

## INSPECTION REPORT

### **BRENT KNOLL C of E (VC) PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Brent Knoll, Highbridge

LEA area: Somerset

Unique reference number: 123808

Headteacher: Mrs S Endall

Lead inspector: Mr D J Curtis

Dates of inspection: April 26<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> 2004

Inspection number: 255596

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	118
School address:	Brent Street Brent Knoll Highbridge Somerset
Postcode:	TA9 4EQ
Telephone number:	01278 760546
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J P Dickson
Date of previous inspection:	June 1998

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

The school is situated in the village of Brent Knoll in Somerset. There are 118 pupils on roll, including 19 children currently in the reception class. A very small proportion of pupils come from minority-ethnic families, none of whom have English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils identified with special educational needs is below the national average. One pupil has a statement of special educational need. No pupils are currently entitled to free school meals which as a proportion is well below the national average. A high proportion of pupils live outside of the village. The school is over subscribed. The school achieved the Healthy Schools Award in 2003.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
20893	Mr D J Curtis	Lead inspector	English, Information and communication technology, Geography, History, Religious education, Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage, Personal, social and health education.
9644	Mr M Whitaker	Lay inspector	
30438	Mr R Guest	Team inspector	Mathematics, Science, Art and design, Design and technology, Music, Physical education, Special educational needs.

The inspection contractor was:

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## **REPORT CONTENTS**

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS</b>	
<b>STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS</b>	<b>8</b>
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
<b>QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>11</b>
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
<b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE</b>	
<b>SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2</b>	
<b>PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS</b>	<b>25</b>

## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This is a very good school which provides very good value for money.** It is very much at the heart of the community it serves. The school is popular and over subscribed.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- In Year 6, standards are well above average in English and mathematics, and pupils' achievement is very good.
- In Year 6, standards in science are above average, with those in information and communication technology (ICT) exceeding national expectations.
- Teaching is very good and has a positive impact on the standards achieved.
- Leadership and management, including governance, are very good.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to school and their behaviour is very good.
- Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good.
- The lack of a suitably sized hall seriously restricts pupils' entitlement to gymnastics.

The school has made good progress since its previous inspection. Very good leadership and management have contributed to an improvement in the proportion of good, and very good, teaching which, in turn, has led to significant improvements in standards.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Children start school with standards that are expected for four-year-olds. As the result of very good teaching the achievement of children in reception is good. The majority of children are likely to exceed the goals they would be expected to reach by the end of reception.

The standards achieved by pupils in Years 1 and 2 are very good as the result of high quality teaching. In speaking and listening, reading, writing and mathematics, standards are well above average; in science they are above average. Standards in ICT exceed national expectations. In religious education standards exceed the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Standards achieved by pupils in Years 3 to 6 are very good. In English and mathematics, standards are well above average; in science they are above average. Standards in ICT exceed national expectations. In religious education standards exceed the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Across the school the achievement of pupils with special educational needs is good. There is no significant variation in standards achieved by boys and girls.

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

In a small primary school results will vary from year to year and need to be treated with some caution. Results in the national tests in 2003 confirmed the trend of year-on-year improvement. Standards were well above average in English and mathematics when compared to all and similar schools and inspection findings confirm that the school is sustaining these high standards.

**Pupils' personal development is very good.** Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very good. Pupils show very positive attitudes to school and their behaviour is very good. Attendance is satisfactory and punctuality is good.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education is very good.** Teaching and learning are very good, with strengths in teachers' subject knowledge and expertise. Teachers have very good relationships with pupils and very high expectations of what they can achieve. There are strengths in the teaching of early literacy and numeracy skills in the reception class. Pupils are enthusiastic and motivated learners. Teachers make very effective use of learning support assistants. Assessment of pupils' learning is good. The quality of the curriculum is good. The headteacher, staff and governors place great importance on developing children as people and citizens of tomorrow. The school enriches the curriculum with an impressive range of extracurricular activities, visits and visitors. However, the school hall is too small for the teaching of gymnastics or games on wet days and this restricts pupils' entitlement to the full requirements for the teaching of physical education in the National Curriculum.

Pupils receive good care and support. The way in which the school seeks and acts on the views of pupils in their learning, and through the school council, is good. Links with parents are very good and those with the community and other schools are good.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The leadership and management of the school are very good.** Governance is very good and governors fulfil all of their statutory responsibilities. The headteacher has a very clear vision for the school and is totally committed to developing the whole child. She has a very high commitment to achieving the highest possible standards. She is ably supported by the senior management team and subject leaders who carry out their roles diligently.

## **PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

Parents are very positive about their relationships with staff and the headteacher. Staff know all the children and parents by name. Parents recognise that the school provides a 'friendly environment' where they are really encouraged to help and to support their children's learning. Parents say that teachers are very approachable and know that they can always talk to them if they have any concerns. Discussion with staff and pupils revealed that there is no bullying in the school and does not support the view of a minority of parents who expressed concerns in the Ofsted questionnaire. Pupils are very happy at school and enjoy lessons and the other activities provided for them. They appreciate and understand the targets that are set for them. There are particular strengths in the way in which they feel totally secure that they can discuss problems and concerns with their teachers.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

The most important thing the school should do to improve is:

- To work with all appropriate agencies to secure 'Phase Three' of the rebuilding programme which includes provision of a school hall.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

#### Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Standards achieved at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are above, or well above, average and pupils' achievement is very good.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in English and mathematics are well above average.
- Standards in science are above average.
- Standards in ICT exceed national expectations and those in religious education exceed the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus.
- Achievement of children in the Foundation Stage is good.

#### Commentary

1. As the result of very good teaching, achievement of children in reception is good. They make good progress in their learning and are on course to exceed the goals they are expected to reach at the end of the reception year. Children make particularly good progress in the key skills of reading and writing.

#### *Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2003*

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	14.4 (17.7)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	13.6 (15.2)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	14.6 (19.2)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 17 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

2. Results of national tests in 2003 for pupils in Year 2 were well below average in reading, writing and mathematics. These results were significantly lower than in previous years but are explained by this particular year group having a much higher proportion of pupils identified with special educational needs than in previous years. In the current Year 2, standards are well above average in reading, writing and mathematics and reflect the overall trend of improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils read confidently and write using good standards of spelling and punctuation. In mathematics, pupils' knowledge and understanding of number work are strengths. Standards in science are above average. In ICT, standards exceed national expectations. Standards in religious education exceed the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus.

#### *Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003*

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.9 (27.6)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	28.6 (29.8)	26.8 (26.7)
science	29.8 (28.6)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 19 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

3. Results of national tests in 2003 for pupils in Year 6 were well above average in English and mathematics, with those in science above average. These results reflect the year-on-year trend of



continuous improvement and the school's commitment to high achievement. The school has been successful in increasing the proportion of pupils who achieve the higher Level 5 in national tests. In the current Year 6, standards are well above average in English and mathematics, with those in science above average, and the school is maintaining the high standards achieved in 2003. In ICT standards exceed national expectations. Standards in religious education exceed the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus.

4. In English, pupils are enthusiastic readers and are articulate in discussing their favourite books and authors. They show good skills in using the library and the Internet for research work. In mathematics, pupils' number skills are particularly strong. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of life processes and living things are significant strengths in their science work. In ICT pupils show impressive skills in designing web pages. Pupils' understanding and knowledge of Christianity and Islam are good features of work in religious education.

5. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs (SEN) make good progress as measured against the targets in their individual education plans and achievement is good. Pupils benefit from very good teaching and the very effective support given by learning support assistants.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Pupils enjoy school and participate enthusiastically in the opportunities it offers. **Attitudes and behaviour are very good.** Pupils' personal, social and moral development is very good, as are relationships. Spiritual and cultural development are good. Attendance is satisfactory and punctuality is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils demonstrate very positive attitudes to school.
- The school is inclusive, free of harassment, and behaviour is very good.
- Relationships between pupils and adults are very good.
- The school's positive ethos and opportunities for involvement ensure very good personal, social and moral development.
- Whilst attendance is satisfactory overall, the level of unauthorised absence is above average.

### **Commentary**

6. There is a buzz of industrious activity throughout the school. The great majority (92 per cent) of pupils say that they enjoy school and there is a high take-up of the opportunities it offers. Pupils are keen to participate in after school clubs, sporting competition with other schools, visits and community activities. In lessons, pupils respond very well to lively and stimulating material as was seen, for example, in a Years 3 and 4 science lesson, in which pupils were studying, dissecting, drawing and categorising various fruit and vegetables. The youngest children in the reception class are confident and socially at ease with each other and the variety of adults (staff and helpers) in their classroom. They are entirely relaxed about leaving parents and carers in the mornings and settle quickly to well established routines.

7. Inclusion is very well developed. All pupils, regardless of background, ability, gender or ethnic origin, are fully included in all activities. Behaviour is very good at all times. In lessons, pupils comply with staff's high expectations and the resulting positive atmosphere contributes significantly to pupils' learning. Pupils are polite and helpful towards visitors and co-operate well with each other. School premises and property are treated with consideration. In the Ofsted pre-inspection questionnaire, 20 per cent of parents expressed concerns about bullying. These concerns were thoroughly addressed during the inspection and discussed with staff, governors and pupils. Nothing untoward was seen and no evidence to support these concerns was found. All agreed that children fell out from time to time and that friendship patterns changed. Staff know their pupils well and routine upsets are handled with sensitivity.

8. Relationships at all levels are very good, a factor that contributes significantly to the quality of pupils' personal development. Adults in school provide very good role models of co-operative working for pupils. Pupils themselves get on well together and would prefer to resolve their own petty disputes, hence the success of the peer mediation group. Staff treat pupils with consideration, and relationships between pupils and their learning support assistants are especially supportive.

9. Personal, social and moral development is very good. Pupils are aware of their responsibilities to each other and their community. They carry out duties in school, such as preparing the hall for assemblies or clearing up after lunch, they organise charity collections and they take part in community events, such as the annual parent-teacher association's summer fair. A 'house' system promotes a sense of group loyalty. The school's clear ethical values promote a strong moral awareness, from discussing and adhering to school rules to stimulating interest in, and concern for, the environment. Through the religious education syllabus, pupils confront their own personal strengths and weaknesses, for instance in the area of friendships, and they consider the moral messages in Bible stories. Spiritual development is good and promoted through strong links with the village church and an appreciation of the beauty of the children's own surroundings. Spiritual values – respect, consideration for others, inclusion – underpin the school's ethos. Cultural development is good. Pupils are made aware of their own cultural heritage through musical and theatrical activities of their own, supported by visits to live theatre in nearby towns. They pursue traditional activities, such as country dancing and, as far as is possible in a virtually mono-cultural environment, they are introduced to other cultures. Visitors talk about life in the Caribbean and India, and French classes for Years 5 and 6 open a window to modern Europe.

10. Unauthorised absence is marginally higher than the national average. The school is fully aware of those families whose children present attendance difficulties and the headteacher is working with them to improve matters. Pupils' punctuality is good.

***Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)***

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.8	School data	0.8
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.*

11. There were no exclusions in the previous school year.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is very good.

### Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are very good and make a significant contribution to the high standards achieved. Assessment is good.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching of key skills is very good.
- Pupils are motivated to learn and show strong concentration and application in their work.
- Teachers have high expectations of, and good relationships with, pupils.
- Teachers make effective use of learning support assistants, students, visitors and parent helpers to support pupils' learning.

### Commentary

#### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 20 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	11	8	1	0	0	0

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

12. A significant factor in the high standards achieved in English and mathematics is the very effective teaching of key skills in reading, writing and number. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies is very good. In reception, children are taught successfully to use phonics (sounding out) to help them read and to learn key words to help them spell. As a result, they are confident readers and writers by the time they start Year 1. In Years 1 and 2, the next level of skills is taught exceptionally well with the result that pupils read confidently, fluently and with good expression. Pupils are taught successfully how to use full stops, capital letters and speech marks in their writing. These skills are built on again by very good teaching in Years 3 to 6 so that pupils' more advanced reading skills are developed successfully, including comprehension and reference skills. Teachers build successfully on early writing skills so that by Year 6 pupils write in paragraphs, with imaginative vocabulary and accurate punctuation.

13. Pupils are enthusiastic and motivated learners. In lessons, they work hard and show impressive levels of concentration. Pupils show genuine interest in their work and want to succeed and please their teachers. There are strengths in the way in which pupils work together in pairs and groups as was evident in a design and technology lesson in Years 3 and 4. Here, there were impressive levels of co-operation when pupils were making the carrier bags which they had previously designed. Pupils respond particularly well when they are given a set amount of time to complete a task. Heads are down and there is a purposeful buzz of activity and concentration as pupils strive to achieve the task set.

14. A significant improvement in the quality of teaching since the previous inspection is that teachers have much higher expectations of individual pupils, and work is planned more closely to meet individual needs. In addition, teachers make effective use of their subject expertise to support pupils' learning and, in turn, this contributes to high standards. For example, the headteacher teaches science to Years 5 and 6. The ICT subject leader, whose class is Years 3 and 4, teaches the subject to Years 5 and 6 whilst his class is taught religious education by the headteacher. Use of subject knowledge, confidence and expertise in this way clearly benefits pupils' learning.

15. In lessons and particularly through their planning, teachers make very effective use of the impressive range of adult help available to them. Learning support assistants make a strong contribution in lessons by supporting individuals and groups of pupils, including those with SEN. Students and parents are deployed effectively and with well thought out planning to support pupils in lessons, and pupils' learning benefits from this. For example, in a literacy lesson in Years 1 and 2, pupils' progress in writing a story was greatly enhanced by each of the groups having adult support. Pupils benefited from an impressive level of support, together with praise and encouragement to succeed in writing sentences with capital letters and full stops in Year 1 and sentences with speech marks in Year 2.

## **The curriculum**

**The school provides a good curriculum** despite some inadequacies of the site which restrict opportunities, especially those which may be offered in physical education. Curriculum enrichment is good. Whilst resources are satisfactory overall the limited space, temporary classrooms and uneven surfaces on playing areas mean the current accommodation is unsatisfactory.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Accommodation is inappropriate for the full range of National Curriculum requirements in physical education.
- The school provides a wealth of curricular opportunities within the school day (including French) and in addition supports learning outside the school day well.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- The school has developed the curriculum in an innovative manner.
- Pupils are very well prepared for later stages of education.

## **Commentary**

16. The curriculum provided for Years 1 to 6 is good and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum despite difficulties in being able to do so for physical education. Religious education is included in the school's good provision. The school has a very strong and appropriate focus on literacy and numeracy and these elements are well used in other subjects. Lessons are well planned to cater suitably for pupils of all abilities. Groups of pupils sometimes change classes to ensure that the appropriateness of academic and social provision is more closely linked to their needs. Provision for personal, social and health education is good and the school attained the Healthy Schools Award in 2003.

17. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and the school fully complies with the code of practice. All staff are fully involved with the care of these pupils and ensure that they have good access to the full range of curriculum opportunities and make good progress.

18. Curriculum planning is thorough and meets the detailed needs of a diverse and wide range of abilities met in mixed aged classes. Younger pupils are frequently challenged by working with, and at the same level as, older pupils in classes, which stimulates achievement effectively. The issue of work not being matched to the needs of children in reception from the previous inspection has been addressed.

19. Subject leaders manage more than one subject in a small school such as this, but staff know each other well, are an effective team and plan and assess together both formally and informally. The curriculum is highly inclusive and promotes equal opportunities effectively (although in some lessons mixed gender groups could be more systematically encouraged). The school is very effective in preparing pupils for later stages of education and maintains very good links with the secondary phase.

20. Pupils benefit from many activities provided outside the school day including residential visits and visitors to the school. The school has increased its participation in sporting activities which pupils value.

21. The accommodation is unsatisfactory to meet modern expectations. The ICT suite whilst useful has to double as a library. The hall is too small to permit effective gymnastics activity. The field precludes throwing events in athletics and has no jumping facilities. The playground has an uneven surface littered with drain covers which must be considered a safety risk if pupils have to run. However, the imminent rebuilding programme will provide much improved classroom accommodation, but the next phase does not include the provision of a new school hall.

### **Care, guidance and support**

**The school provides a good standard of care** and a safe environment for all its pupils. Personal, social and academic support for individual pupils is good. Pupils' involvement in the life of the school and the management of their own learning is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school works hard to ensure pupils' welfare and safety; healthy living is especially well promoted.
- A caring ethos and the staff's thorough knowledge of children ensure that good personal, social and emotional support is provided.
- Pupils' views regarding school life and their own academic development are sought and listened to.

### **Commentary**

22. Arrangements for ensuring pupils' welfare, health and safety are good. The headteacher is the designated person for child protection purposes; all staff, including support staff, know what to do in cases of concern. All volunteers have been appropriately checked. All necessary health and safety procedures are in place. A professionally qualified governor is responsible for overseeing the health and safety policy. Staff stress safety matters in appropriate lessons (science, design and technology and physical education, for example). The school has obtained a Healthy Schools award and promotes healthy living in an annual health week that involves the entire village with healthy activities every evening, such as line dancing. The school nurse and a governor who is a general practitioner talk to pupils about health related issues, and pupils' lunch boxes are surveyed for healthy food. There is a strong ethos of care in the school; the headteacher spends much time supporting pupils, and their families, through emotional and social difficulties.

23. Pupils are well supported. Much of the support is informal and based on the thorough knowledge staff have of their pupils and the very good relationships throughout the school. Through the wide range and high take-up of extracurricular activities, most pupils are well known to a number of adults and are seen in a number of settings. Further opportunities to monitor personal development are provided by personal, social and health education lessons, including 'Circle Time'<sup>1</sup>. Through effective assessment procedures, staff are able to provide good guidance on academic progress. Pupils are happy with the degree of support they receive.

24. Pupils' involvement in the life of the school is good. The school council, comprising two pupils each from Years 3 to 6, meets monthly under the guidance of the deputy headteacher. Pupils feel that they are listened to and are encouraged to take their own ideas forward, for example they wanted to provide a 'friendship bench' in the playground for the use of children who felt lonely. They

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<sup>1</sup> During Circle Time pupils discuss a wide range of personal and general issues. It is agreed by all pupils that no interruptions should occur and only one person at a time will speak. Respect for other pupils' views will occur at all times and therefore pupils feel confident that they can talk with ease and free from any form of interference of interruption from other children.

organised a non-uniform day to raise the money for the bench and are now considering which one to buy. Pupils prefer to resolve their own disputes if they can and have formed a peer mediation group, consisting of volunteers from Years 5 and 6. Pupils are involved in discussing and setting their own targets, both personal and academic. They know what they have to do to achieve required levels; in English, for instance, they have assessment books which record their progress. They are encouraged to mark and evaluate each other's work.

### **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

This is a school that is at the centre of its community and has the whole-hearted support of parents, with whom **links are very good**. Parents are kept well informed, both formally and informally about children's progress and fully involved in the life of the school.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is a highly effective degree of parental involvement in, and commitment to, the school.
- The school provides good quality information about pupils' progress and school events.
- Good links with the community and use of the locality enrich pupils' learning.
- Good, co-operative relationships with partner institutions broaden pupils' experiences and smooth their transition between stages of education.

### **Commentary**

25. Parents are closely involved with the school and make a significant contribution to children's learning and the running of the school. A number of parents, including parent governors, volunteer to help in classrooms, to provide additional supervision on school trips and to assist with after-school activities. The school makes very effective use of parent volunteers; all are well briefed and know precisely what to do in the classroom and all feel valued and a part of the school team. Parents contribute to children's work at home through supporting the homework policy and home reading. There is a lively and well supported parent-teacher association which raises considerable sums that are used for pupils' benefit, for example, in supporting the school's information and communication technology suite. Parental views are sought, both informally (through the parent-teacher association) and formally, by way of questionnaires.

26. The school provides parents with information of good quality about school events and children's progress. Each class teacher sends parents a list of the topics the children will be studying over the ensuing term. Regular newsletters give good notice of forthcoming events. Parents of children in the reception class are offered a meeting to explain their children's progress against the standards expected for children of that age (these standards are called early learning goals). All parents are offered two formal consultation meetings with staff and, additionally, the school sometimes offers open meetings to discuss any topics parents wish to raise (the take-up for these offers can, however, be disappointing). Staff are always happy to discuss minor concerns at the beginning or end of the school day, and the headteacher is known to be available to parents in the playground when they collect or deliver their children.

27. Good community links enrich pupils' experiences. People from the community help in school and those with interesting stories help to support learning, for example a Caribbean mother talks to children about carnival, and someone with years of experience in India talks about the Hindu faith. Governors with professional expertise use it well in the service of the school. There are close links with the church; the vicar is a frequent visitor and the church is used as an historical artefact and school theatre as well as a place of worship. Good use is made of community facilities, such as the village tennis courts, and the locality is well used to enrich the curriculum. Pupils visit a nearby environmental centre and use contrasting local beaches to support their work in geography. Pupils' sense of citizenship is enhanced by charity collections, the gift of Harvest produce to local women's refuges, and by singing to elderly people.

28. The school has built up good, effective links with partner institutions. Links with the kindergarten are especially close. Kindergarten children join in reception class activities and their transition to the reception class is virtually seamless. The secondary school to which most pupils transfer has sports college status and physical education staff from that school have worked with children from Years 3 and 4. There are good arrangements for smoothing the transfer process to secondary education. The school works in co-operation with other, small, local primary schools over, for example, a Caribbean festival, and the headteacher has established a mutually supportive partnership with a similarly sized primary school a few miles away. There is an effective partnership with the University of the West of England. At the time of the inspection, two students from the university were working with the reception class.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The headteacher is providing very good leadership and management.** An informed and active governing body ensures the school is supported with very good governance. The leadership of other key staff and the effectiveness of management are good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher has high aspirations aligned to a very good sense of purpose.
- The governing body is very effective in helping to shape the vision and direction of the school.
- The school's ambition is well reflected in long term strategic planning and shorter term improvement plans.
- The school is self-evaluative and monitors performance data in core subjects effectively.

### **Commentary**

29. The very good leadership provided by the headteacher, ably assisted by a relatively new deputy headteacher, has been instrumental in building an effective and committed whole school team. This team shares a drive to continue to raise pupils' achievement and ensure that they all benefit fully from their time at school. Despite a stable staff in terms of service at the school, innovation is welcome and new ideas are incorporated into the school curriculum and reviewed to ensure it is to pupils' benefit. The inclusion of French on the school timetable is a recent example of this use of expertise. Staff and pupils are provided with very good role models for promoting respect and concern. Pupils' ideas are listened to carefully and their emotional and social awareness is being well developed alongside their academic achievement. All staff feel that their contributions and ideas are valued and a purposeful inclusive ethos has been developed throughout the school.

30. Governors fulfil the requirements of their position in a very effective manner. They are interested in, informed about, and committed to, their school. The three year development plan ensures the longer term vision for their school and it in turn shapes the shorter term direction of the school effectively. Governors are well aware of all aspects of their school, many work or help in it and regular visits are undertaken to further inform. Members of the governing body are well placed to challenge and support school staff, which they do to very good effect. Staff and governors have great confidence in each other. All statutory requirements have been met and members are instrumental in building a purposeful, inclusive and achieving school.

31. The managers of the school monitors data on pupil attainment in English, mathematics, science and ICT very well and take effective steps to ensure further improvement. This aspect of school life is not as fully developed in relation to other subjects. Staff expertise is used effectively and continuing professional development is undertaken, usually in line with school's needs, as identified by subjects which are currently the foci in the school improvement plan. Staff performance management, including the headteacher's, is effectively organised. The school is contributing well to initial teacher training by supporting students from the University of the West of England. The governing body has a very good approach to financial management. Setting and monitoring of the budget to fit in with educational priorities is effectively achieved. Managers receive appropriate support from the school secretary who efficiently monitors daily spending and provides financial

reports for the headteacher and governing body. A feature of financial management is the very good manner in which the principles of best value are applied, ensuring the school gets and gives very good value for money. A high proportion of the carry forward is DFCG (devolved formula capital grant) and is linked to the imminent rebuilding programme.

32. The barriers to further achievement, especially in physical education, presented by the inadequacies of the current accommodation, have been manfully minimised by staff dedication to ensuring all pupils receive the best possible opportunities. This attitude has ensured a delivery of as full a curriculum as possible with the unsatisfactory accommodation within which staff have to work. A hall too small to teach gymnastic activities appropriately, together with a field too small for all athletic activities (certainly any throwing), and a playground with uneven surface and drain covers prevent the school from delivering a full curriculum effectively. The school, despite this, and with great goodwill, has nonetheless ensured all pupils have overcome this barrier as effectively as possible.

***Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004***

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	331,384
Total expenditure	306,975
Expenditure per pupil	2,595

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	55,591
Balance carried forward to the next	80,731



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

### AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

**Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good.** At the time of the inspection, 19 children were in the reception class, together with seven pupils from Year 1. The number of children joining the school varies from year to year and with small numbers standards achieved on entry to the school vary. The recent trend shows that children enter the school with standards expected for their age. Teaching and learning are very good, with strengths in the teaching of the key skills of reading, writing and number. The reception teacher makes effective use of learning support assistants, students and parent helpers to support children's learning. There is effective leadership and management provided by the reception teacher. Children benefit from a secure outdoor play area and the improvement since the previous inspection in work being matched more carefully to the six areas of learning in the Foundation Stage curriculum. By the end of reception, children are on course to exceed the expectations of the Early Learning Goals.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's achievement is good, especially in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy and in mathematical development.
- The teaching of the early and important key skills of reading and writing is very good.
- Children are happy and confident learners.

#### Commentary

33. Children make good progress in their **personal, social and emotional development** and their achievement is **good**. They settle quickly into the day-to-day life of the school through very good teaching and the effective support given to them by older pupils, especially at break and lunchtimes. Children are confident in asking and answering questions and they have good relationships with each other, including the Year 1 pupils in their class. Children are helpful and co-operative, especially in tidying up at the end of the morning and afternoon.

34. Achievement in **communication, language and literacy** is **good**. The teaching of the key skills of reading and writing is very good and has a significant impact on children's achievement, preparing them successfully for future work in literacy. Phonics (letter sounds) are taught exceptionally well with the result that children use their knowledge of letter sounds in reading. By the end of reception, children are established as confident readers on the school's reading scheme. Children are taught how to write, with a strong emphasis on correct letter formation. Children write their names unaided and by the end of reception, write simple sentences on their own, including those they word process on the computer.

35. Achievement in **mathematical development** is **good**. Children know the days of the week and the months of the year and count accurately from the '1<sup>st</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup>' forwards and backwards. They read, write and order numbers to 10, with most confident beyond 10. Children understand *one more than* and *one less than*. They show a good understanding of two-dimensional shapes. Teaching is very good, with high expectations of children's ability in number.

36. Achievement in **knowledge and understanding** of the world is **good**. Children are confident in the use of the mouse and the keyboard when using the computer, including writing simple sentences unaided. They enjoy using small and large construction kits and work together collaboratively to build, for example, a roller coaster. Children thought up the idea, then designed and made flags to go on the top. Through their current topic, children show a good understanding of the seashore.

37. In **creative development**, achievement is **good**. Children enjoy making pictures using paint and collage. They work successfully with modelling dough and use small tools to shape their designs. Children benefit from the outdoor play area where they can experiment and investigate sand and water. During the inspection, they took great delight in working with a parent helper (a father) to make a rock pool. Speaking and listening skills were developed successfully when the group had to tell the rest of the class how they made the rock pool.

38. In **physical development**, achievement is **good**. Children are confident in handling scissors and other small tools when they make models, involving cutting, sticking and joining. In the outdoor play area, they ride confidently the good selection of large wheeled toys. In the hall, children show good skills in music and movement, including learning how to perform traditional Scottish dances.

## **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2**

### **ENGLISH and FRENCH**

#### **English**

Provision in English is **very good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards achieved in all aspects of English are very good.
- Teaching, especially of key skills, is very good.
- Pupils make very effective use of literacy skills in other subjects.

#### **Commentary**

39. Results of the 2003 national tests for pupils in Year 2 were well below the national average in reading and writing. However, this particular year group had a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Standards in the current Year 2 are well above average in reading and writing and pupils' achievement is very good. In the 2003 national tests for pupils in Year 6, results were well above average in English. Standards in the current Year 2 are well above average and achievement is very good. Current standards in Year 2 and Year 6 reflect the trend of year-on-year improvement since the previous inspection.

40. Standards in speaking and listening are well above average. Pupils are confident in asking and answering questions and in initiating conversations with each other and visitors. They listen attentively to their teachers and to each other. It is clear that pupils value and respect the opinions of other people.

41. In reading standards are well above average. In Year 2 pupils are enthusiastic readers. They read confidently and fluently, with the high proportion of more able readers reading with good expression. Pupils benefit from regularly reading at home. In Year 6, pupils talk confidently about the plot and characters and express preferences for their favourite books and authors. They are confident in using the library and know how to locate a specific book and then how to use the contents and index pages to find specific information. Pupils make very good use of the Internet as a source of reference material.

42. Standards in writing are well above average. In Year 2, pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar are good. Pupils write successfully in a range of styles, including original stories, retelling of stories, poetry and factual writing. In Year 6, pupils write successfully for a range of purposes and different audiences. Standards of spelling, punctuation and grammar are good and pupils take great care and pride in how they present their work. Pupils' use of imaginative vocabulary is effective in stories and poetry.

43. Teaching and learning are very good and have a positive impact on the standards achieved. Pupils enjoy English because lessons are interesting and challenging. Teachers have a very good understanding of, and expertise in, teaching the National Literacy Strategy. The teaching of key skills is particularly strong and contributes to the discernable progress pupils make within a school year, and year on year, as they move up through the school. Teachers are very confident and this is reflected in pupils' enthusiasm for the subject. Effective use is made of homework, particularly to support reading. Teachers make good use of learning support assistants and other adult helpers to support pupils in lessons.

44. Leadership and management are good and contribute successfully to the standards achieved. The subject leader is knowledgeable and enthusiastic and works effectively with her colleagues in supporting teaching and learning.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

45. Pupils' use and application of literacy skills in other subjects is impressive. There are strengths in pupils' use of word processing and desktop publishing skills as a tool to help them present finished pieces of work, including stories and poems. Pupils are very confident in using the Internet to carry out research. Pupils apply their writing skills successfully in science, history and design and technology.

### **FRENCH**

Only one lesson was observed in Years 5 and 6 so it is not possible to make a secure judgement about provision in French.

#### **Commentary**

46. An impressive feature of the lesson observed was pupils' recall of previous learning. Because of the Easter holiday and a residential visit prior to that, this was their first lesson for five weeks. The lesson observed was very good and reflected previously very good teaching because pupils had remembered so much. Pupils were confident in the days of the week, months of the year and in counting to 20. Many showed good recall of weather, such as 'Il fait froid'. During the lesson, they made good progress in learning about items in the classroom, including 'un stylo' and 'un cahier'.

### **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There are high standards of work evident throughout the school.
- Very good teaching results in the high achievement of all pupils.
- Number work is particularly strong.
- Learning support assistants are well directed and support pupils with special educational needs well.
- Pupils' attitudes towards the subject are very positive.

#### **Commentary**

47. Standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are well above the national average and pupils' achievement is very good. This is particularly the case in number work where standards and pupils' enthusiasm for working at challenging number tasks is excellent. In the 2003 national tests for pupils in Year 2, results were well below average because of the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. In Year 6, standards were well above average. Notwithstanding those in Year 2,

results have improved year-on-year and the school has made good progress in mathematics over time and since the last report.

48. A significant factor in pupils' high achievement in this subject is the good quality of teaching. Teaching observed during the inspection was always good and occasionally very good. This ensured that pupils' learning was good, as was their progress. Good or better teaching was observed because class teachers were secure in their subject knowledge, made good use of time to ensure lessons were stimulating and of good pace and engaged pupils' interest well. The unusual practice of modelling more than one equation at once in Year 6 was particularly effective in ensuring active engagement and stimulating achievement.

49. Pupils' number work is excellent. Pupils as young as five count in twos, fives and tens forwards and backwards. Year 6 pupils use brackets in equations skilfully and work to two decimal places in multiplication and division. This emphasis on number work is not to the detriment of other aspects of mathematics. Work seen in pupils' books and conversation with pupils demonstrates that other aspects of the mathematics curriculum are effectively covered and provision in this subject offers appropriate breadth of study. A feature of all lessons is the very good use made of learning support assistants and other adults. They are well directed and ensure all pupils are included in lessons and achieve well.

50. ICT was not being well used to support the subject at the time of inspection within classrooms. Where it was attempted in some cases the equipment failed to allow the class teacher to demonstrate her teaching points. ICT is however well used in the school suite to support mathematics by older pupils.

51. Assessment of pupils' attainment is thorough and results are used to set targets in order to raise standards further. Marking of pupils' work, whilst encouraging pupils, frequently marking does not set targets for future learning and pupils themselves were not clear what they had to do to improve on a short term basis. Pupils were, nonetheless, well motivated to succeed and were engaged in lessons in a positive and purposeful manner. Pupils' attitudes towards the subject were very positive; pupils enjoyed the challenge which lessons set. Although learning objectives planned for lessons were not always shared in an effective manner, plenary sessions demonstrated that they had been met in all lessons.

52. The subject is well led and managed by an experienced co-ordinator. She is ensuring the school follows the requirements of National Numeracy Strategy. In a small school, her ability to monitor teaching directly is limited but through informal discussions with colleagues, she knows that the subject is taught to the full requirements of the National Numeracy Strategy. Teachers have pupils for more than one year and information on pupils' standards and progress is passed from one teacher to another via informal thumbnail sketches. Discussions with pupils about their work are used effectively for day-to-day assessment. Mathematics is appropriately resourced and equipment effectively used. There has been good improvement in the subject since the last report.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

53. Pupils use and apply successfully mathematics in other subjects. For example, they measure and estimate accurately in design and technology, and when recording the growth of plants in science.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards in science are good with pupils making good progress.
- Teaching observed was never less than of a good standard.

- The school focuses science teaching on investigation, observation and testing in a very good manner.
- Pupils' knowledge and understanding of materials and their properties is not as strong as other aspects of science.

### **Commentary**

54. At the last inspection, standards in science were 'in line with national expectations'. Standards have improved steadily, except in 2003 in Year 2 when the year group had a substantial number of pupils with special educational needs. Current standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are above average and pupils' achievement is good.

55. Teaching and learning are good and have a positive impact on standards achieved. Evidence from lessons and pupils' work confirms the school's practical approach to the subject with a very strong emphasis being placed on pupils of all ages investigating through observing, hypothesising and testing which is evident in all lessons. ICT is very well used in the subject to support teaching with the 'electron' microscope available to pupils in Years 5 and 6 being an especially impressive feature. Within the teaching of science, learning support assistants and volunteer parents are particularly effectively used to support pupils' learning. Class teachers have well planned activities to direct this support in a manner which results in the higher achievement of all pupils. Learning is confirmed with successful and analytical plenary sessions. With many investigations being ongoing over long periods of time, pupils sustain interest and engagement and never lose sight of the subject.

56. With the investigative approach, the quantity of written evidence available whilst satisfactory did not reflect the pupils' wealth of experiences. Pupils remembered all aspects of their science work. Their knowledge and understanding of living things was very good as was their work on physical processes. Here, there was a strong link with design and technology where excellent buzzer games had been made using knowledge of electric circuits. Inspection evidence did not reveal such a high standard of work in pupils' knowledge and understanding of materials and their properties.

57. The subject is led and managed effectively. The subject leader has a clear picture of science in the school and is well supported by the school having two other leading science teachers. Results of pupils' work are analysed carefully and information is passed on informally to ensure pupils are properly taught and their progression in learning is guaranteed. The subject is well provided for and resources are well used to promote further learning.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in ICT is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' key skills are good.
- Pupils' use and application of literacy skills are strengths.
- Assessment of pupils' work is very good.

### **Commentary**

58. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, standards exceed national expectations and pupils' achievement is good. Standards have improved significantly since the previous inspection and the school has addressed successfully the key issue to make better use of computers to support learning, especially in Years 3 to 6. In Year 2, pupils are secure in the key skills of loading, printing and saving their work. They show particularly good skills in using the wide range of tools in a graphics program to produce high quality pictures. In Year 4, pupils link the presentational features of word processing and clip art to support their poetry writing in literacy on the theme of 'Seasons'. In Year 6, pupils show impressive skills in creating their own web pages, especially in linking pages, text and pictures.

59. Teaching and learning are good and have a positive impact on the standards achieved. There has been significant improvement in teachers' knowledge and expertise since the previous inspection. Teachers are confident in using the school's ICT suite, particularly for teaching key skills through effective demonstration and explanation. Pupils benefit from the support by the school's teaching assistant who is dedicated to support ICT. Her expertise is used to support teachers in lessons and in the teaching of groups. Together, with the subject leader, she produced a computerised assessment programme which matches pupils' work to the levels expected by the National Curriculum. In addition, in Years 3 to 6, there are strengths in pupils assessing and saving examples of their work to file. As a result, they can see their own progress over time and are involved in assessing and evaluating their own work.

60. Leadership and management are good and make a strong contribution to standards achieved. The subject leader is knowledgeable and enthusiastic and is committed to improving and raising standards. He has made effective contributions to improving the quality of the hardware and in providing in-service training for his colleagues.

### **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

61. Pupils use and apply their ICT skills successfully across the curriculum, with strengths in the use of literacy skills to research on the Internet.

### **HUMANITIES**

The inspection focused on religious education. Pupils' work was sampled in geography and history because no lessons were observed. Consequently it is not possible to make a judgement on provision in these areas.

### **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

Provision in religious education is **good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other world religions.
- Teachers make lessons interesting and challenging.
- Pupils make very effective use of their literacy skills.

#### **Commentary**

62. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, standards exceed the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus and pupils' achievement is good. The previous inspection judged 'attainment' to be 'good' and these standards have been maintained. In Year 2, pupils have a good knowledge of key stories from the Old Testament, including Jonah and the Whale. Their understanding of the Christmas and Easter stories is good, together with the parables told by Jesus. Pupils have a good knowledge of the key festivals in Judaism. In Year 6, pupils have an impressive knowledge and understanding of Islam. They have a good understanding of the life of Jesus and his disciples. Pupils use their literacy skills to good effect both in writing about religion, such as sequencing the Easter Story, and in using books and the Internet to carry out research into Islam.

63. Teaching and learning are good and have a positive impact on the standards achieved. Teachers have good subject knowledge and expertise in teaching the subject. They make lessons interesting and exciting through the good use of resources and artefacts. In a lesson in Years 5 and 6, pupils were totally absorbed and fascinated by photographs, baptism certificates and other items brought in by fellow pupils to deepen understanding of the importance of Christening and Baptism to Christians. The quality of discussion was impressive as were pupils' articulate speaking skills when

sharing their information with the class. Homework had been used effectively in order to prepare for this lesson.

64. Leadership and management are good and make a strong contribution to standards achieved. The subject leader is the headteacher and she provides a good role model in using her expertise in the subject when teaching Years 3 and 4. Monitoring of teaching and learning is good, with strengths in teachers' knowledge and understanding of pupils' progress in the subject.

65. In **geography**, pupils in Year 2 develop a good understanding of the world through postcards sent and artefacts collected by the school's three teddy bears who accompany pupils on holiday. In Year 6, pupils have good knowledge of the water cycle and coastal features, including the causes of, and solutions for, erosion. They talk confidently about how to use atlases and maps when looking at places and countries. Pupils understand keys and geographical symbols and that an understanding of co-ordinates is needed to locate specific places and features on a map.

66. In **history**, pupils show a good knowledge of important people from the Victorian era. They know, for example, about the life and work of Isambard Kingdom Brunel, including the fact that he designed and built the Clifton suspension bridge in Bristol. In Year 6, pupils have a good understanding of how to use historical sources of evidence, such as artefacts, portraits, books and real people in studying the subject. Pupils apply their literacy skills effectively when they use reference books and the Internet to research day-to-day life in Anglo-Saxon and Viking times.

## **CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS**

The inspection focused on physical education. Work in art and design, design and technology and music was sampled, It was possible to see one lesson in design and technology.

### **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

Provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Facilities are not appropriate for the development of gymnastics and games aspects of National Curriculum requirements.
- Good attention is given to health and safety in lessons.
- Effective teaching enables pupils to obtain best possible advantages from a poor site for the subject's development.

#### **Commentary**

67. Standards in Year 2 meet national expectations and achievement is satisfactory. There are strengths in pupils' work in dance. No lessons were observed in Years 3 to 6 so no judgement on standards can be made. The school endeavours to cover curriculum requirements in this subject despite great difficulties being presented by the site. The hall is too small to develop gymnastic activities appropriately, especially for older pupils.

68. The field is too small for appropriate team games or for aspects of athletics such as throwing and jumping. The playground is uneven and pitted with drain covers discouraging safe practice of games skills. A similar state of affairs was reflected in the last report.

69. Teaching seen was never less than satisfactory, with lessons being of good pace and well presented by teachers secure in the needs of the subject. Pupils were eager to learn and learnt appropriately, being well aware of the importance of exercise to their development. Pupils benefit from games clubs after school. Pupils have participated in team games and their enthusiasm for the

subject is great. Dance lessons are effectively organised and pupils have had swimming lessons. Outdoor activities form part of the school's residential visit.

70. Pupils change appropriately for physical education lessons. Proper attention is given to safety issues and to warm up and cool down in lessons. Some lessons would benefit from mixed gender groupings in work to ensure all pupils are effectively engaged. In the very few lessons observed teaching was never less than satisfactory and pupils' progress appropriate.

71. Leadership of the subject is creative in ensuring pupils have their curriculum entitlement in disadvantageous conditions. Progress of pupils is not really assessed formally although frequent informal discussions amongst staff ensure that capabilities of, and development of, all pupils is recognised.

72. In **art and design**, no teaching was seen but displays around the school were good with large scale art work being a feature. In discussion, pupils In Year 6 stated this as their favourite subject in the creative aesthetic group and were familiar with the styles of Lowry and Monet.

73. In **design and technology**, a lesson was seen revealing strengths in teaching through very good teacher subject knowledge with resources supporting learning effectively. Photographic evidence provided by the school showed pupils had made very good buzzer models based on electrical circuits providing a good link with their science work. Pupils had made good models using hydraulic systems and had undertaken some food preparation. Pupils remembered their work well and had positive attitudes towards the subject.

74. In **music** singing is satisfactory. Pupils benefit from peripatetic brass, keyboard, strings and woodwind lessons and recorder tuition provided by the school.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

75. No lessons were observed and it is not possible to make a judgement about provision. The school has a good policy and a detailed scheme of work which reflects the importance attached to the subject. Each class has a timetabled lesson per week, with an emphasis on discussion, often through the use of 'Circle Time'. There is a strong ethos of care and respect in the school, which is evident from discussions with pupils. The school council is important in representing pupils' views and the use of 'Chums' (pupils from Year 6) who wear red hats to identify them, is successful in providing pupils who have worries or concerns with someone they can talk to.



## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	2
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>2</b>
Pupils' achievement	2
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	4
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	5
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
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	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	2

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

