

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **CHURCHSTANTON PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Churchstanton, Taunton

LEA area: Somerset

Unique reference number: 123701

Headteacher: Mr Paul Bish

Lead inspector: Mr Andy Bond

Dates of inspection: 8<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> March 2004

Inspection number: 255819

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:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	93
School address:	Churchstanton Taunton Somerset
Postcode:	TA3 7RL
Telephone number:	01823 601354
Fax number:	01823 601175
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Colin Molton
Date of previous inspection:	16 <sup>th</sup> March 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Churchstanton is a smaller than average community primary school with 93 pupils on roll. Pupils are taught in four mixed age classes. The school serves a wide rural area of Somerset set amongst the Blackdown Hills and eight miles from Taunton. Pupils are drawn from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds; from agricultural workers families, travellers and middle-class homes. Free school meals entitlement is below the national average, with 10 per cent of pupils qualifying. Overall, social and economic factors are judged to be average. Children start school with average levels of attainment.

The ethnic background of pupils is almost entirely white UK heritage. There are eight pupils whose parents are travellers. There are no pupils for whom English is an additional language.

The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs is 13 per cent, which is just below the national average. Most of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties. There are however, three pupils (three per cent) with a statement of special educational needs, which is well above the national average. The percentage of pupils who move part way through the school year is broadly average.

The school was last inspected in March 1998, since that time there have been major changes in staffing. The headteacher, senior teacher and all the classroom teachers have been appointed in the last five years. The school received an achievement award in 2000 and the 'Investors in People' award in 2002.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
17263	Mr Andy Bond	Lead inspector	English Science Geography History Religious education Special educational needs English as an additional language
31754	Mrs Charlotte Roberson	Lay inspector	
22856	Mrs Kath Campbell	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology Music Physical education Personal, social and health education The Foundation Stage curriculum

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**Churchstanton Primary School is an effective school**, which gives good value for money. Standards are generally average by the end of Year 2, but above average by the end of Year 6. Pupils receive a good education and generally achieve well. Overall, teaching and learning are good as are leadership and management. There are good learning opportunities and curriculum enrichment activities are very good. Links with parents, the local community and other schools are very good. Since the last inspection, there have been good levels of improvement.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils generally reach above-average standards by the end of Year 6 and achieve well through the school, but standards in science could be higher.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good and assessment procedures are well developed, but teachers could insist on pupils' work being better presented and handwriting could also be improved.
- The school is led very well by the headteacher and governors, however, the role of co-ordinators could be developed further.
- There is a good, interesting curriculum, which is enriched by after-school clubs, visits and visitors to school. The school uses excellent procedures to ensure that all pupils have an equal opportunity to learn and make progress.
- The school serves the local community very well and there are very good links with parents, local organisations and schools.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and pupils from traveller families are supported well.
- The school fosters pupils' personal development very well and provides very good support, care and guidance in order to create a very effective learning ethos.

The school was last inspected in March 1998; since then it has made good progress. The key areas for improvement then were related to the provision for information and communication technology, improving standards in English, mathematics and science, setting more challenging targets, improving teachers' subject knowledge and taking the register at the appropriate times. These issues have been addressed properly, although standards in science could be improved further.

### 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	C	A	A
Mathematics	B	B	B	A
Science	D	D	D	D

*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.*

**Overall, pupils' achievement levels are good.** Children start school with standards that are broadly average. They achieve satisfactorily, and by the time they begin Year 1, the majority are expected to reach the early learning goals<sup>1</sup>, with the exception of their personal, social and emotional development, in which the goals are expected to be exceeded. In Years 1 and 2, pupils generally achieve satisfactorily and attain average standards in reading, writing, mathematics, science and expected standards in religious education by the end of Key Stage 1<sup>2</sup>. In information and communication technology, standards are above average. By Year 6, standards have risen to above average in English, mathematics and information and communication technology. In religious education, pupils reach the expected levels but in science standards are below average. There was insufficient evidence to make judgements in other subjects. Achievement levels are generally good in

<sup>1</sup> The Early Learning Goals set out what children should achieve by the time they reach the end of the reception year in primary schools.

<sup>2</sup> Key Stage 1, sometimes referred to as the infants, caters for pupils aged between 5 and 7 and refers to pupils who are in Years 1 and 2.

Key Stage 2<sup>3</sup>. Compared with similar schools, standards are well above average in English and mathematics, but below average in science. However, there are greater variations in schools with a small number of pupils in each year group and this should be borne in mind when comparing Churchstanton's results with those from similar schools. Achievement levels in Key Stage 2 are better than similar schools. Pupils with special educational needs and those pupils who are from traveller families also achieve well, based on their prior attainment.

**Pupils' personal qualities are good and the school's provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.** Pupils have good attitudes, values and many very positive personal qualities. The behaviour of most pupils is good. There are very good opportunities for pupils to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural qualities. Attendance levels and punctuality are satisfactory.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided by the school is good. Overall, teaching and learning are good.** In reception and in Key Stage 1, teaching and learning are satisfactory with good features. They are good in Key Stage 2. The strongest teaching is to be found amongst the established teachers in classes 2 and 4; that is the Years 2 and 3 and Years 5 and 6 classes. Teachers create a good climate for learning and use a variety of methods which enable pupils to improve their knowledge, skills and understanding. Teachers promote equality of opportunity very well and this increases pupils' capacity to work both independently and collaboratively. Pupils apply themselves well in lessons and show good levels of concentration, but teachers could do more to improve pupils' presentation and handwriting. Assessment procedures are good, although pupils' targets for improvement could be made clearer.

The quality of the curriculum is good overall. The school uses excellent procedures for ensuring that the curriculum includes all pupils. There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities. Support for pupils with special educational needs is very good and children from travellers' families are supported well. Pupils' personal development is good. The accommodation is generally good and resources are adequate. There are very good links with the community, parents and other local schools. Pupils receive very good care, guidance and support from staff.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Overall, the leadership and management of the school are good.** The headteacher's leadership and management are very good and he is supported well by the senior teacher and school staff. Co-ordinators of subjects fulfil their roles satisfactorily, but there is more scope for increased monitoring and evaluation of some subjects and the development of improvement plans. The governors fulfil their role very well and have an excellent understanding of the school. However, the governors do not fulfil all their statutory requirements because there are some minor omissions from the governors' annual report to parents.

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

Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and recognise that it is a good school, at the heart of the community. Pupils have very positive views of the school, too. They like school and say that other children are friendly. Pupils believe that teachers are fair and support them well if they are worried at school.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

The most important things the school should do to improve are:

- raise standards in science, particularly by the end of Year 6;
- improve the presentation of pupils' work and the quality of handwriting in Key Stages 1 and 2;
- develop the role of the co-ordinators in a number of subjects, to include monitoring, evaluation and development planning;

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Ensure that the governors fulfil their statutory requirements by including all relevant information in the governors' annual report to parents; i.e. information about school site security, arrangements

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<sup>3</sup> Key Stage 2, sometimes referred to as the juniors, caters for pupils aged between 7 and 11 and refers to pupils who are in Years 3 to 6.

for catering with pupils with disabilities, and contact addresses for the Clerk and Chair of Governors.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

Standards are average by the end of Year 2, and above average at the end of Year 6. Overall, achievement levels are judged to be good. They are satisfactory in reception and Key Stage 1, but good in Key Stage 2.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average by the end of Year 6 in English and mathematics, but below average in science. In information and communication technology they are above average at the end of Years 2 and 6.
- Pupils generally achieve well because of the good teaching and good learning opportunities made available to them.
- Standards are improving over time because the school monitors pupils' progress well and implements good strategies for improvement, based on reliable information.
- Pupils' work could be presented better and the quality of pupils' handwriting could be improved in Key Stages 1 and 2.

#### Commentary

1. Standards at the end of the reception year are broadly in line with the expected early learning goals. Children enter the mixed reception/Year 1 class with generally average standards in personal, social and emotional development, mathematical development, communication, language and literacy and physical development. They achieve satisfactorily, although in personal, social and emotional development their achievement is good, because the quality of teaching is good and pupils gain in confidence and behave very well; this enables the vast majority of children to exceed the early learning goals in this area. No judgement was made on standards and achievement in knowledge and understanding of the world, or creative development, because they were not included in the inspection focus.

#### *Standards at the end of the Reception Year*

Personal, social and emotional development	Above expected levels
Communication, language and literacy	In line with expected levels
Mathematical development	In line with expected levels
Knowledge and understanding of the world	No judgement
Physical development	In line with expected levels
Creative development	No judgement

2. The results of the national tests in 2003 showed that pupils in Year 2 attained below average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. In science, teachers' assessments also indicate below average standards. Compared with schools in a similar context, standards were below average in reading and writing and well below average in mathematics. This was not a typical set of results for the school because there was a high percentage of pupils with special educational needs who failed to reach average standards. Year groups are also small and the performance of a small number of pupils can make a large impact on the school's results. In previous years, test results have been at least average, and occasionally above average in mathematics and writing. Results over the last four years have improved faster than the national trend. Girls generally do better than boys in reading, writing and mathematics, but differences are not significant. Inspection judgements for the present group of pupils in Year 2 show that standards are broadly average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. School assessment information indicates that results should be better this year and in line with nationally expected levels. In information and communication technology, standards have improved quite markedly and are now above average, compared with below average at the last

inspection. The school has refurbished a former toilet block and converted it into a computer suite. Teachers have had a good level of training and improved their expertise in the subject. These factors are responsible for the rapid improvement in standards in information and communication technology by Year 2. In religious education, standards are at the expected level. Other subjects were only sampled, so no overall judgement was made about standards in music, art and design, design and technology, physical education, history and geography.

**Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores<sup>4</sup> in 2003**

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	15.1 (16.2)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	13.9 (15.3)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	15.6 (17.9)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 14 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

- The results of the national tests in 2003, taken by pupils at the end of Year 6 were well above average in English, above average in mathematics and below average in science. A higher percentage than average reached the upper level 5 in English and mathematics, but in science the percentage of pupils reaching the upper level 5 was below average. It is clear that some of the more able pupils are not reaching their full potential in science. However, there have been slight improvements over the last three years which are a cause for optimism.
- Compared with similar schools, results were well above average in English and mathematics, but below average in science. Levels of achievement in Key Stage 2, based on test results from four years earlier, that is at the end of Key Stage 1, show that pupils' progress was good. Trends over time show that the school test results at the end of Year 6 are keeping pace with national levels of improvement. Girls do better than boys in English and boys do better than girls in mathematics and science, which is in line with the national trend. However, over the last three years, girls' performance has fallen below the national average and this has had the effect of depressing overall standards in science. In information and communication technology, standards are above average at the end of Year 6; this is a remarkable improvement considering that they were judged to be well below average at the last inspection. In religious education, standards are in line with the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus. In the remaining National Curriculum subjects no judgement was made on standards because they were only sampled and insufficient evidence was gained.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.8 (27.4)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	28.1 (27.8)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	28.1(27.8)	28.6 (28.3)

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

- Standards are improving well in English and mathematics, but in science, improvement is much slower. The school sets itself quite challenging targets in English and mathematics and they are usually achieved. At the end of Year 2, the school results since 1999 show that the average points score has been raised from below the national average in reading to average, from below the national average in writing to above average and from average in mathematics to above the national average. Results in English, at the end of Year 6, have been maintained at generally above the national average for the last five years, whereas, in mathematics results

<sup>4</sup> **Average Points Scores.** The average point scores table compares the school's performance with the national results. The calculations are arrived at by using the total of all test scores gained by pupils, and dividing the total by the number of pupils with a test result. This calculation is carried out for each subject tested.

have been improved from average to above average. In science, the picture is mixed. The test results in 1999 and 2000 placed the school above average in national terms, but results fell in 2001 to below average. Since that time there has been a steady recovery, but science standards still remain below average. However, the school has good strategies in place, based on reliable information, to tackle weakness in pupils' performance. Assessment systems are good and pupils' progress is tracked carefully. Teachers have a clear understanding of how well their pupils are doing in relation to national standards. They make accurate predictions based on school assessment procedures and their own informal systems. They are quick to pick up weaknesses and implement remedial action. The headteacher has an analytical approach to solving problems. Trends in performance are examined and test papers carefully scrutinised to pick out particular weaknesses in pupils' knowledge and understanding. After discussions with staff and governors, new strategies are put into place and with everyone's agreement. In science, the focus has been on monitoring the quality of teaching and learning, using investigation techniques more effectively, improving the attainment of higher-attaining pupils; particularly girls, and setting more challenging homework in Years 5 and 6. These strategies appear to be starting to make a favourable impact in science, but it is taking time to raise standards to average levels at the end of Year 6.

6. Pupils generally achieve well because teaching is good. The teaching seen during the inspection was judged to be good overall in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology and religious education. The methods used, the level of challenge, the engagement of all pupils in their learning, good management systems, and the effective use of resources are key reasons why pupils acquire the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding to make good progress in their learning. Teachers also cater well for pupils with special educational needs, and those from travellers' families, to ensure that they too achieve well. The curriculum provision makes a beneficial contribution to pupils' achievement, especially the way in which their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills are effectively developed in other subjects.
7. Although there are some good examples of work in pupils' exercise books and files being well presented, it is not consistently high throughout the school. Some pupils do not take sufficient pride in their presentation of work and leave work unfinished and untidy. Handwriting is taught throughout the school and there is evidence of good progress being made in reception but pupils do not begin joining their handwriting at an early enough stage in their general work. As a result, many quite capable pupils in Key Stage 2 are still using a printed style of handwriting in Years 5 and 6. Teachers could focus more on higher standards of presentation and developing pupils' handwriting, so that a fluent, joined, legible style is achieved much earlier in their education.

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

Pupils have good attitudes, values and many very positive personal qualities. Pupils' behaviour is generally good. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Attendance levels and punctuality are satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The very good provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education permeates school life.
- Pupils really enjoy school and are taught to be kind and respectful to each other.
- There are high expectations for good behaviour.
- Pupils take on responsibilities willingly and benefit from all the activities the school provides.

### **Commentary**

8. A strong feature of school life is the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This aspect has improved since the school was last inspected, and is now very good. Pupils are very well behaved during assemblies, when they show much respect for the presenters. For example, they appreciate the piano playing of older pupils, which sets a good

atmosphere as they enter into the hall. They join in prayers and songs with reverence during these occasions, and younger pupils look to their older friends as good role models and benefit especially from the very close relationships within school. They are learning the difference between right and wrong, how to look after themselves and the importance of accepting each other's points of view. They are very caring and considerate towards their friends who have special educational needs. A strong feature of this school is the attention given to learning about other faiths and religions. Pupils of all ages talked sensibly about the recent 'Hindu Day'. The school arranged for visitors to attend and there were planned activities which were much enjoyed.

9. The very youngest children behave very well. They respond to routines very happily and settle down to enjoy their work and play. By the end of the reception year most children are exceeding the Early Learning Goals in their physical, social and emotional development. The pupils are fully aware of the school behaviour policy; it has been reviewed, taking pupils' views into account and is based on high expectations. There are many instances of pupils collaborating well in lessons and using their reasoning skills to solve problems. Behaviour across the school is good, overall. However, sometimes there are occasions when small groups of boys do not always listen carefully and do what they are asked. Occasionally, some boys are over exuberant in the playground. There have been four fixed-term exclusions, related to the unacceptable behaviour of one boy. This was dealt with fairly and in accordance with the school's behaviour policy. But, on the whole, pupils of all ages get along well and behave appropriately.

***Ethnic background of pupils***

Categories used in the Annual School Census	
White – British	
Mixed – any other mixed background	
Any other ethnic group	

***Exclusions in the last school year***

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
90	4	
1		
2		

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

10. The oldest pupils are very polite to visitors. They talk at length about what they like about school and they are keen to show off the school forest. They take on responsibilities willingly and offer to help their teachers and each other throughout the day. There is a good rota system in place so that each pupil in turn takes on specific responsibilities, which do not then become a chore. Pupils are very sensitive to the various needs of their friends. Learning is especially good and purposeful in lessons when pupils find the tasks interesting and become highly motivated. Bullying is discussed openly and fairly and any very isolated incident of racism or harassment is always dealt with immediately by the headteacher.
11. Attendance levels are satisfactory overall. Percentages have recently declined; the reasons for this are clearly given and are in the main related to illness, a few term time holidays and because a single pupil is being educated part-time off site and was incorrectly recorded as absent. The key issue at the time of the previous inspection has been properly addressed and registers are taken twice daily. This now meets statutory requirements. Pupils are very keen to come to school and many have very high levels of attendance and are rarely absent. Many travel a fair distance from outside the school catchment area, but still manage to arrive punctually.

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

Authorised absence	
School data	6.5
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.1
National data	0.4

*The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.*

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good. The curriculum provision is good; the quality of teaching and learning, including assessment is also good. There are very good systems for pupils' care, guidance and support. Partnership with parents and the links with the local community and other schools are also very good.

### Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school, and assessment procedures are also good. Teaching and learning is good in Key Stage 2, and satisfactory, with good features, in Key Stage 1 and reception.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning is good overall.
- Pupils' achievement levels have increased since the last inspection because the quality of teaching and learning has improved.
- Assessment procedures are good and pupils' progress is monitored well, but pupils' understanding of their improvement targets is often vague.
- Teachers establish a good climate for learning and use a variety of methods, which enables pupils to improve their skills, knowledge and understanding.
- Teachers promote equality of opportunity very well and increase pupils' capacity to work independently and collaboratively.
- Pupils apply themselves well in lessons and show good levels of concentration, but teachers could do more to improve pupils' presentation and handwriting.

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

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	2	7	9	0	0	0

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

### Commentary

12. The quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is good overall. Evidence from the scrutiny of pupils' books, along with lesson observations, confirms this judgement. Teaching is judged to be good in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology and religious education. In the Foundation Stage<sup>5</sup> and Key Stage 1, it is generally satisfactory, but with good features, such as the teaching of basic skills. In Key Stage 2, teaching and learning are good. There are particular strengths in classes 2 and 4; (the Years 2 and 3 and Years 5 and 6 classes), where the well-established teachers are located. At the last inspection, teaching was judged to be good overall, but pupils' achievement levels, especially in English, mathematics and information and communication technology, have improved over the last four years, from sound to good. The improved assessment procedures, monitoring of teaching and learning by the headteacher, constructive use of performance management targets and improved resources, appear to be making a favourable impact on teachers' classroom practice. Additional training for teachers, especially in information and communication technology, has strengthened teachers' command of their subject knowledge. This was identified as a weakness at the last inspection. Overall, there has been a good level of improvement in teaching and learning.

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<sup>5</sup> The Foundation Stage caters for children from the age of three to the end of the reception year.

13. Teachers establish a good climate for learning in their classrooms and use a range of teaching methods. Relationships within the class between adults and pupils are positive and pupils are keen to learn. The introductory part of the lesson is usually lively, beginning with a 'recap' of previous learning, accompanied by good probing questions from teachers. In general, teachers use a persuasion style of management, which coaxes pupils to learn. Praise and encouragement are used effectively, so that pupils gain in self-esteem and want to do their best. The basic skills of literacy, numeracy and those related to information and communication technology, are taught well, providing pupils with the important tools which enable them to achieve well. Pupils find most lessons interesting because teachers present them imaginatively, as in a combined reception/Year 1 class lesson. This lesson focused on Vincent Van Gogh; his life and work. Pupils' interest levels were high and they remembered many key facts as well as understanding the artist's feelings. The written work that followed showed good achievement levels in the sequencing of phrases and sentences and the use of relevant vocabulary.
14. Pupils generally apply themselves well in lessons. They concentrate and settle to tasks with enthusiasm. For instance, in quiet reading sessions, in Class 4 (a Years 5 and 6 class), pupils are well focused and sustain concentration for a good length of time. Occasionally, teachers use little time reminders to speed up pupils so that work is finished on time. However, teachers could do more to ensure that all work is completed within the lessons and that pupils' presentation is better. Some higher attaining pupils produce polished pieces of work and take pride in their handwriting and general presentation. However, this is not always the case and there is some evidence of unfinished work, missed pages in exercise books and crumpled pieces of work in files. Many pupils are capable of producing a joined, fluent style of handwriting in their general written work, but this is slow to develop in Key Stage 2. Standards in handwriting could be higher.
15. Teachers have a very good awareness of equality of opportunity and try to ensure that everyone in the class is involved and makes appropriate progress in their work. Teachers clearly value pupils' views and respect their contribution to discussion. They show sensitivity towards individuals and take into account pupils' circumstances. The children from travellers' families are integrated well into school life, and their needs carefully considered. During a lesson on autobiography, for instance, a traveller pupil wrote most sensitively about his family and the ties which were important to him. He appreciated how hard his grandparents had worked to establish a business to support the whole family. This was used by the teacher as a model piece of work to inspire others in the class. Those pupils with special educational needs are taught well by teachers and teaching assistants. Their needs are catered for well, because pupils' individual education plans are carefully structured with clear strategies for overcoming difficulties. The school uses pictures and symbols, as well as some signing, to effectively support communication and understanding for those pupils who have learning difficulties and specific speech problems. Teaching assistants know the pupils well and have formed very good, trusting relationships, which make them feel secure and help them to achieve well. In lessons, collaboration is encouraged so that all pupils contribute. There are good examples, particularly in science, of joint investigations being made, when views are shared and pupils pool their ideas to draw together their conclusions.
16. The school's assessment systems are good. Pupils' performance in the core subjects<sup>6</sup> and information and communication technology is tracked carefully and predictions are made for attainment levels at the end of each year. Occasionally, pupils fail to make the progress expected and the school is quick to respond and analyse the reasons why. The assessment systems are closely linked to National Curriculum objectives so that there is a systematic check of the development of skills, knowledge and understanding in pupils' learning. There are some good examples of diagnosis of pupils' strengths and weaknesses in reading through group literacy sessions, which allows teachers to give pupils guidance on future reading strategies. The quality of marking is generally good, but there are variations from class to class. The best marking strategies explain explicitly to pupils what they have done well and

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<sup>6</sup> The core subjects are English, mathematics and science.

what could be improved. Pupils have targets for improvement related to literacy, numeracy and sometimes behaviour. However, many pupils, especially younger ones in Key Stage 1, are vague about their targets. Some have forgotten them because it was earlier in the term when they were set, others are a little vague but know what is expected in general terms. Older pupils are clearer about what they have to do to improve, but there is little evidence of teachers reinforcing targets, periodically, to ensure that pupils achieve them in a set period of time.

## **The curriculum**

The overall quality of the curriculum is good. Opportunities for enrichment are very good. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory overall.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Provision for personal development is very good.
- The introduction of a well-equipped computer suite has improved information and communication technology provision significantly since the previous inspection.
- Support for pupils with special educational needs, and children from travellers' families, is very good and ensures that they achieve well.
- The range of extra-curricular opportunities is outstanding for a school of this size.
- The Foundation Stage curriculum, although developing well, is not yet firmly established.
- Links with parents and the community make a strong contribution to curriculum enhancement.
- Equality of opportunity is excellent and all pupils participate fully in school life.
- The school uses visits and visitors very effectively to enhance provision.
- The headteacher monitors the complexities of a mixed age, mixed key stage curriculum very well.
- Governors are fully involved in curriculum development.

### **Commentary**

17. The school provides well for the academic and personal development of all pupils through a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum that fully meets statutory requirements. Provision is enhanced very well by an outstanding variety of extra-curricular opportunities, ranging from creative arts to French. Many of the positive features found during the previous inspection have been retained and there has been a good level of improvement. Governors remain very involved. The curriculum is well organised and planning for mixed-age classes is thorough. Weaknesses, such as the unsatisfactory provision for information and communication technology, have been fully rectified. The headteacher reviews provision very effectively. Interesting innovations, such as the recent 'multicultural week', provide an exciting range of learning opportunities that pupils enjoy, thus promoting good learning. Equality of opportunity is exceptionally strong and is at the forefront of all decision making. Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds succeed because they participate fully in all aspects of school life. The school's approach towards the literacy and numeracy strategies is good. It develops skills well through other subjects and provides a good range of information and communication technology opportunities.
18. The school provides very good support for pupils with special educational needs and ensures that they achieve well. The special educational needs co-ordinator makes sure that each pupil has a detailed individual education plan, which sets out targets for improvement and exactly how these can be achieved. There are good procedures for liaison between teaching assistants, teachers and the special educational needs co-ordinator, which enable staff to use a consistent approach towards support techniques. The majority of pupils have moderate learning difficulties, but there are three pupils with a statement of special educational needs who have complex and severe learning difficulties. The school has been particularly successful in nurturing and integrating these pupils into school life. The expertise that staff have gained and the support provided by the whole school community has enabled these pupils to make progress well beyond what might reasonably have been expected. Pupils from families who are travellers also make good progress because of well-targeted support. A

teacher from the traveller support unit forges good links with the school and the homes of traveller pupils. The curriculum is flexible enough to cater for the personal and social needs of children from travellers' families and the contribution they make to the school's culture is valued.

19. Children in the Foundation Stage receive an interesting range of good quality activities that ensure they are well prepared for Key Stage 1. However, some activities adhere too closely to the National Curriculum, rather than the Foundation Stage curriculum guidelines. Consequently, they do not always meet the needs of individual children.
20. The school's strong emphasis on personal and social development has a very positive impact on pupils' attitudes and school life as a whole. Residential trips to centres such as Kilve further enhance provision. By the time pupils leave the school, the vast majority are mature individuals who are well prepared for the next stage of their education. Visits from, for example, Hindu Priest Dhirashanta, and a wide range of representatives from the local community, also make a positive contribution. Despite its relative isolation, the school has very good links with other local primary and secondary schools, as well as good community involvement with, for example, Taunton Rugby club.
21. There have been considerable staffing changes in recent years. All new staff are well supported, enabling them to settle quickly into school life. Currently, the staffing situation is more stable and each subject has a co-ordinator. Teaching assistants are of high quality and make a strong positive contribution to pupils' learning. The school buildings and grounds provide an attractive learning environment. Parents and pupils rightly appreciate how the school makes effective use of its unique location. The recently completed computer suite has had a very positive impact on standards in a short space of time. Although the narrow hall layout and sloping playground cause problems, the school copes well and delivers a full physical education curriculum. All subjects are at least adequately resourced. The ratio of computers to pupils is very good and contributes to the good standards achieved. Funding for literacy and numeracy has been used very effectively to provide good quality materials.

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

The school takes very good care of all pupils equally. Very good standards of support and welfare are evident in the school. The school takes account of pupils' views and feelings well. Good levels of advice and guidance are given to pupils.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- All staff treat pupils fairly and kindly.
- There is good provision for children from travellers' families and for the very small number of boys who may be at risk of exclusion.
- Induction arrangements are very good for new pupils.
- Governors are fully involved in reviewing school policies and procedures which promote care and support.
- Circle time is timetabled effectively to encourage open and informal discussion.

### **Commentary**

22. The school provides a happy environment which is conducive to learning. Parents and pupils see it as a very friendly school. Adults get along well with each other and pupils benefit from the good pastoral leadership provided by the headteacher. Pupils of all ages approach him regularly throughout the day. He boosts their self-esteem by building up their confidence, using individual praise and encouragement. Staff are considerate to pupils, and the warm relationships, evident in most classes, benefits pupils' personal development. Parents are right to believe that their children are well looked after and fairly treated throughout the day.

23. The school is meeting the needs of children from travellers' families well, and receives very good support from outside agencies. Checks on their progress, as well as thorough monitoring from the headteacher of their attainment, take place regularly. Liaison between home and school is very good through the provision of a support worker. Likewise, the school works hard, and with success in most cases, to meet the needs of a small number of pupils, mainly boys, who are at risk of exclusion. The modification of disruptive behaviour is often achieved by establishing programmes to target improved behaviour, which are shared with parents. This high level of support promotes achievement in the school noticeably.
24. Parents appreciate the very good induction arrangements for the youngest children. Children begin part time in September and then move on to a full day when they are sufficiently prepared. Many opportunities are provided for families to get to know the school and staff before starting. Pupils who join higher up the school are assigned a 'Buddy' and these pupils told inspectors how easily they adjusted into the school because they were made to feel very welcome. During the week of inspection, pupils in the infants were eagerly awaiting the arrival of a new pupil.
25. Health and safety are given a high priority both by staff and by governors. Risk assessments are effective and in place for many activities and areas of school life. First aid is competently overseen. Regular training is undertaken by many staff to ensure that priorities are set and met. Child protection arrangements are clear and appropriate and advice and support is sought and received from outside agencies, as necessary. There are many aspects to the standards of care that are very good. The school care, guidance and support systems have remained strong since the last inspection.
26. Pupils' academic achievement is monitored well throughout the school, with regular checks that ensure that appropriate progress is being made. Through the personal, social and health education programme and through circle time<sup>7</sup> in particular, pupils are encouraged to express their views and feelings openly. A suggestion box for older pupils is being used well to promote discussion within class and recently discussions have taken place on the topic of playground behaviour. The school actively encourages pupils to get along well and usually they do. Occasional incidents of naughtiness or even bullying are always sensitively and properly handled and pupils are generally supported well. The huge commitment to involving all pupils in the life of the school is very evident, not only in its documentation but also in the way it deals with pupils. The school knows that the next step to take on board is consultation with pupils, for example by establishing a school council or through encouraging pupils to be more involved in their own self assessment and target setting.

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

The headteacher has been very successful in forging strong and, overall, very good links with parents, other schools and with the community. Many strengths were noted in the previous inspection, but they are now better established.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and recognise and appreciate its many positive features.
- There are very good partnerships forged with the community.
- The school is active in promoting close ties with many schools.

### **Commentary**

27. Nearly 75 per cent of parents responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire and gave their unanimous support to nearly every question asked. They clearly value having their children in this school. They especially like the strong leadership of the headteacher and the very good

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<sup>7</sup> Circle time: a time when the teacher and pupils discuss moral and social issues.

relationships formed, and the fact that their children are happy and make good progress both academically and in their personal development.

28. Parents are willing to get involved by helping out when asked. They help with transport and with after-school clubs. They also tend the grounds and use their 'Do It Yourself' skills in many ways. Through the Parent-Teacher Association, they raise considerable sums of money for the school. In addition, they come into school to talk to pupils, for example about their different faiths and beliefs. They know it is a happy school and one where all are treated equally and where those with special educational needs or those from traveller families are welcomed and supported. Links with parents contribute well to pupils' learning at home and at school. The headteacher is always accessible and available to parents and prepared to listen to their ideas and suggestions. There are very positive links with parents that are now very well established. This is a real strength of the school.
29. Its unique setting within rural woodland and its reputation for good standards has made the school popular within the locality. Governors and parents see the school as a true community school. The headteacher has been instrumental in promoting very good links within the community through, for example, setting up the information and communication technology room, where adults from the community, including parents, can participate in computer courses outside of school hours. Pupils get involved in community events whenever they can, including sporting activities. School events are advertised in the village and everyone is made welcome. The school hall is regularly let for parties and other events. Contributions from organisations, such as from the Beer and Music Festival are received and used to support music provision. There are close links with the church as well as a local chapel. Links within the community, including those with parents, contribute to pupils' learning because they have a very significant impact on the quality and range of experiences provided for them.
30. The school works very closely with five other primary schools in the area and also has firmly established links with schools in the Taunton Learning Partnership. Its work with pupils who have more challenging behaviour and emotional difficulties is supported very effectively by the Forest School in Somerset. Programmes to support pupils in Year 6 when they move to secondary school are established successfully. The headteacher is active in ensuring that the school makes every effort not to be isolated from other schools and joins in initiatives that are taking place in the county. On balance, and because of his strong commitment to developing these partnerships further still, the range of links currently established is judged to be very good. Partnership with parents and the community has remained strong since the last inspection.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The leadership and management of the school are good. The governance of the school is very good. The headteacher provides very good leadership and is supported well by the senior teacher and staff. Overall, management is effective, but the evaluation and development of some subject areas could be improved. There are no significant barriers to the raising of achievement levels.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher has a very clear vision for the development of the school, based on very thorough management systems.
- The governors fulfil their role very well and have excellent procedures for monitoring the school's performance, but there are some minor omissions from the governors' annual report to parents.
- The co-ordinators manage their areas of responsibility satisfactorily, but there is more scope for developing monitoring and evaluation systems in a number of subjects, so that a clearer view of standards can be obtained.
- The school uses its financial resources well and best value principles are applied very well to its financial management and the use of resources.
- There is a very good ethos for learning based on the school's commitment that everyone should be treated equally.

## Commentary

31. The headteacher's leadership and management of the school are very good. Governors, staff and parents share the headteacher's vision for the future development of the school. Since the last inspection in March 1998 there has been a good level of school improvement. Standards in English, mathematics and information and communication technology have all improved and pupils' achievement levels have been increased. Teaching and learning have improved and many of the strengths reported at the last inspection have been maintained. All the key issues for improvement have been addressed thoroughly and the school is in a much stronger position than at the time of the headteacher's appointment in 2000. The development of good systems for monitoring and evaluation, the building of a strong school community spirit and the headteacher's own enthusiasm and dedication have been the key factors in school improvement. The quality of teaching and learning is monitored closely and staff are given clear guidance, through constructive feedback, on how their own performance can be improved. There is a close link with the school's own performance management systems, which sets targets for improving the quality of teaching and the management of the school. New staff are supported well through the school's own mentoring programme and there are good opportunities for training, in order to improve teachers' individual expertise. This was recognised by the school gaining the 'Investors in People' award in 2002. The school development plan is well focused on raising standards and based on thorough school analysis and evaluation. For instance, science has been a key priority in the school because the test results at the end of Key Stage 2 have been disappointing. The headteacher has analysed pupils' test papers to identify weaknesses in their understanding and knowledge, monitored the quality of teaching in the subject, scrutinised pupils' work and visited schools with high standards in science, before producing an action plan to improve pupils' achievement levels and standards. The focus is now on investigative techniques, structured homework and challenging higher-attaining pupils. Although the school development plan is fulfilling its purpose of outlining the school's strategies for improvement well, it does not consider sufficiently long term development over the next three or four years or structured management strategies to improve the provision of some non-core subjects. The parents are very supportive of the school and express their confidence in the leadership of the headteacher. They see themselves as important partners in an improving school, which places the emphasis on pupils' all round academic and personal development.
32. The governors fulfil their role very well. They are very committed to supporting the school, giving their time generously in order to monitor its performance and strengthen its provision. Their understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses is excellent because they are involved so closely in the life of the school. Visits and their particular purposes are recorded, voluntary support is given in classrooms, frank and open discussions are undertaken with the headteacher and staff, committee structures and terms of reference are set out clearly, analysis of school performance is shared and there is full involvement in school development planning. There are very few weaknesses in the governance of the school, however, the governors' annual report to parents, although detailed and very informative, has three minor omissions: information about school site security; arrangements for catering with pupils with disabilities; and the contact addresses for the Clerk and Chair of Governors.
33. The co-ordinators of the subject areas have a good range of expertise and have the appropriate leadership qualities to develop their roles well. However, some are new to the school and have not had sufficient time to monitor and evaluate the provision within their respective areas of responsibility. Being a small school, with a comparatively small number of teachers to cover all the subjects and aspects of the curriculum, it means that, in effect, each teacher needs to become responsible for two or three subjects. Established teachers have had some opportunities for release from classroom teaching duties, in order to gain an overview of their subjects, and then to produce action plans to set well-directed targets for improvement. This has led to good leadership and management, as in English, science and special educational needs. However, in other subjects, particularly the non-core ones, there have been insufficient opportunities for the monitoring and evaluation process to be developed and, as a result, clear action plans for the future are lacking.

34. There are good approaches to financial management which help the school to achieve its educational priorities. The targets in the school development plan are costed properly and co-ordinators receive funding for their subject areas in relation to the importance of the priority. The most recent audit report of January 2004 identified a small number of minor areas for improving financial management. All of these issues are being addressed successfully. The school was particularly imaginative in its use of funding to create an information and communication technology suite. A former toilet block was refurbished and equipped with computer equipment. The whole school community threw its weight behind the venture and funds were raised from a variety of sources, both locally and centrally. The facility has had a significant impact on standards in information and communication technology. Standards are now judged to be above average in Year 6, compared with well below average in 1998. The governors and headteacher have a very good understanding of best value principles and apply them very well. There are good levels of consultation, and comparative performance data is used very effectively to evaluate school standards. School managers are prepared to question major decisions and competitive tendering is used very well to ensure that the school gets good value for money. Although expenditure per pupil is high when compared with the national picture, it is fairly typical for a rural school of less than a hundred pupils. The standards attained are generally above average by the end of Year 6 and achievement levels are good. Educational provision is also judged to be good. Taking these combined factors into account, the school gives good value for money.
35. The headteacher, senior teacher and staff have created a very good learning ethos in which everyone is valued and given an equal opportunity to develop their personal qualities and make progress academically. The school has a clear racial equality policy and implements this effectively. School results are analysed carefully to ensure that pupils of different gender and racial background are performing at an appropriate level. The school has built up a strong tradition of welcoming children from travellers' families and of integrating them fully into the school. Pupils with a range of special educational needs, some with quite complex learning difficulties, are also supported very well. Teachers and learning support staff have acquired good levels of expertise and care, which enables these pupils to be well integrated and to play a full part in school life. The school ensures that all pupils have the opportunity to undertake residential experience at the end of Key Stage 2, regardless of their socio-economic background. Withdrawal from lessons for additional tuition is kept to a minimum so that all pupils receive a full curriculum entitlement.

***Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003***

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	310,371
Total expenditure	349,432
Expenditure per pupil	3,798

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	53,578
Balance carried forward to the next	14,517

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

## **AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

36. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall, with some good features. Personal, social and emotional development is a particular strength. Very good induction procedures and strong links with parents, praised during the previous inspection, remain strong. The school has made steady improvement by, for example, recently introducing better outdoor play equipment.
37. Children enter a mixed reception/Year 1 class in the September of the year in which they are five. Attainment on entry is similar to other children of this age. Most have sound early language, literacy and numeracy skills. Personal and social skills are well developed. At the time of the inspection, there were eight children in the Foundation Stage, none of whom had special educational needs. All had received some pre-school experience.
38. The quality of teaching and learning is always at least satisfactory and sometimes good. Difficulties associated with teaching two age groups are managed well. Children in the reception class receive a balance of interesting, purposeful activities. Lessons are well organised and medium term planning takes careful account of the six areas of learning for children this age. However, further work remains to be done to establish the Foundation Stage as a separate key stage with its own identity. Teaching sometimes focuses too strongly on methods advocated for delivering the National Curriculum. Information gained from early assessments is used effectively to set realistic and achievable targets for future development.
39. Although the co-ordinator is new to the post, she is knowledgeable and conscientious. She has a sound view of the strengths and weaknesses in provision. The Foundation Stage classroom is spacious and children's work is attractively displayed. New play equipment is starting to enhance outdoor provision. The school makes good use of its unique rural location to enrich children's learning.
40. Two areas of learning, children's knowledge and understanding of the world and their creative development, were not observed in detail during this inspection and are not included in the report. The school makes appropriate provision for the teaching of religious education in the Foundation Stage.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision for personal, social and emotional development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The quality of teaching and learning is good and children achieve well.
- Home visits, prior to entry, ensure children settle quickly into school.
- Relationships are very secure.

### **Commentary**

41. Most children enter the reception class with secure social skills. They achieve well because all adults provide very good role models and children value the care shown to them. A good example of this occurred during a lesson in the computer suite. The teacher used praise, encouragement and humour very effectively to develop individual confidence. Children made swift progress because they enjoyed the personal attention. Staff know families well and this ensures smooth transition into school. Behaviour is very good and children are courteous and

kind to each other. Routines are well established and children quickly develop a sense of belonging. Most will exceed the early learning goals by the time they reach Year 1.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

Provision in communication, language and literacy is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children achieve well in reading and writing through good teaching.
- Reception-age children do not always get enough opportunity to develop their speaking and listening skills during whole-class discussions.

### **Commentary**

42. Most children are confident speakers and listeners on entry to school. When chatting in a small group, such as in the dinner hall, they are articulate and well informed. In the classroom, however, they are sometimes shy and reticent, particularly when pupils in Year 1 dominate the discussions.
43. The teaching of reading is good and children of all abilities achieve well. Reading is an enjoyable social event when children share a book with an older pupil or an adult. Parents make a strong positive contribution to children's learning. Records of reading development are helpful and informative.
44. Writing is taught well and children's achievement is good. The teacher is confident with this aspect and encourages children of all abilities to 'have a go'. Children progress from making unrecognisable marks at the beginning of the year to writing short recognisable phrases or sentences in their current work. Most children are on course to achieve the early learning goals by the time they reach Year 1.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children enjoy mathematics because activities are interesting.
- Worksheet based activities do not always match the needs of individual children.

### **Commentary**

45. Children enter the school with secure mathematical ability. The quality of teaching and learning is always sound and achievement is satisfactory; most children reach the early learning goals by the time they start Year 1. Children show real enthusiasm for mathematical activities. There are times when they benefit from working alongside older pupils, such as in lessons where they respond to the challenge as they try to count as quickly as their Year 1 classmates. They also benefit from working in a small group with support staff and learning through structured play activities. Examination of children's previous work shows that when there is too much reliance on worksheet based activities children of all abilities cover the same work at the same level. More able children suffer because the work is too easy.

## PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

- Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school does its best to provide adequate opportunities for children to develop physical skills, within the limitations of the building.
- Outdoor play provision has improved since the introduction of new equipment.

### Commentary

46. Physical development is similar to other children of this age. Children achieve satisfactorily in this area of learning. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and children make adequate progress. Most are on course to achieve the early learning goals by Year 1. The school's narrow hall and sloping playground make physical education very difficult to teach. Children compensate well for the lack of space. For example, they moved around the hall with confidence in their dance lesson, and showed appropriate skill as they linked a sequence of movements together on the apparatus. They have access to a small, covered outdoor area and use large wheeled vehicles to develop skills further. Children write with good pencil control. They handle scissors and paintbrushes competently and demonstrate secure mouse control when, for example, placing computer generated symbols on weather charts.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average by the end of Year 6 and pupils' achievement is good. However, pupils' handwriting and presentation of work could be improved.
- Teaching and learning are good throughout both key stages and assessment procedures are well developed.
- There are good learning opportunities for all pupils across the whole curriculum.
- The subject is led well and clear priorities for improvement are set.

### Commentary

47. Inspection evidence shows that standards are average in reading and writing at the end of Year 2, but above average in English at the end of Year 6. The number of pupils in each year group is small and standards can vary quite markedly from year to year because, in National Curriculum test terms, each pupil represents approximately seven per cent of the overall school result. The 2003 test results at the end of Year 2 were below average in reading and writing. This group contained a higher percentage of pupils with special educational needs than usual, and the overall effect was to depress results. Compared with similar schools, results were also below average. At the end of Year 6, the test results in 2003 were well above average in English. Compared with similar schools, they were also well above average. The 2004 group of pupils in Year 6 are not expected to attain such high standards because there are two pupils with a statement of special educational needs, who will be disapplied from tests. This would appear to show a fall in standards, but in reality, standards will remain fairly similar. Overall, pupils' achievement is good, especially in Key Stage 2. The stronger teaching in Class 4, a Year 5/6 class, has the effect of boosting pupils' performance as they approach national tests. Pupils with special educational needs also achieve well because of the very good support they receive. The programmes of work set for them are well matched to their needs

and they are given skilful support from teaching assistants who possess considerable expertise and knowledge. The traveller pupils also achieve well. The school-based evidence shows that their progress is on a par with their classmates. Girls tend to do better than boys in English, but differences have not been significant in recent years. The school is keeping pace with national levels of improvement in English test results and, at times, exceeding it in Year 2. Statistical analysis from last year's test results showed that pupils in Year 6 had made good progress, when these results were compared to the standards they reached in Year 2.

48. Although there are no particular weaknesses in pupils' standards of performance in the elements of reading, writing and speaking and listening, the quality of handwriting and presentation of work could be improved. Pupils are not joining their handwriting early enough and producing a joined fluent style of handwriting. Although accurate and consistent in size, handwriting, sometimes even in Year 6, remains unjoined. Presentation of work is variable. Some pupils produce high quality pieces of work in English that are presented beautifully, but others do not take sufficient pride in their work and leave work unfinished or untidy. Teachers could do more to ensure that standards of presentation are consistently higher and that handwriting is joined, fluent and legible at an earlier stage, particularly from Year 2 onwards.
49. Pupils in both key stages achieve well because of good teaching and the good learning opportunities in English. Planning is thorough and matched well to the National Literacy Strategy, with due consideration being given to the range of abilities and ages in each class. Pupils make good gains in their basic literacy skills, extend their knowledge and develop a good understanding of the subject because teachers have a good command of English themselves. Lessons are generally organised and managed well. Pupils are generally well behaved and respond well to teachers' calm, positive approach. Pupils are well motivated because teachers create a good learning environment. They give praise and encouragement and teaching assistants support small groups using well-timed intervention strategies. Teachers use question and answer techniques effectively to ensure that everyone is drawn into the lesson.
50. Assessment procedures in English are good. They are well structured and linked systematically to the pupils' achievement of learning objectives, as they progress through the school. The use of writing progress books has strengthened the procedures and there are very good examples of accurate levelling of writing<sup>8</sup> especially in Class 2, the Year 2/3 class. The marking of pupils' work is generally good; the best examples are to be found in the Class 4, Year 5/6 class, where helpful annotated comments and symbols are made in the margin, explaining what has been completed well, and what needs to be improved. Pupils have specific targets for improvement, but they are not reminded of these often enough and, as a result, they are a little vague, especially the younger pupils, when questioned about their targets in English.
51. The curriculum covers a good range of activities, including biography, Greek myths, poetry and the analysis of newspaper articles. An appropriate amount of time is allocated to reading and teachers use the group reading sessions well to diagnose pupils' strengths and weaknesses in reading. The reading materials provided for pupils are generally well matched to their reading level. There are regular opportunities for research in the library and through the use of information and communication technology. A particular strength of the curriculum provision is the use of literacy in other curriculum areas. In science, for instance, pupils make predictions and record results and in religious education they write their views on racism. Some of the best examples are to be found in history in empathetic writing. This is exemplified by a pupil in Year 2 who, when writing about his experiences as a Second World War evacuee, says in a letter to his parents *'I am OK with my new family. I do miss you so much. I put my stuff in my bedroom. I do get food and water. Love x x x'*
52. The subject is led well by a knowledgeable and committed co-ordinator, who is a good role model for staff and pupils. Management systems are improving and monitoring of pupils' work and the quality of teaching is being undertaken on a more regular basis. The action plan in the school development plan identifies what needs to be completed in each year group in order to

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<sup>8</sup> The levelling of writing is where teachers compare pupils' writing with National Curriculum level descriptors.

maintain and to improve standards throughout the school. The plan is based on information derived through astute observation and analysis and the collective desire of all staff to enhance the school provision.

53. There has been a good level of improvement in English since the last inspection. Standards have risen over the years to above the national average by the end of Year 6 and achievement levels have increased to good. The quality of teaching has improved across both key stages and pupils' attitudes to learning are now better than previously reported.

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

54. Literacy skills are taught well. There is a distinct focus on phonics<sup>9</sup> and emergent<sup>10</sup> writing from the early stages of Key Stage 1. Teachers develop pupils' literacy skills well in other subjects by reinforcing and developing literacy in other situations. A growing strength is the use of information and communication technology in English, particularly for composing and editing their own work.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Assessment and analysis are used very effectively to identify areas of weakness.
- Good quality monitoring has improved the quality of teaching and learning.
- Teachers use information and communication technology very effectively to increase pupils' mathematical understanding.
- There is some inconsistency in the presentation of work, marking, and the use of targets.
- Equality of opportunity is very strongly promoted.

### **Commentary**

55. Results of the 2003 national tests indicated that standards in Year 2 were below average nationally and well below average when compared with similar schools. Only a small proportion of pupils reached higher levels. These results are only part of the story and must be treated with caution. Standards fluctuate considerably, from year to year, because of the small number of pupils involved. Inspection findings indicate that the pupils currently in Year 2 achieve satisfactorily and are on course to reach average standards. There are fewer pupils with special educational needs and a larger proportion capable of reaching higher levels. Standards in Key Stage 2 have been consistently above the national average for a number of years. In 2003, standards in Year 6 were well above those of similar schools. Despite having pupils with severe learning difficulties in the current year group, a similar proportion of pupils is on course to reach average or higher levels in 2004. Boys and girls achieve equally well. The school regards the success of each pupil as paramount. Booster groups are carefully organised to ensure they meet the needs of individuals effectively. Pupils with special educational needs and traveller pupils achieve well because they receive a high level of good quality support.
56. Since the previous inspection, there has been good improvement, and the school has successfully raised overall standards, most noticeably in Key Stage 2. Focused monitoring has improved the quality of teaching. In the Year 5/6 class, where pupils achieve well, evidence taken from previous work reveals that interesting, challenging activities, particularly in the using and applying aspect of mathematics, are promoting greater understanding very effectively. As a consequence of thorough analysis of test information, there is a more structured approach towards overcoming identified weaknesses. This year, for example, the school has focused

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<sup>9</sup> Phonics is the system of using the sounds that letters make when learning to read.

<sup>10</sup> Emergent writing is children's very early writing or mark making.

more attention on teaching decimals and, as a result, pupils have developed a clearer understanding of the concept.

57. By Year 2, most pupils are working within the expected range. The vast majority develop secure numeracy skills and are well equipped for work in Key Stage 2. By Year 6, many pupils develop mature mathematical thinking and devise an above-average range of strategies for solving problems. All year groups make very effective use of timetabled sessions in the computer suite to increase numeracy skills. There are numerous examples of information and communication technology being used very well to support mathematical understanding. The computers in classrooms, however, are outdated and do not make as strong a contribution to pupils' learning.
58. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2. Teachers, particularly in Years 5 and 6, focus more accurately on matching work to the needs of individual pupils and provide a good level of challenge for the more able. In Key Stage 1, there is sometimes an over-reliance on worksheet-based activities and more able pupils find the work too easy. The over use of worksheets was criticised in the previous report. In all lessons, teachers use warm-up sessions very effectively to engage pupils by carefully targeted questioning. In the good lessons, teachers remind pupils regularly about the purpose of the lesson, use mathematical vocabulary well, teach specific skills effectively and have a very accurate understanding of pupils' capabilities. In these lessons pupils achieve well, because work is pitched at the right level and activities are interesting. A good example of this occurred during a booster group lesson, when pupils were revising multiples. They made good progress because each part of the lesson had been linked well to the main activity, pupils understood the vocabulary, and activities were very accurately matched to their needs. Lessons that are satisfactory rather than good still ensure pupils make sound progress, but the pace is sometimes too leisurely and pupils are allowed to waste time settling to work or moving between activities. Occasionally, the inappropriate behaviour of a small minority of boys slows progress.
59. The co-ordinator has only recently taken over responsibility for the subject. She has a good basic understanding of strengths and weaknesses and a sound sense of direction for the subject but has not yet had the opportunity to monitor provision. Consequently, inconsistencies in marking and reviewing pupils' targets have not come to light. Presentation is an area for development. Currently, the quality of work in books does not always reflect the standards achieved.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

60. Pupils use mathematical skills very effectively as part of their work in other subjects. There are numerous examples of well-planned opportunities in subjects such as science, geography, history and design and technology.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are below average at the end of Year 6, but achievement levels are improving steadily.
- Teaching and learning are good, with a strong emphasis on investigation.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning but their presentation of work could be improved.
- The leadership and management of the subject are good. Very good analysis of performance data is helping to identify weaknesses in standards.

## Commentary

61. Standards in science are average at the end of Year 2 and below average at the end of Year 6. Pupils' achievement levels are now satisfactory. The school's strategies for improving standards are gradually making a favourable impact. Teachers' assessments in 2003 of Year 2 pupils showed that standards in science were below average, but this was not a typical group of pupils, because there was a higher than normal percentage of pupils with special educational needs; this had the effect of depressing standards overall. Assessment from previous years indicates broadly average standards. The national test results for the pupils in Year 6 in 2003 showed that standards were below average, largely because too few pupils reached the higher level 5 standard. Compared with similar schools, standards were also judged to be below average. Boys do better than girls in tests and over the last three years the gap has widened, with boys doing better and girls' results remaining similar. However, year groups are small in the school and results can vary quite markedly from year to year. Over time there is a pattern of steadily improving standards in science from 2001 onwards.
62. Overall, teaching and learning are good. Teachers set suitable learning objectives and use methods that will enhance pupils' skills and develop their knowledge and understanding. There is a strong emphasis in lessons on an investigative approach, where pupils can gain first hand experience and discover for themselves. Teachers are confident and use scientific vocabulary accurately. They pose well-worded questions which make pupils think and reason for themselves. Relationships in the classroom are positive. Pupils from traveller families are well integrated and make similar progress to other pupils in the class. Teaching assistants make a very valuable contribution to lessons by supporting pupils with special educational needs. They ensure that they understand objectives and join in lessons fully. The support given also enables pupils with special educational needs to make good progress based on their prior attainment. Assessment procedures are well organised and pupils' progress is monitored regularly so that the next step of learning can be planned properly.
63. Pupils have positive attitudes to their work. They collaborate particularly well in lessons, recording information for the group, sharing ideas and taking turns to lead investigations. They show good levels of interest and sustain concentration well. Their behaviour is good because they enjoy the work and lessons are well prepared and structured. In the plenary<sup>11</sup> sessions, they draw well-reasoned conclusions from their experiments. However, the presentation of work is not always of a high standard. Some work is left unfinished or insufficient care is taken with handwriting or preparing grids for the results of experiments.
64. The subject is led and managed well. Teaching and learning have been monitored regularly and pupils' work is scrutinised thoroughly. Science has been a key priority in the school development plan for the last two years because of below average standards. The headteacher, staff and governors have tackled the weaknesses analytically. Test results have been evaluated, curriculum time allocation monitored, and homework re-structured, resources checked, and schools visited where good practice prevails. New strategies have been put into place, in the light of school analysis, and there are positive signs of improvement in standards, but the issue is taking time to resolve.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- There has been very good improvement in standards and provision since the previous inspection.
- The introduction of the new computer suite has had a very positive impact upon raising standards.

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<sup>11</sup> The plenary is the final part of the lesson when the teacher usually reinforces the lesson objective and checks what pupils have learnt.

- Information and communication technology is developed effectively through other subjects.
- Staff training has increased confidence and expertise.
- Classroom computers are outdated.

## Commentary

65. At the time of the previous inspection, provision was unsatisfactory and standards were below expectations. A very different picture emerges now. Investment in quality hardware and software, combined with staff training, has paid good dividends. Provision has improved significantly since the introduction of a well-resourced computer suite. Pupils achieve well and standards in Years 2 and 6 are now above average. This level of improvement represents a major achievement. Pupils with special educational needs and traveller pupils achieve as well as others because they enjoy the practical nature of the subject and receive a good level of high quality support.
66. From the reception class onwards, pupils regard information and communication technology as an important tool in all their work. They acquire independence and competence from an early age. By Year 2, pupils demonstrate above average keyboard skills. Computer generated Rangoli patterns provide a good example of their expertise. Pupils understand on-screen tools and symbols and display advanced skills when searching for programs, collating information or word processing. Photographic evidence shows they have a good understanding of programming movable toys.
67. By Year 6, most pupils develop an impressively wide range of skills. They access information regularly and interpret data in a variety of formats. Information and communication technology is an integral part of daily life and pupils are clearly very enthusiastic about their work. A group of pupils demonstrated their expertise as they showed 'PowerPoint' presentations of topic work. They easily sorted out problems as they accessed files. They explained how they had inserted digital images into their written work before adding sound effects. Many commented on how they would improve their next presentation. When making decisions about creating on-screen electrical circuits, or controlling traffic light sequences, pupils discussed their work with maturity and understood the importance of precision.
68. The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school. This judgement is based on a small amount of direct observation, discussion with staff and pupils and examination of planning. When teachers work with small groups of pupils who have a computer each, achievement is very good. Teachers are confident with the subject and develop skills well.
69. The co-ordinator has only recently taken over responsibility for the subject. Although she has good expertise and a clear action plan for further development, it is too early for her to have an overview of provision or standards. The headteacher is a skilled information and communication technology practitioner who has implemented good assessment procedures that monitor progress well. Classroom computers have yet to be upgraded and are not used in lessons very often.

## Information and communication technology across the curriculum

70. Discussion with pupils and evidence taken from previous work confirms good skills development through other subjects. Pupils report that they use programs linked to topics such as tessellation and symmetry regularly in their numeracy work. They word process writing, such as anti-racist poems, very effectively. There are numerous other good examples in subjects such as art, science, geography, history and music, of information and communication technology being used effectively to support learning.

## HUMANITIES

71. In **geography** and **history**, no lessons were observed during the inspection and, therefore, no judgements are made about the provision in these subjects. Pupils' work was examined and

the discussions held with groups of pupils in Years 2 and 6 in order to assess their level of skills, knowledge and understanding. Additionally, the co-ordinator for history and geography was interviewed. Pupils in Year 2 have a sound knowledge of the island of St. Lucia in the Caribbean and they compare many of its features with their own rural environment in Somerset. In history, they understand what it felt like to be an evacuee in the Second World War; pupils explain the action to be taken when the air raid siren sounds and the type of conditions to be expected in the air raid shelter. In Year 6, pupils compare the climate and living conditions of Chembakoli, a rural village in India, with their own Churchstanton setting. They have a sound knowledge of world maps and a good understanding of the damage that pollution can do to the environment. In history, pupils have developed sound research skills and know how to seek out information from the past. Their sense of chronology, i.e. the passage of time, is good. They plot skilfully important historical events on to a time line. The curriculum provision for both subjects is good and caters well for different age groups. The co-ordinator for humanities is new to the school and has had insufficient time to gain an overview of the subjects in order to create a long-term strategy for development.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Provision for religious education is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- The curriculum is rich and provides pupils with interesting learning opportunities.
- Pupils' personal development is enhanced through their studies in religious education.
- The subject leadership is good, but monitoring and reviewing procedures could be further improved.

### Commentary

72. Standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 are in line with the locally Agreed Syllabus. In Year 2, pupils have a sound knowledge of Christianity and apply this to situations arising in school. Pupils in Year 6 have a growing understanding of Hinduism and show respect for the views of others and for different cultures. Overall, pupils achieve satisfactorily. Teaching and learning in both key stages are good. Teachers have acquired a good level of information, which ensures that pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding are improved systematically as they progress through the school. Lessons are managed well and pupils are fully engaged, especially in discussions, when views are shared openly. Teachers are particularly skilful at involving all pupils in lessons, using a good range of strategies, such as providing artefacts or telling exciting and relevant stories. Pupils with special educational needs are provided with very good support, particularly from teaching assistants, who guide and encourage them, in order that they make the same levels of progress as their classmates. Pupils whose parents are travellers also receive appropriate additional support. They achieve at the same rate as their classmates.
73. The learning opportunities provided by the school are rich and interesting. There are well-planned visits to school by representatives of different faiths, including Buddhists, Hindus and Christians; this enlivens the curriculum and adds relevance to pupils' studies. Teachers plan topics that help pupils, not only to learn about religion, but also to learn from religion and relate it to life in general. In Class 2, a Years 2 and 3 class, the teacher read a passage from the Bible about Jesus' temptation; she then asked pupils to talk about times when they had felt tempted to do something wrong. By sharing their views, pupils gained a greater depth of understanding about the feelings of others and what to do when facing a dilemma.
74. Pupils' personal development is enhanced through their work in religious education. They have opportunities for spiritual experiences, such as the sharing of a quiet moment of reflection at the end of a lesson when a diva lamp is lighted or listening to a verse composed by classmates to be inserted into a celebration card. These are typical experiences for pupils in

Class 4; a Years 5 and 6 group. Pupils are taught to respect the views of others and understand their points of view. By studying the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi they learn the importance of persuasion and the rejection of violence in order to achieve political goals.

75. The subject is led well by a committed and experienced co-ordinator. Satisfactory levels of improvement have been made since the last inspection. The curriculum has been improved and issues related to multi-cultural education have been addressed thoroughly. Teachers are more confident and resources support the learning process more effectively. Some monitoring and evaluation is undertaken, but it is largely informal. More could be done to structure review arrangements and set out long-term development plans to enhance the subject provision further.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

76. Too few lessons were observed in each of the following subjects: **art and design**, **design and technology**, **music** and **physical education** to make a firm judgement about provision. Inspectors spoke to co-ordinators and pupils about what they had learnt and also looked at displays and examples of planning and previous work.
77. In **art and design**, evidence taken from teachers' planning and work on display indicates that pupils have access to an appropriate range of media. The school has focused much of its attention on English, mathematics and science in recent years and art has been a low profile subject. Consequently, standards are not as high as they were last time the school was inspected, but pupils still receive a worthwhile experience in the subject. Curriculum innovations, such as the recent 'Multi-cultural Week' raise the profile of art well and capture pupils' interest. Good quality computer generated Rangoli patterns and batik work provide a common theme for displays.
78. In **design and technology**, discussion with pupils showed that they are gaining experience of an adequate range of materials and developing appropriate skills in designing, making and evaluating. Provision is similar to that found by the previous inspection team. Younger pupils explained how they designed batik pictures and made musical instruments. One boy talked about how, if he was making a rain stick again, he would use different materials to make the sound louder. Older pupils, who had also made musical instruments, demonstrated more advanced levels of skills as they explained how they made a flute out of copper. All were familiar with using cogs and gears when, for example, they made models of boats or four-wheel drive tractors.
79. In **music**, no lessons were observed, as specialist music teaching did not take place during the inspection. The whole school was heard singing in assemblies. This singing was tuneful and enthusiastic. Pupils of all ages, both boys and girls, participated fully and enjoyed the sense of occasion. One pupil was observed achieving a good standard during her flute lesson. Many of the strong features from the previous inspection have been retained. In Year 2, pupils learn recorder and some older pupils receive tuition in a wide range of instruments, such as guitar and woodwind. All pupils have good opportunity to participate in concerts and performances both in school and in the wider community. Such events make a strong positive contribution to pupils' personal and social development. During discussion, pupils in Year 6 recalled a past concert about 'Snow White' with great enjoyment and pride.
80. In **physical education**, the school works hard to overcome the limitations imposed by the site. Many opportunities to enhance provision are on offer and the school makes very effective use of its small on-site swimming pool to ensure all pupils learn to swim. Extra-curricular opportunities are excellent. Outside providers and students from the local secondary school enhance pupils' learning further, very effectively, by giving specialist training in, for example, tag rugby. Provision remains as strong as that found by the last inspection team. From discussion with pupils and from looking at teachers' planning, it is clear that all strands of the subject, including outdoor and adventurous activities, are taught. Residential visits support learning well. Hall space is at a premium. Teachers are very aware of the safety implications and

compensate well. There are, however, items such as trolleys of musical instruments, stored around the edge of the hall, that limit space even further.

81. In all these subjects, although co-ordinators are enthusiastic and some are very knowledgeable, others are new to the post and have heavy curriculum workloads. They have not been given opportunities to monitor or evaluate provision in these subjects, so they do not always have an accurate view of strengths and weaknesses. Consequently, they do not yet have a clear whole-school overview of standards or provision.

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

82. Too few lessons were seen to make a judgement on overall provision. The school regards pupils' personal development as a very important part of its work. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection. The programme for personal, social and health education is very good and includes work on diet, health, sex and relationships and drugs awareness. It is well supported by visits from outside agencies. Pupils know they are part of a very caring community in which their views are greatly valued. The school recognises the next natural step would be the introduction of a School Council. Citizenship is promoted well, through initiatives, such as 'Person of the Day'.
83. Pupils are given many opportunities to explore and discuss moral issues, such as racism, choosing between right and wrong, and bullying. A good example of this was seen during the inspection when a teacher sensitively encouraged her class to talk about being tempted to do wrong. Nearly every pupil had something to contribute and all listened thoughtfully to what others had to say. In acts of collective worship, a sense of respect and reflection is very noticeable.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is	1
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>3</b>
Pupils' achievement	3
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	4
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
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	2
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
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	2
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).*