standards.

15. The school is aware that some staff have lacked confidence in their knowledge and understanding of ICT. This is being successfully addressed through ongoing in-service training.

16. Teachers make good use of support staff and resources to promote learning and usually use time well. However, some sessions were observed to go on for relatively long periods. For example, a Years 3 and 4 literacy lesson covered seventy five minutes. It was nevertheless judged as a good lesson, but took pupils to the limit of their concentration.

17. All staff share the common aim to raise and maintain standards both personal as well as academic and give pupils plenty of opportunities to show independence and take responsibility. Consequently pupils' social development is very good and the school's ethos is, as parents strongly believe, very good.

18. The quality of teaching has been systematically improved since the last inspection with better monitoring by head, subject co-ordinators and governors taking effective roles. Performance management of staff is well established. Analysis is well used to recognise strengths and set targets for development.

The curriculum

The school has invested a great deal of thought, time and energy over the past few years to developing a **very good** curriculum which is rich and relevant, as well as broad and balanced. Many

visits and visitors enrich it. There are good resources which are easily accessible and used effectively to support pupils' learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are very good detailed schemes of work
- Cross curricular links are very good.
- Very good use is made of visits and visitors.
- There is a very good range of clubs.
- This is a very inclusive school which makes very good provision for pupils with special educational needs, and provides very good challenge for the more able.
- Accommodation is good.
- There are good resources
- The outside play area for the youngest children is in need of further improvement.

Commentary

19. Teachers' planning of what they are to teach to each year group in each term is very good and enables staff to prepare stimulating lessons so that pupils acquire a broad body of knowledge in each topic and develop a good range of key skills. The curriculum is planned over two years because of mixed age classes.

20. The school has identified good cross curricular links: for example across science, design and technology, history and art. Literacy is used very effectively across the curriculum: for example newspaper reports of the First Christmas and very clearly labelled diagrams of an Egyptian mummy. Art Week and Craft Days give pupils the opportunity to work in mixed age groups which contributes to their personal development.

21. A wide range of visits and visitors enrich the curriculum. Nearly every history and geography topic includes a visit or a visitor. The drama day linked to the topic on Ancient Egypt was a very good stimulus and motivated pupils well. The school makes very good use of its local heritage, the village, coast, rivers and the moor. Residential trips linked to the curriculum are well supported and provide good opportunities for personal development as well as learning in a particular subject.

22. For such a small school there is a very good range of clubs, some in the lunch hour and some after school. These are very popular, nearly every child attends a club and nearly two-thirds of pupils attend three clubs per week.

23. This small school is very committed to inclusion and has taken pupils who have failed or had severe problems in other schools. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and more able pupils are challenged well. All pupils are well known by more than one adult; pupils say that they would feel confident to approach an adult with a problem.

24. The school has very good links with the community. Older people have shared their experiences of Britain in the 1930s and 1940s; and pupils sing carols for senior citizens. The school liaises closely with the local playgroup which meets in the memorial hall and there are plans to bring this on site. Links with Kingsbridge Community College to which nearly all pupils transfer, are very effective. The oldest pupils go to the college for some maths and science lessons and there are links with the PE department who have provided some training for primary teachers. In the term before they transfer pupils work on a topic which is then displayed in Kingsbridge when they arrive in September. This, together with other records, means that the large secondary school has some knowledge about its pupils before they start at the school. This helps to make the transfer stress free.

25. Despite not having a hall which limits the delivery of the physical education curriculum, accommodation is good overall. The refurbishment which took place ten years ago gives large areas

of communal space. This gives the school a spacious feel. The recent development of a drama/music room is another positive feature. These areas, together with the school's good swimming pool, are used very effectively to create a good learning environment. However, the outside play provision for the youngest children is a weakness.

26. There are good resources to support the teaching of the newly developed schemes of work. The lively, relevant curriculum which is enriched by visits and visitors, helps all pupils including those with special educational needs to be successful learners.

Care, guidance and support

This is a very caring school that provides a high standard of guidance and support based on a good knowledge of pupils' personal and academic development. Pupils feel secure and are confident that their views are heeded. There are good procedures for monitoring health and safety matters but the unfenced pond remains a hazard.

Strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' care and welfare are very well supported by the very high quality of relationships between adults and children.
- Arrangements for the induction of new pupils are excellent.
- Pupil involvement in day-to-day school life is good.
- Whilst there are good procedures for monitoring and managing health and safety matters, the unfenced pond remains a potential hazard.

Commentary.

27. This is a small school with small classes and a stable staff. As a result, all pupils are well known to most, if not all, adults in school. The great majority of pupils responding to the Ofsted pre-inspection questionnaire felt that there was an adult in school they could turn to if worried about something. Parents are particularly impressed with the fact that their children are treated as individuals. Staff have, through extensive assessment information, a very good knowledge of pupils' academic development in the core subjects, and a thorough, albeit informal, knowledge of their personal and social development. Relationships between pupils and adults are very good. Consequently, high quality advice and support is readily available to any child. Induction arrangements are excellent. There is close liaison between the school and the local pre-school group. Pre-school children make a series of visits to the school before they join.

28. Pupils know that their views are valued. There is a school council that comprises two pupils from each class. Membership is changed every term to ensure that the benefits of participation are spread as widely as possible. Most pupils spoken to during the inspection knew what the school council did and its members felt that the school did listen to their views. Pupils have the opportunity to discuss their own progress - each child has targets and each is involved in reviewing them.

29. There are good procedures for child protection and ensuring pupils' health and safety. The headteacher is the designated person for child protection purposes. All parent helpers have been appropriately checked and all staff are aware of the action to be taken in cases of concern. A committee of the governing body oversees health and safety matters; the premises are regularly inspected and the necessary procedures for first aid, fire drills and risk assessment are in place. Safety issues are well addressed when taking pupils across the road to the memorial hall for physical education lessons or lunch - there is a well rehearsed routine with which all comply. The last inspection report concluded that the unfenced school pond presented a safety hazard and recommended that action be taken to deal with the matter. The school, in consultation with the local education authority and parents, decided that they wished the pond to stay unfenced. It remains the view of this inspection team that a sizeable pond of almost half a metre in depth is a potential hazard, especially to small children.

30. In this small, inclusive school pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

There are very positive links with parents, the majority of whom feel closely identified with, and involved in, the life of the school. Information for parents is good, regular and accessible. An impressive range of links with other schools and the community considerably enriches pupils' experiences.

Strengths and weaknesses.

- The school is open, approachable and welcoming to parents.
- The quality of information about pupils' progress and school events is good.
- A wide variety of visits, visitors and community events enrich pupils' experiences, as do very positive links with partner institutions.
- A small minority of parents are unable to agree that the school takes account of parents' views.

Commentary.

31. This is a school with very positive links with parents. The clear majority of parents seen both before and during the inspection felt that they were welcome in school. Informal access to staff was readily available and parents who wished to work voluntarily in school were welcomed and made to feel part of the school team - the school prospectus positively encourages parents to become involved. Parents support the work of the school at home; children's home-school reading records, for example, are well used by both parents and staff and form a good vehicle for home-school dialogue.

32. Information provided for parents about children's progress is of good quality. Parents particularly appreciate their children's end-of-year reports. Parents have several opportunities a year for meetings with staff and for seeing the school at work. At a meeting in the autumn term, parents are informed of the curriculum plans for the ensuing year. Regular newsletters, couched in parent-friendly language, inform parents of school events, matters of concern, school staffing and management issues. In the pre-inspection Ofsted questionnaire, 93% of parents said that they would feel comfortable about approaching the school with a query.

33. Despite parents' very positive views about most aspects of the school's partnership, a small minority of parents responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire did not feel that the school took sufficient account of parents' views. The school has no formalised procedures for establishing parents' opinions. The headteacher has, on occasions, used questionnaires but normally parental views are determined by informal soundings. It is noteworthy too, that 16 per cent of children travel to school by minibus or taxi - consequently, their parents do not have the benefit of twice daily contact with the school.

34. Links with the community are very good and enrich children's experiences considerably. The school seizes suitable opportunities to reinforce learning by inviting in a local artist, writer or resident with an interesting story to tell. Pupils talked to older residents of the village about life in the 1930s and 1940s. They have visited Iron Age hill forts on Dartmoor, stately homes and looked at local beaches and farms in support of curricular objectives. There are strong links with the parish church whose rector and lay reader visit often to take assemblies and talk to pupils. Pupils visit the church for the major Christian festivals. Harvest service donations are given to a nearby refuge, thus supporting children's awareness of citizenship. The community make use of the school swimming pool and the school hosts a church based club for young people. Links with partner institutions are similarly very good and rewarding. Pupils take part in a mathematics challenge at the secondary

school to which most pupils transfer and they use its information technology, science and sports facilities.

35. Parents are very appreciative of the provision the school makes for pupils with special educational needs. Parents are regarded as partners in their child's education and their support helps these pupils to achieve. Parents are kept well informed of their child's progress.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The school is well managed by head, staff and governors working as a very good team. The leadership of the head is very good. Governors are very supportive of the school and their contribution to governance is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has very good educational direction.
- The curriculum is managed well.
- The management of special educational needs is very good.
- Strategic management linking finance to educational priorities is much improved and is now good.
- Health and safety arrangements are good overall, but unsatisfactory with regard to the pond.
- Behaviour is well managed.

Commentary

36. The last inspection recognised strengths in the leadership of the head, but reported weaknesses in development and strategic planning. The head has managed change well with significant improvements to planning to the point where management (judged against much more rigorous criteria) is considered good. She leads staff and governors very effectively as a very good team and this has had a substantial impact on the quality of education provided. Her part in the improvement of the school from 'satisfactory' to 'very good' is obvious. This, whilst teaching three days a week, is to her considerable credit.

37. Subject co-ordinators, which in this small school means all teachers, manage curriculum areas well, with notable strengths in English, maths and science, and this has positive effects on standards. Good initiatives in assessment in these subjects are beginning to be used as models for developments in other subjects and this is an appropriate focus for management in the future. Because pupils are well challenged, the curriculum on offer is very good and relevant to their needs, and relationships are very good, consequently pupils behave very well. This complements the consistent management of behaviour by all staff working to the same expectations, policy and procedures. Pupils know where they stand and are pleased through the active school council to play a part in determining protocol.

38. Management of special educational needs is very good. The paperwork enables pupils' progress to be tracked. Individual education plans contain short measurable targets which are reviewed formally each term. Statutory reviews are carried out at the designated time. There are good relationships with outside agencies. All staff receive appropriate training. This area has improved well since the last inspection.

39. Governors play a good, and improved, part in the running of the school. They are very supportive, are well organised, and through their monitoring are well informed. Good analysis means they are well aware of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Governors make good links between limited finance and educational priorities and manage the budget well, working closely with the head. Governors are kept up to date by the efficient administrative officer who monitors spending effectively to ensure best value principles are followed. Although because the school is small spending per child is high, expenditure matches income. In the light of above and often well

above average standards, very good provision (not least of which is in developments to accommodation and resources), very good response from pupils and very good personal development, the school is judged as giving good value for money. This is a clear improvement over the last report's judgement of 'satisfactory'. The school currently has a slightly larger than recommended contingency fund, but this is intentional and is designed to protect staffing in the event of numbers on roll fluctuating.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	208683	Balance from previous year	3789
Total expenditure	197398	Balance carried forward to the next	11286
Expenditure per pupil	3463		

40. The last report recommended that steps should be taken to ensure that the pond did not create a hazard to pupils' safety. Governors took advice from the local education authority and raised awareness amongst staff, parents and children to improve the situation. This inspection still finds the unfenced pond gives cause for concern in terms of health and safety and requires attention, especially in the light of plans to develop provision for pre-school children adjacent to the site.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

As there were no children in the Foundation Stage present during the inspection it was not possible to judge teaching and learning. A review of planning for those who will arrive after Christmas and reference to Year 1 pupils indicates provision continues to be satisfactory. All required elements of the Foundation Stage curriculum are covered and appropriate emphasis is put on learning through first hand experience.

Observation and discussions with Year 1 pupils together with teachers' records show children make sound progress in reception and usually achieve the early learning goals expected nationally before they are six. Children would appear to achieve notably well in personal, social and emotional development, adjusting well to school routines and showing consideration for others, joining in well and developing good communication skills.

Provision in terms of well resourced accessible space outdoors is an area already identified by the school for improvement.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is good, and sometimes very good, teaching.
- Standards are above average.
- There is very good planning for, and implementation of, the literacy hour in mixed age classes.
- There is very good management of the subject, including the library.

Commentary

41. The school has benefited from good support from the local authority's literacy consultants who have helped teachers improve their planning for the literacy hour. There is a very clear structure to lessons which indicates that pupils are given opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills before embarking on a task. Pupils are set interesting tasks which are well matched to their prior learning, and as a result they are confident, well motivated learners. Teachers' subject knowledge is very secure; one member of staff is a leading literacy teacher within the local authority. Expectations are high and pupils are always encouraged to work hard and do their best. Good support is provided for pupils with special educational needs, while the more able are well challenged. Although teaching is effective some lessons are overlong. For example a Years 3 and 4 literacy session was observed to go on for 75 minutes. Because of good teaching the session was judged as 'good', but this took pupils to the limit of their concentration.

42. Target setting is used effectively to help pupils take some responsibility for their own learning. Assessment is good; as a result teachers, pupils and parents know how well pupils are achieving.

43. Pupils achieve very well as a result of consistently good teaching. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good and there is good support from parents. Inevitably, standards vary year on year because year groups are small and the proportion of pupils with special educational needs varies.

44. Very good planning ensures that all the strands of English are taught well. Pupils' speaking listening skills are above average. Pupils listen attentively to teachers in the introductory part of lessons. They discuss ideas in pairs and confidently share their work at the end of lessons. For

example, Year 6 pupils read the play they had written from reading a couple of days of Adrian Mole's diary. Standards in reading are above average for pupils in Years 2 and 6. Reading skills, for example, phonics and learning high frequency words, are taught consistently well in the youngest class. Pupils have varied opportunities to read, both guided reading and individual reading, to an adult. Reading diaries show that pupils read regularly at home and by the end of Year 2 most pupils are reading fluently with expression and understanding. Reading continues to be a priority and is managed well. There is a good range of attractive books for pupils to read individually or in a group. Guided reading is timetabled and records are kept of the skills being acquired. Reading tests show that by the end of Year 6 pupils have a higher reading age than their chronological age.

45. Pupils achieve good standards in writing as a result of good teaching and the effort they put into the tasks, for example, newspaper articles of the First Christmas. Teachers make good use of examples of writing and this increases pupils' confidence. Spelling and handwriting are taught consistently well in all classes. By Year 6 most pupils write in a legible, joined script and spelling errors do not spoil their re-drafted work. There is a very strong culture for pupils to check and re-check their work for spelling and punctuation errors and many older pupils do this without being reminded.

46. A teacher with very good subject knowledge and very good teaching skills manages literacy very well. The detailed action plan which has included in-service training for staff on planning, guided reading and writing, has been very effective in raising the quality of teaching and standards in literacy. The co-ordinator has ensured that there are sufficient good quality resources to stimulate pupils. Pupils are given opportunities to take part in competitions and festivals and to celebrate National Poetry Day and World Book Day so that the profile of literacy is kept high. The co-ordinator monitors planning, pupils' work, teaching and learning. This has contributed to the rise in standards over the last few years. The co-ordinator has conducted an audit of the library and has been able to purchase some new books, so that the school now has a well stocked and attractive library which promotes reading very well.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

47. There is good use of pupils' English skills to support other subjects, particularly in discussions and group work where pupils listen well and make sensible, reasoned contributions. For example very good circle time in Years 1 and 2 made the most of good communication skills as well as extending pupils, and Years 5 and 6 topic work on Aztecs in history showed that pupils use good reading ability in researching for information.

48. After the residential trip Years 5 and 6 pupils produced attractive topic books which showed good use of literacy in history and geography. Current work in science shows very clearly labelled diagrams of the eye and writing up of investigations. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 used literacy well in history in their writing about how the Ancient Egyptians used the Nile for transport.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results of national 2003 tests (SATs) for eleven year olds were well above average.
- Good planning underpins good teaching and pupils' good achievement.

Commentary

49. Although care must be taken where small year groups are concerned, the school can be proud of its success. Its performance in national tests was well above average both for all and similar schools in 2003. A high proportion of pupils reached above the average level and pupils with SEN did well to achieve (or very nearly achieve) levels expected for their age.

50. The school's improvement year on year shows progress is being made faster than the national trend. When considering the well above average level of special needs in most year groups this represents a substantial achievement. The school can demonstrate that it adds good value to pupils' mathematical skills and understanding as children move up through the year groups, and this continues to build on the sound basis reported in the last inspection. It reflects the good improvement recognised in 2001 by the DfEE in an achievement award.

51. Currently standards are judged as average for seven and eleven year olds. This is a positive situation considering the higher than average level of SEN in both year groups and shows that pupils continue to achieve well. For example most Year 2 pupils can solve money problems using mental calculation, making the most of role play experience in the class shop; and Year 6 pupils are competent at using all four operations (addition, subtraction, multiplication and division) efficiently and have a sound understanding of fractions. Throughout the school more able pupils rise to good levels of challenge in determining which methods to use to attempt problems. Pupils were observed to be interested and to enjoy maths activities. They responded enthusiastically to lessons and behaved very well. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls

52. Attainment is notably good in numeracy and consistently good teaching in all three classes encourages pupils to apply what they know and to explain their strategies. A strength of maths teaching is that staff expect pupils to demonstrate independence and check the reasonableness of their answers. Very good questioning involved all pupils in all activities and good planning provides work which is based on what pupils already know and can do as well as taking different ages and abilities in the same class in to account. Assessment is used effectively to set targets for individual pupils and to determine future planning. This complements good use of learning objectives made clear to pupils at the start of lessons and referred back to at the end to gauge progress.

53. Areas for further development are in ensuring lessons, regardless of how successful, do not go on too long (one observed maths session was 75 minutes long!), and in promoting still more use of data handling skills and ways of recording and presenting information. The head as co-ordinator is a good role model to other staff in her teaching and shows a good awareness of the strengths and relative weaknesses of the subject. There is a comprehensive action plan for maths as an integral part of school improvement planning. The subject is well managed and expectations of staff and pupils, although high, are attainable. This has a very positive effect: for example, the school far exceeded the targets set by the local education authority in 2003 with twice the percentage of pupils achieving the higher level, Level 5, compared with the proposed proportion.

Mathematics across the curriculum

54. The use of maths in other subjects is satisfactory. For example there is good use of measuring in science, application of scale in DT and art, and understanding of timescales in history. Pupils make appropriate use of numeracy skills in a variety of situations: for instance in working with data collected for surveys in humanities.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve standards above the national average.

Commentary

55. Only one lesson was observed during the inspection, so it is not possible to make a judgment on teaching and learning. In the lesson with the youngest pupils they looked at a range of objects to identify a source of power, mains electricity, battery or solar. Pupils showed an understanding of key

words: for example power, socket, pylon and flex. Photographic evidence shows that the farm trip enhanced pupils' scientific knowledge.

56. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 are learning about forces, pushing and pulling, speed and direction. They understand how to conduct a fair test. The oldest pupils have been studying electricity this term. They can all make a circuit. Good links were made with DT and literacy when pupils designed and made a buzzer game and then wrote an evaluation.

57. A strength of the teaching in science is the emphasis given to investigations. Frequently pupils are asked to plan and carry out an investigation with the materials provided. Planning, pupils' work in books and on display, shows that the oldest pupils have investigated shadows and are now learning how the eye works.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **much improved and is now satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Much improved planning seeks to build skills on those learnt previously.
- Standards are below national expectations at the end of Year 6 because pupils have yet to cover all required elements in sufficient depth.
- Although improved there is still room to further develop the use made of ICT to support other subjects.

Commentary

58. Good progress in planning a scheme of work and in improving resources since the last inspection is having positive effects on pupils' achievement and standards. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are achieving satisfactorily and reaching levels expected nationally of seven year olds by the end of Year 2. They can enter and retrieve work, and make satisfactory use of computers as word processors. They are able to control programs and follow simulations to improve spelling and tables.

59. Year 6 pupils have not yet covered all work specified in the National Curriculum in sufficient depth to meet what is expected of eleven year olds, and as such standards are unsatisfactory. However, pupils are achieving satisfactorily in the light of their experience. The school is aware of this situation and has put in place new planning to ensure that there will be no gaps by the time the current Year 4 reach the end of Year 6. In the meantime work in hand is of an appropriate standard. Most pupils can produce and organise their own ideas using ICT and clearly enjoy the opportunity to use computers: for example as part of literacy extending work on metaphors, developing a powerpoint presentation; and using the Internet for research. Gaps still to be overcome, such as in control technology, and using sensors to detect changes in science investigations, are planned for in the very detailed action plan for ICT which is being used to bring about improvements.

60. The head as temporary co-ordinator has a sound appreciation of strengths and areas for improvement and is keen to see ICT taking a more obvious role in supporting other subjects. She is aware of Years 3 to 6 having missed opportunities to handle data in maths and science and has this as a priority for development alongside further improving staff confidence and skills.

61. No actual ICT lessons could be observed so no judgements on teaching have been made. However, observations of groups of pupils and individuals working on computers show basic skills are satisfactory and that pupils are keen. Although the school still needs to increase resources, pupils' opportunity is guaranteed by good record keeping to ensure all have a turn and this is complemented by a system of assessment (recently begun) where pupils themselves confirm what they can do.

62. Ongoing progress in the development of ICT is the result of good staff co-operation, the active support of the local education authority advisor, and the commitment of the governors to funding for the subject.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

63. The school has plans to develop the use of ICT across the curriculum and improvement since the last report is sound. Currently there is satisfactory use of word processing, and good progress in terms of the way art programs are utilised to extend pupils' expressive skills. However, the use of ICT is underdeveloped in data handling and in presenting information: for example in maths and science. Pupils are beginning to use CD-ROMs and the Internet to research for information, but although resources are now much improved, this is still a limiting factor for individual work.

64. An area for development is to include in schemes of work for other subjects specific ICT skills that will be applied in various topics.

HUMANITIES

GEOGRAPHY

Provision in geography is **good**.

65. No teaching was seen and there is very little work available so geography was lightly sampled. However, teachers' planning shows that staff have good subject knowledge and are very clear what is to be taught to each class each year. The planning indicates that pupils will acquire a broad body of knowledge and develop geographical skills in each topic studied. Visits and visitors enrich this area of the curriculum well. Very good use is made of the local area, the village, Kingsbridge and Dartmoor. There are sufficient resources which are easily accessible for teachers and pupils to use.

HISTORY

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is very good planning.
- Very good use is made of a range of visits and visitors.
- Pupils achieve higher standards than those expected nationally.
- There are no assessment procedures in place to gauge progress.

Commentary

66. The school has given a great deal of thought, time and effort to creating a really vibrant scheme of work for history which includes national guidance. The planning is really detailed and as a result pupils gain an 'in depth' knowledge of each topic studied, as well as developing historical skills systematically. Pupils take a pride in their work. Attractive displays value pupils' work as well as being a resource for further study.

67. A wide range of trips is arranged for history: for example the Tudors, Buckland Abbey, Invaders and Settlers, Totnes Castle and for Victorians, Lanhydrock House. A popular trip supporting the 'Where We Live' topic is a four and half mile trip from the village following the Avon Trail through meadow, farmland and woodland to the mouth of the river. Such visits enliven the curriculum and motivate pupils to work hard back in the classroom.

68. Pupils achieve well in history because they are presented with a rich, lively curriculum, teaching which is consistently good, and they have a strong desire to learn. Teachers know their

pupils well and prepare stimulating lessons with tasks very well matched to prior learning. Lessons meet the needs of all pupils. Those with special educational needs and more able pupils are encouraged to work independently and use their initiative.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (RE)

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The school has created a good scheme of work based on the locally agreed syllabus.
- There are good links between RE and other subjects.
- Good resources are available.
- No effective assessment procedures are in place to guarantee progress.

Commentary

69. No teaching was observed during the two days of the inspection, but teachers' planning and pupils' work indicate that pupils cover the agreed syllabus in depth and make good progress. Pupils spend a substantial amount of time studying Christianity, and learn about Judaism and Hinduism. Attractive displays in classrooms and corridors indicate that RE has a high profile in this small church school. Literacy and ICT are developed well in RE: for example creating the 'Bethlehem Times' for the year Jesus was born. The co-ordinator ensures that appropriate artefacts are hired from a Christian resource centre – this is effective use of the budget and ensures that teachers have high quality resources available to support pupils' learning. There are no assessment procedures in place yet and this makes it difficult to prove how well pupils and the school are doing.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

70. In this five day inspection this curriculum area was not a major focus of observation. Only one art lesson was seen, no design and technology lessons, two music sessions, and one physical education lesson (dance). These provided too little evidence for detailed judgements, especially as work samples were not available for music and PE. However, it appears that provision in art and design and technology is good, and that it is broadly satisfactory in music (with good use of the part time specialist), and satisfactory in PE (notwithstanding the limitations of having no hall).

71. Scrutiny of displays, photographs and teachers' records point to pupils achieving well in art and DT. Standards are above national expectations for seven and eleven year olds in both subjects and are the result of good planning and the staff's strong commitment to encouraging pupils to express themselves and to test out their designs.

72. Evidence from planning and records shows that co-ordination of all four subjects is good, with very good features in art. Resourcing all round is good as a result of good use of finance. There are positive moves towards assessing and recording pupils' progress involving pupils in evaluating their own performances.

73. The quality of teaching in the few lessons seen was consistently good. Pupils achieved well because they were fully involved and included in all activities. Teachers used questioning well to challenge pupils of different abilities and very effectively got pupils to comment on their own work and that of others in the class. In all lessons pupils responded positively (very well in the case of a Years 3 and 4 long art session making Christmas wreaths) and all achieved well.

74. The last inspection raised issues about the management of swimming. It was not possible to observe any swimming as this inspection took place in December and the pool is outdoors. However, discussions with staff and parents indicate arrangements have been improved with a view to making better use of time. Records show that virtually all pupils can swim the required 25 metres

before they leave. The school is committed to joining with other local schools to promote sporting activities and this works well to overcome the restrictions associated with small schools in terms of team games.

75. Parents and pupils are right to be pleased with the range of extracurricular opportunities which include features such as Arts Week and a variety of visits and visitors as well as clubs for music and sport. Take up for after school and lunchtime clubs is high with over 90% of pupils joining in at least one activity per week and over 60% of Years 3 to 6 participating in three or more clubs. Good use is made of the village memorial hall and sports field.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION

Provision in personal, social and health education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Golden rules and class rules are well established.
- The school has a very good ethos.
- There is a flourishing school council.

Commentary

76. The golden rules are displayed prominently and one is a focus each week. A 'child of the week' is chosen who has been seen to be keeping this rule especially well. This is celebrated in assembly. Class rules are negotiated between teacher and pupils, and pupils quickly understand that they earn rewards for appropriate behaviour, but that, if necessary, sanctions will be applied for inappropriate behaviour. Pupils in all classes have responsibilities, ranging from simple straightforward ones in the youngest class to whole school responsibilities for the oldest pupils. All the adults who work in the school are very committed and provide excellent role models for pupils.

77. The very caring ethos of this school, in which every pupil is known well by several adults, raises self-esteem and helps pupils to be confident. Pupils empathise with those less fortunate and are keen to help. After a successful sponsored swim they decided to help the street children of Ethiopia. A local contact visits Africa and brings back firsthand information to pupils. An attractive informative display helps pupils to understand the living conditions of these children. The school fulfils its statutory responsibilities to teach pupils about drug and alcohol abuse, and sex and relationships. Pupils value circle time as a time when they can discuss issues that are important to them and consider various emotions and discuss strategies to manage them.

78. Pupils feel that the school council gives them real opportunities to express their views. It has been responsible for improving playtimes by purchasing equipment to make this a more exciting time. Council representatives have suggested that a hall and a roof to the swimming pool would improve their school further, but they are learning that not all things are possible!

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	2
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	3
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	2
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).