

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **NORTON ST PHILIP CE VA FIRST SCHOOL**

Norton St Philip, Bath

LEA area: Somerset

Unique reference number: 123836

Headteacher: Mrs S Flindall

Lead inspector: Mr D J Curtis

Dates of inspection: 7 – 8 June 2004

Inspection number: 257058

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school:	First
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 to 9 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	51
School address:	Church Street Norton St Philip Bath Somerset
Postcode:	BA2 7LU
Telephone number:	01373 834327
Fax number:	01373 834327
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Jenny Luscombe

Date of previous inspection: 27 April 1998

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

The school is situated in the village of Norton St Philip in Somerset, close to the nearby towns of Frome and Radstock. It is a small village school with 51 pupils on roll. At the age of nine, pupils transfer to one of two middle schools in Frome. Five pupils are identified as having special educational needs, although none has a statement of special educational need. A small number of pupils come from minority-ethnic families. No pupils have English as an additional language. The headteacher has been in post for two years and has brought stability to the school after a long period of uncertainty around leadership and management. Standards on entry meet expectations for four-year-olds. Pupil mobility is low.

The school received the Healthy Schools Award in 2001. It has very close links with a Beacon School and the Frome Community Learning Partnership. The school works closely with the pre-school in the village.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
20893	Mr D J Curtis	Lead inspector	English as an additional language Foundation Stage English Science Geography History Physical education
9712	Mrs J Barber	Lay inspector	
18116	Mr C Taylor	Team inspector	Special educational needs Mathematics Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology Music Personal, social and health education

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This is a very good school** which provides good value for money. The dedication of the headteacher, staff and governors is a significant aid to achievement.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards are well above average and pupils' achievement is very good.
- Teaching is very good and has a positive impact on the standards achieved.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes and their behaviour is very good.
- The school provides a rich and exciting curriculum for its pupils.
- Relationships in the school are very good at all levels.
- In Years 3 and 4, standards in handwriting are not high enough.

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

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

The standards achieved by pupils in Years 1 and 2 are very good, as the result of high quality teaching. In speaking and listening, reading, writing, mathematics and science, standards are well above average. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) meet national expectations. In Years 3 and 4, achievement is very good. Standards in English, mathematics and science are well above expectations for nine-year-olds. Standards in ICT meet national expectations. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is good. There is no significant variation in the achievement of boys and girls.

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
Reading	A	C	A	C
Writing	A	D	B	C
Mathematics	A	C	A	A

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average.  
Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils entitled to free school meals.*

The number of pupils taking the national tests each year is small and therefore results need to be interpreted with caution. Results in 2003 showed improvement over those achieved in 2002. Indications are that the school's unofficial results for 2004 show further improvement. There has been a marked improvement in standards since the appointment of the current headteacher two years ago.

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

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education is very good. Teaching is very good**, with strengths in the teaching of key skills in literacy and numeracy. Teachers have very good relationships with pupils and very high expectations of what they can achieve. There are strengths in the teaching of early literacy and numeracy skills in the reception class. Teachers make very effective use of learning support assistants. Assessment of pupils' learning is very good.

The quality of the curriculum is good. The headteacher, staff and governors place great importance on developing children as people and citizens of tomorrow. To this end, the school enriches the curriculum with a very impressive range of extra-curricular activities, visits and visitors. Pupils receive very good care and support. The way in which the school seeks and acts on the views of pupils, especially in their learning is excellent. Links with parents are very good and those with the community and other schools are very good. There are significant strengths in the school's links with the Frome Federation of Schools.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The leadership and management of the school are very good.** The headteacher since her appointment has brought a clarity of vision to the school and a determination to raise standards, in which she has succeeded. She is totally committed to developing the whole child. Governance is very good. All statutory responsibilities are met. Governors have a detailed understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement in the school. She is ably supported by her teaching colleagues and teaching assistants who carry out their roles diligently.

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

Parents are very positive about their relationships with staff and the headteacher, who know all the children and parents by name. They recognise that the school provides a 'friendly environment' where parents are really encouraged to help and to support their children's learning. Parents say that teachers are very approachable and know that they can always talk to them if they have any concerns. They are especially pleased with the quality of education in the reception class.

Pupils are very happy at school and enjoy both lessons and the other activities provided for them. They appreciate and understand the targets that are set for them. There are particular strengths in the way in which they are encouraged to work with the headteacher in contributing their ideas into the school improvement plan.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

The most important thing the school should do to improve is to improve the quality of handwriting in Years 3 and 4.



## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

The standards achieved are very good. Pupils' achievement is very good.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- By the end of Year 4, standards are well above expectations in English, mathematics and science.
- By the end of Year 2, standards are well above average in reading, writing, mathematics and science.
- The achievement of children in the Foundation Stage is very good.
- In Years 3 and 4, standards in handwriting are not good enough.

#### Commentary

1. The number of children who join the school each year is small and it is inevitable that standards on entry will vary from year to year. The trend shows that children start school with standards that are expected for four-year-olds. As the result of high-quality teaching, the achievement of children in reception is very good. By the time they start Year 1, the majority exceed the expectations of the Early Learning Goals in all areas of learning. Children make particularly good progress in the key skills of reading and writing.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	17.0 (15.8)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	15.8 (14.0)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	18.5 (16.3)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 8 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

2. The results of the Year 2003 national tests for pupils in Year 2 were well above the national average in reading and mathematics and above average in writing. These results showed a significant improvement over the previous year and reflect the determination of the headteacher since her appointment to raise standards in the school. As the result of very good teaching, the achievement of pupils in Years 1 and 2 is very good. In the current Year 2, standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science are well above average and reflect further improvement over those achieved in 2003. There are significant strengths in the key skills of reading and writing. Standards in ICT meet national expectations. Insufficient lessons were seen to judge standards in other subjects, but work on display and in art and design and in design and technology is of high quality.
3. By the end of Year 4, standards in English, mathematics and science are well above expectations for pupils of this age and their achievement is very good. Pupils are fluent readers and write imaginatively, with a good range of vocabulary. They are successful in

using and applying their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in other subjects, especially in science. However, in handwriting, standards are not high enough. Pupils do not consistently produce a neat, legible and joined-up style. Standards in ICT meet expectations for nine-year-olds. Insufficient lessons were seen to judge standards in other subjects but work on display in art and design and design and technology is of high quality.

4. Across the school, pupils with special educational needs make good progress as measured against the targets in their Individual Education Plans. Their achievement is very good because of very effective teaching and high quality support from dedicated teaching assistants.

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

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. Other aspects of their personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are also very good. Most pupils' attendance is satisfactory and has improved over the last two terms. Punctuality is good. There has been good improvement in this aspect since the last inspection.

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

- Pupils have very good attitudes to learning.
- There is very good provision for personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Behaviour is very good.
- Pupils are given good opportunities to have a voice in running the school.
- Attendance levels are improving.

### **Commentary**

5. Pupils enjoy coming to school and have very positive attitudes to learning. They are happy and feel safe. Staff have high expectations of all pupils and provide every opportunity for them to succeed. Pupils are polite to visitors and their respect for the school surroundings is evident. They use equipment purposefully and know how to play without friction. Pupils' behaviour is equally good at lunchtimes and at playtimes when they play together well, with no signs of unruly or oppressive behaviour. The children in the reception class settle happily into school and quickly learn essential routines and expectations of behaviour. Older pupils help younger ones; an example of this is shown by older pupils playing with and watching out for younger ones at lunchtime and playtime.
6. Many pupils take part in day-to-day routines by helping, for example, to take equipment out and tidy it away and even the youngest children in the reception class show independence by selecting activities, whether in lessons or at play. As they progress further through the school, opportunities are given for looking after the play equipment used at lunchtime and playtime, ensuring all pupils have someone to play with, and also helping to run the library. They are consulted about the school and any valid suggestions are included in the school improvement plan.
7. The school makes good provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its pupils, who respond well in these areas. Spiritual development is promoted for example, when pupils show joy in listening to music, playing and singing and explore

feelings in dance movements. The daily act of worship gives good opportunities for spiritual awareness where there are good reasons given for reflection on thought-provoking issues. Moral development is promoted successfully. Pupils know the difference between right and wrong and behave well. Teachers take care to explain why some behaviour is unacceptable and show they value good behaviour. Personal, social and health education lessons and ‘Circle Time’<sup>1</sup> encourage pupils to understand that people have different needs, views, cultures and beliefs, which need to be treated with respect. The ethos of the school fosters good social development. Pupils co-operate well with teachers and with each other, work well in groups and listen to the opinions of others. Pupils are provided with good opportunities to appreciate different cultures. They are introduced to poems from different parts of the world in literacy lessons. They listen to music of different traditions and are introduced to instruments from around the world. A recent multicultural week featured an African meal and visitors acted out a drama telling traditional African stories, with African drumming.

8. In the current school year, attendance figures have improved to above average and this trend looks likely to continue. Pupils are punctual and lessons start on time. There are clear procedures for following up any absence and the nil figure for unauthorised absence can be attributed to the school’s clear policies and the co-operation of the parents.

## Attendance

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.9	School data	0.0
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

## Exclusions

There were no exclusions in the previous year.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is very good.

### Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are very good. Assessment is very good.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching in the Foundation Stage is very good.
- The teaching of key skills is very good.

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

- Pupils show great enthusiasm for learning.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is very strong.
- Assessment is used effectively in planning future learning.

## Commentary

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 11 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	6	5	0	0	0	0

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

9. A significant feature in the very good achievement of children in reception is the very good teaching. There are significant strengths in the very effective teamwork between the class teacher and her two teaching assistants. The team has a very clear and detailed understanding of the needs of young children. Planning is of high quality, especially in ensuring that children in reception who are taught in a class together with pupils from Year 1 and Year 2 receive their full entitlement to the Foundation Stage curriculum. Because of high-quality support from teaching assistants, the teacher can teach the reception children as a group whilst Year 1 and Year 2 work with the assistant. As a result, children are taught successfully, particularly the important early key skills in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. The classroom is an exciting and stimulating learning environment and there is a significant strength in the celebration of children's work which is attractively displayed.
10. An important factor in pupils' achievement in English and mathematics is the very effective teaching of key skills. From Year 1 onwards, teachers build successfully year-on-year to develop key skills, knowledge and understanding. In reading, pupils move from being taught how to use letter sounds to reading for meaning and to give preferences for favourite authors and books. There is a strong emphasis by Year 4 in developing comprehension skills. Spelling is taught to a clear structure with the result that standards of spelling are very good. Similarly, teachers are effective in teaching grammar and punctuation, so that by the end of Year 4 pupils understand clauses and the use of conjunctions. In mathematics, there is a strong emphasis on the teaching of key skills in mental arithmetic and the use of multiplication tables with the result that pupils make very good progress in these key skills.
11. In lessons, there is a genuine love of learning. Pupils are interested, excited and motivated to learn. In whole-class sessions, they show tremendous enthusiasm to join in with question and answer sessions and show absolute confidence in 'having a go'. They understand that their answer may not always be the correct one, but that trying is the most important thing. In individual, paired and group work, pupils concentrate well and show very impressive levels of application. As a result, they achieve well and the quality and range of the work they produce is of high quality. At the end of lessons, many are desperate to share their work with the rest of the class. Pupils are genuinely interested in the work of their classmates and the degree of spontaneous applause shows how much they value the achievement of others.
12. There are significant strengths in teachers' subject knowledge which impact positively on the standards achieved and on pupils' enthusiasm for learning. Teachers make lessons interesting through imaginative use of story-telling, careful explanations and high-quality demonstrations, all of which capture the attention of pupils. Teachers' understanding of and adaptation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been a major factor in the significant improvement in standards over the last two years.

13. Teachers make very good use of assessment to plan future learning. Pupils' work is assessed regularly against the levels required by the National Curriculum and this information is used well to monitor pupils' progress and to set future targets. Pupils are very much involved in this process and have a good understanding of what they need to do in order to improve. Very effective use is made of a computer program to chart pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science and this gives teachers, parents, pupils and governors a very clear picture of pupils' progress in the school from reception to the end of Year 4, when they transfer to middle school.

### **The curriculum**

The curriculum of the school is good overall. It caters well for the needs and interests of all pupils. The curriculum provides a secure basis for learning with excellent enrichment beyond the school day. The school effectively includes all pupils in the activities it puts on. Accommodation and resources are very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils with special educational needs are very well catered for.
- Opportunities for enrichment are excellent, including residential trips, sports and cultural activities.
- All staff make a very effective impact on the work of the school.

## **Commentary**

14. All the subjects are taught and statutory requirements are met. The national strategies for numeracy and literacy are used well to develop pupils' knowledge and skills to a high standard. They are also taught through other subjects. However, by Year 4, standards in handwriting are not as high as other aspects of literacy. Skills in ICT are taught effectively and it is used to help teach other subjects. The school has a successful programme for personal, social and health education which is linked to assemblies and other lessons. This programme includes drugs education and sex and relationships education. Provision for pupils' personal development is good. The school uses schemes based upon nationally agreed plans for the other subjects. It is involved in a number of curriculum developments including the development of thinking, musical and creative skills.
15. The school is committed to including all pupils and successfully provides equality of opportunities. Pupils with special educational needs are very well provided for, both in classes and beyond. They are fully included in all activities and achieve well. They are identified early on in their school career, or whilst still at playgroup, their needs are analysed and appropriate provision is provided. They are well supported by the teaching assistants who make a substantial contribution to the life of the school. Gifted and talented pupils are identified and provision is made for them. The school makes good provision for those transferring to the next stage of education by arranging visits for pupils, providing advice and support.
16. Enrichment of the curriculum is excellent. There are a wide range of activities that go on beyond the school day to enable access to the curriculum or to extend the curriculum. Pupils have very good opportunities to take part in sports activities and events. Visits are arranged to concerts and theatres. Visiting groups come into the school to work with pupils. Trips outside the school are a very important part of the curriculum, with the aim that each class has a trip every term. For pupils in Years 3 and 4, there is a residential trip during the year to Cirencester where they learn about Roman history.
17. The quality and quantity of both accommodation and resources are good overall. Although based in an old school building, the accommodation provided is good, with well laid out teaching rooms and a range of shared rooms and small rooms for withdrawal. The playground is appropriate and well used. There is good sized field which is used for games, sports and outdoor activities. It includes a wild area and children's garden. Resources are good and support delivery of the curriculum across the school. The school has sufficient teachers to deliver the curriculum with a very good range of skills and expertise. The support staff contribute very well to the work of the school, and are well trained. There have been significant changes of staff over the past few years but these have not led to a deterioration in standards.

## **Care, guidance and support**

The school cares very well for its pupils' welfare, health and safety. Staff provide them with very good support, advice and guidance through effective monitoring of their personal development and progress. The way the school involves pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is very good. This is a good improvement since the last inspection.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is strong emphasis on ensuring pupils' care and welfare.
- Pupils are routinely involved in decisions and their suggestions are incorporated into the School Improvement Plan.
- Pupils have good and trusting relationships with adults.
- There are very good induction arrangements for children joining the school.

## **Commentary**

18. The school is inclusive with many very good features in the way pupils' well-being, care and safety are promoted in the school. Provision for pupils' support, guidance and welfare is very good and helps to raise achievement. The pupils' academic progress and their personal development are monitored well. Teaching assistants make useful contributions to the teachers' records. Annual reports of pupils' progress provide a good picture of each child and their individual achievements. They incorporate targets for improvement in the following year.
19. Procedures for monitoring attendance and encouraging parents to send their children to school regularly and on time are good. The children themselves understand the importance of regular attendance and punctuality. Teachers know their pupils well and keep track of their reasons for absence. The headteacher is the designated person for child protection. Staff are aware of the need for vigilance and they follow the recommended procedures in this area. Most staff are well versed in first-aid and have appropriate qualifications. Health and safety are a priority for the school. The school building, classrooms and grounds are very well cared for and swift and effective attention is given to any necessary repairs. Litter and graffiti are non-existent due to the care of their environment by the pupils. The welcoming displays, especially on corridor walls, help to ensure that pupils treat the school with respect. Every pupil is handed over personally to the coach driver or parents/carers at the end of the school day, by a member of staff.
20. The ethos of the school is conducive to very good behaviour. Bullying and oppressive behaviour are not a problem. On the rare occasions when isolated incidents occur, they are well handled. The pastoral care is very good. The excellent relationships between staff and children enable pupils to build trusting relationships with one or more members of staff.
21. There is a careful approach for new pupils to make sure they settle well into school. Those entering the reception class are offered a visit to the school from a member of staff. This ensures that parents are involved with their children's education from the start and is a valuable opportunity to voice any concerns and for exchange of information. During these 'Stepping Stones' sessions, children become familiar with the building, staff and other pupils. There is a special information booklet for new pupils starting school and an evening meeting for parents to meet staff and look round the school.
22. Pupils' views are sought on a range of issues and these views are discussed by staff. Teachers are effective in obtaining the views and opinions of pupils. Pupils in Years 2 to 4 are involved in producing the school improvement plan and their priority for improving the learning environment by additional playground facilities has been incorporated. The pupils have been instrumental in the purchase of more equipment for the Friday afternoon 'Golden Time' to give a greater choice of activities.

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

The school works very well in partnership with parents, other schools and the community. Communications between parents and the school are very good and parents think highly of the school. The school has very good links with the local community. There are positive links with other schools and with the playgroup. Overall this represents a good improvement since the last inspection.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There are very effective links with other schools in the Frome Federation.
- There are very good links with parents.
- Links with the local community are very effective.



## **Commentary**

23. Before starting in the reception class, parents and their children are invited to spend several half-day sessions in the class. This is called 'Stepping Stones' and is a particularly good start to the pupils' school lives. This contributes to a smooth transition and helps to develop the partnership between home and school. Parents consider staff to be approachable and welcoming and are confident in raising concerns informally with them. The school deals effectively with any concerns or complaints. There is a supportive parents, teachers and friends' association which raises considerable sums of money for the school. The quality of information provided for parents is good. There is a good quality newsletter sent out regularly and termly curriculum newsletters from each class. The home-school notebooks keep the parents informed on a daily basis and encourage them to reply to let the school know any pertinent facts straight away. The contribution of parents to pupils' learning at school and home is good.
24. There is a particularly good link with other schools in the Frome Federation of Schools. The majority of pupils transfer to middle schools in Frome and subsequently at Year 9 to Frome College. Norton St Philip maintains close links with all these schools to ensure good continuity in pupils' education. There is very good liaison between staff members to ensure a smooth transition both pastorally and academically. The transfer arrangements include teachers from the middle school visiting pupils at Norton St Philip as well as Year 4 pupils attending induction days. Moving books are completed so that the new school knows the pupils' interests, and the records of achievement are also forwarded.
25. Links with the outside community are very good. Pupils make good use of the local environment, for example visits to Forest School each Thursday, and to the adjacent church. Other visits take place to museums and art galleries further afield, for example, Bath Museum. The school optimises on its proximity to the historic cities of Bath and Wells. There is an overnight residential trip for Years 3 and 4 as part of their study of the Romans, visiting both Bath and Cirencester. The pupils have participated in a Pilgrimage to Wells. Visiting speakers and performers add a valuable dimension to the children's learning experience, for example, a local archaeologist discussed Roman discoveries. Children's support of charities is a regular feature of the school, for example, a 'Blue Peter' sale, which was the pupils' idea and the stall was run by them. Twenty pupils from Years 3 and 4 sang at Great Elm and pupils used to visit a local elderly persons' home to read to the residents. After it closed, pupils continued this link with older members of the community at the mid-week church service where the pupils serve coffee, read and share work with the people attending.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management of the school are very good overall. The headteacher's very good leadership has very successfully influenced the quality of teaching and learning, helping to raise standards. Governance is very good and there is a good partnership with the very successful governing body. These are major factors in raising and maintaining good standards of achievement within a good curriculum. The school successfully overcomes any barriers to achievement. The leadership shown by other key staff is good and the effectiveness of management is very good.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The leadership of the headteacher is very good.
- She provides a sense of vision and strategic direction for development of the school and the very good working relationships between the headteacher and staff is a great strength.
- The governors play a very effective role in leading and managing the school.
- The financial management of the school overall is very good.

## Commentary

26. The leadership, management and governance of the school have improved significantly since the last inspection. In the short time she has been in post, the headteacher has established a clear vision for the school. This successfully focuses on raising pupils' achievements and standards of attainment. The school improvement plan, performance management policy and self-evaluation successfully underpin the consistently improved performance. There is a very clear view among all the staff and governors of the need to ensure children achieve as well as they can.
27. The headteacher and governors have a very strong relationship. Their roles have been improved successfully since the last inspection. They work very closely together to drive developments forward positively. The teachers have been given time to monitor the quality of teaching and learning in those areas where they have subject responsibility.
28. The governors are committed to the school. They use their expertise to benefit the school and its children. Together with the headteacher and staff, they make major contributions to the school development plan that shapes the vision and direction of the school. Governors have a very clear idea of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are given good opportunities to observe teaching and talk with parents and children.
29. The school has made it a priority to introduce assessment systems to track pupils' progress, develop a broad and exciting curriculum, and improve and enhance an excellent range of additional learning activities beyond the subject curriculum. This has successfully motivated pupils so that they want to come to school and learn in a vibrant and stimulating environment.
30. The provision for special educational needs is managed well by the headteacher. All paperwork is kept up to date. Liaison with outside agencies is effective so that they are involved in the provision when required. There are regular meetings with the teaching assistants to enable them to discuss any new initiatives, or concerns about the provision or about individual pupils. The provision fully meets statutory requirements which ensure the children progress as well as they can.
31. There is very good staff development, which helps to improve the quality of teaching. The school is in the process of applying for 'Investors in People' status to support this. The headteacher, with good support from the other teachers, has ensured that children experience a broad and varied curriculum and good quality teaching. Expertise within the school is utilised fully, and staff responsibilities are allocated accordingly. The teaching assistants play a full part in this. Because of the effective teaching, pupils are successful in many subject areas, for instance through learning to play musical instruments or participating in a local music festival. This makes them confident and helps them achieve more in other areas of the curriculum.
32. The governors and headteacher ensure that the budget reflects the school's educational priorities. The school administration of finance is very efficient. There are very successful procedures in place for long-term strategic planning. The finance committee ensures very good financial procedures are in place. The school has decided to enhance the number of teachers in the school by using its funding to ensure all pupils are very well provided for. The current budget surplus is to allow this to continue. The principles of best value are successfully applied to all aspects of the school. This has resulted in good standards of achievement, a good curriculum, good teaching and successful leadership and management. The very effective governance ensures critical analysis of the school's performance. Because of the high standards achieved and effective leadership and management, the school provides good value for money.

## Financial information

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	180,327
Total expenditure	156,962
Expenditure per pupil	2,573

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	12,308
Balance carried forward to the next	35,673

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

### AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision in the Foundation Stage is very good.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of planning for reception children who are in a class with pupils from Year 1 and Year 2 is of high quality.
- Parents are delighted with the quality of teaching.
- Teaching assistants support children's learning effectively.

Currently, there are nine children in the reception class. Numbers vary from year to year as do the standards of attainment on entry to the school. The trend is that standards meet expectations for four-year-olds, although more children are now starting school with weaker skills in the early development of communication, language and literacy. Children are on course to exceed the expectations of the Early Learning Goals in all areas of learning by the end of their time in the reception class. Teaching and learning are very good in all areas of learning, with strengths in the teamwork between the teacher and her two teaching assistants. Planning is of high quality and there is an excellent understanding of how to meet the learning needs of reception children who are in a class with pupils from Year 1 all day and, additionally, from Year 2 in the afternoons. Leadership and management are very good, with strengths in the day-to-day management and organisation of the class. The classroom is exciting and stimulating and motivates children successfully. Parents are fulsome in their praise for the quality of education their children receive in reception.

33. Achievement in **personal, social and emotional development** is **very good**. Children settle very quickly into the day-to-day routines of the school. They benefit from very good support from older pupils, especially at break and lunchtime. Children know their classroom routine and are very confident in choosing their own activities. They show good concentration when working independently, in groups or part of the whole class. Children are very co-operative in helping to tidy up at the end of sessions.
34. Children's achievement in **communication, language and literacy** is **very good**. Children make good progress in early reading and show a good understanding of letter sounds and blends when reading new and unfamiliar words. By the end of reception, most are competent readers and established on the school's reading scheme. Children make good progress in writing. Early on in the year, they write their own names unaided and by the end of the year, most write simple sentences without adult support. Children make good progress in their handwriting and most form letters correctly.
35. In **mathematical development**, children's achievement is **very good**. Children show very good skills in counting, with many successful in counting in tens to 100 both forwards and backwards. They understand how to find 'one more than' and 'one less than', working with numbers to 20. In measuring, children understand 'shorter than' and 'longer than' and successfully compare 'lighter than' and 'heavier than' when using scales.

36. Achievement in **knowledge and understanding of the world** is **very good**. Children have a good understanding of the five senses and use these successfully in exploring the school and school grounds. They know which materials would be suitable to make a window. Children develop a good awareness of other places through the study of the seaside. Awareness of the past is developing through work on the Great Fire of London. Children enjoy using computers and show confidence in the use of the mouse to 'click and drag'.
37. In **physical development**, achievement is **very good**. Children show good skills in cutting, pasting and joining materials together. They are confident in riding large-wheeled toys and show good early skills in throwing and catching, especially bean bags. Children benefit from a good range of small games at lunchtimes and from good opportunities to play with older pupils.
38. Achievement in **creative development** is **very good**. Children particularly enjoy role-play and during the inspection were having immense fun travelling to and from the seaside. With very good support from a teaching assistant, they built sandcastles in the sandpit and prepared a picnic in the 'kitchen', including shell soup which was clearly the 'dish of the day'. Children join in singing in assemblies and sing tunefully and with enthusiasm.

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

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **very good**.

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

- Pupils are enthusiastic readers and imaginative writers.
- Teaching of key skills is very good.
- Pupils make very effective use of literacy skills when working in other subjects.
- Assessment of pupils' learning is very good.
- In Years 3 and 4, standards of handwriting are not high enough and do not do justice to the content.

#### **Commentary**

39. Results of the 2003 national tests for pupils then in Year 2 were well above average in reading and above average in writing. These results showed a significant improvement over the previous year. In the current Year 2, standards are well above average in reading and writing and pupils' achievement is very good. Girls achieve as well as boys which reverses the recent trend of boys outperforming girls. By the end of Year 4, standards in English are well above expectations for nine-year-olds and achievement is very good. Standards have improved significantly since the previous inspection.
40. Standards in speaking and listening are good. In lessons, pupils are confident in asking and answering questions and they articulate their thoughts well. Pupils are willing to enter into conversations with each other and adults. In lessons, they listen attentively to their teachers and follow instructions particularly well. Pupils listen to each other and value the

contribution of their classmates. Very effective use of paired discussion has a positive impact on the very good progress pupils make in speaking and listening.

41. Standards in reading are well above average. Pupils love reading fiction, poetry and for factual information. By Year 2, pupils read fluently and with good expression. By Year 4, pupils show a very good understanding of the plot and characters in stories. They have clear preferences for favourite books and authors. In a lesson in Year 2, pupils were desperate to read the nonsense poems they had written and did so with infectious enthusiasm that left the audience breaking into spontaneous applause.
42. Standards in writing are well above average. In Year 2, pupils show great enjoyment in writing poetry. In a lesson observed, there were so engrossed in writing their nonsense poems that they did not want the lesson to end. Pupils are confident to draft and redraft their ideas. Standards of spelling and punctuation are very good. By Year 4, pupils have built successfully on their previous learning and standards of spelling, punctuation and grammar are very good. Pupils write imaginative stories and poems, with very good use of exciting and imaginative vocabulary. Standards of handwriting in Year 2 are excellent. However, these standards are not maintained in Years 3 and 4 where standards are not high enough.
43. Teaching and learning are very good and have a positive impact on the high standards achieved. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and enthusiasm for teaching the subject and this is reflected in the pupils' very positive attitudes in lessons. Pupils are motivated to work hard and they respond exceptionally well to the very high expectations of them. There are significant strengths in the teaching of key skills in reading, writing and spelling. Through very effective assessment teachers know where pupils are in their learning and build successfully on this. As a result, all pupils make clear gains in knowledge, skills and understanding.
44. Leadership and management are very good and contribute significantly to the high standards achieved. The headteacher in her role as subject leader had developed a significant programme of in-service training, including work with local schools to address previous weaknesses in writing. As a result of these initiatives, there has been a significant improvement in the quality of writing in the school.

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

45. Pupils make very good use of their literacy skills in other subjects. They make good use of reference books and the Internet when researching information. In science, their reports of investigations and experiments are of very high quality, with examples of immaculate presentation especially in Year 2. Pupils use ICT skills successfully, especially word processing to write letters of thanks and to produce their own newspapers.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching in mathematics is good overall.

- Pupils achieve very well in mathematics.
- The school provides a wide and interesting mathematics curriculum.

### **Commentary**

46. Results of the Year 2003 national tests for pupils in Year 2 were well above average. In the current Year 2, standards are well above average, and at the age of nine, they are well above expectations for pupils of this age. Pupils currently achieve very well throughout the school. At the time of the last inspection, standards were average for pupils aged seven and nine. The school has made a very good improvement in provision of the subject. Standards have improved year-on-year as is reflected in the improved, well above average, standards in the 2003 national tests for pupils in Year 2.
47. By Year 2, pupils order numbers up to 1000. They know that the answer for '5x10' is the same as '10x5' and they use this knowledge to solve problems. They know about symmetry and how to interpret data in graphs. They make very good progress by the end of Year 2.
48. Pupils in Year 3 and 4 are taught together. Despite the wide range of ability, all undertake addition and subtraction with numbers above 1000. They use inverse operations and understand that '6\*4' is the inverse of '24/4'. The pupils make very good progress across the school. They have the opportunity to use mathematics in a range of real contexts, for example they have planned a party and worked out the costs of the food.
49. The teaching of mathematics is good overall with some very good teaching and has a significant impact on standards achieved. The current staff deliver the subject well. They have good subject knowledge and the National Numeracy Strategy is well integrated into their teaching. Teachers have very good relationships with the pupils and use appropriate strategies to help them learn. Pupils have the chance to explain and demonstrate their mathematical strategies to the rest of the class. Their work is assessed regularly and they undertake the statutory tests in Years 2 and optional tests in Years 3 and 4. Where classroom assistants or other helpers are used, they are well briefed to support the groups they are working with. In the best lessons, the pace is good and pupils' interest is maintained. Work is matched carefully to the individual needs of the pupils which contribute to good achievement by all pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress in the subject.
50. Good opportunities to let pupils apply mathematics to real life situations and undertake investigations are used well. When time permits, teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to use ICT within mathematics lessons. Because of the good quality of the teaching, pupils learn well.
51. Pupils' attitudes to mathematics are good across the school. They enjoy lessons and sustain concentration very well. Teachers know their pupils well and make every effort to keep them interested. Very good behaviour is maintained throughout. Pupils are all included in mathematics lessons and none get preferential treatment. Although there are differences in test results between boys and girls, there was no evidence of different treatment or rates of learning during the inspection.
52. The subject is effectively led and managed. The co-ordinator has only recently been appointed but is enthusiastic and has the vision to take the subject forward. She has had



useful opportunities to monitor lessons and pupils' work in the subject. She is aware of the range of resources available. A clear subject policy and detailed scheme of work are in place. All the teachers in the school are sufficiently confident to deliver the National Numeracy Strategy well. They assess pupils' work appropriately.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

53. There is effective use of mathematics within other curriculum areas, particularly ICT, science, design and technology and geography. In one good ICT lesson, pupils were handling data when looking at different kinds of houses. They used successfully the data from this to create simple graphs. In other lessons, they learn about directions by programming an on-screen 'robot' to follow a planned route, including left- and right-angled turns.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' skills in investigative and experimental work are very good.
- Pupils make very good use of literacy and numeracy skills in recording results of experiments.
- Teachers have very good subject knowledge and motivate pupils to enjoy science.

### **Commentary**

54. By the end of Year 2, standards are well above average and pupils' achievement is very good. The school is maintaining the high standards shown in the teacher assessments made in 2003 at the end of Year 2. By the end of Year 4, standards are well above average for nine-year-olds and achievement is very good. Standards have improved significantly since the previous inspection.
55. Pupils enjoy science and work hard in lessons. The quality of their recording of the results of experiments and investigations is impressive. In Year 2, pupils have a very good understanding of the life-cycles of plants and animals. Very effective use is made of the school environment to study plants and creatures to be found there. In Year 2, pupils show good skills in investigating, including predicting successfully whether an electric circuit will light a bulb or not. In Year 4, there are strengths in pupils' experimental work and the successful application of literacy and numeracy skills in recording results. Measuring skills are accurate and the presentation of tables and charts is of very high quality. Pupils show a good understanding of materials and their properties, including the differences between solids, liquids and gases.
56. Teaching is very good and has a positive impact on the high standards achieved. Teachers have very good subject knowledge which they pass on to pupils with interest and enthusiasm. Lessons are exciting with a strong focus on experimental and investigative work. As a result, pupils are enthusiastic and motivated learners. A strength of the teaching is that pupils are given time to answer questions and to explain their scientific thinking. In addition, teachers make effective use of those pupils who have a very good knowledge of and enthusiasm for the subject that they bring with them into school.

57. Leadership and management are good and have a positive impact on the standards achieved. The subject leader, who is a part-time member of staff, is enthusiastic and hard working. Her own teaching is a good role model for her colleagues. She has monitored teaching and learning and carried out a thorough audit of the subject. As a result, she has identified the need for the next area of focus to be in developing pupils' thinking skills and assessment in the subject. There are effective links with other local schools in developing joint initiatives to develop science, including the use of assessment.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in ICT is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Staff use ICT well to support teaching.
- ICT is used well to support other aspects of the curriculum.

### **Commentary**

58. The last inspection found that standards in ICT for pupils aged seven and nine were in line with national expectations. Standards are still in line with national expectations and this represents satisfactory progress in developing the subject. A broad programme of study is in place which supports standards across the school. It is planned in the near future to install new projection facilities and an interactive whiteboard in the Years 3 and 4 classroom. These will allow classes to be taught more easily because teachers' demonstrations will be easily seen on the large screen. In some cases, classes are split to enable teaching in small groups.
59. By the age of seven, most children confidently log into the computers, load software and use a good range of programs. In one class, the pupils were learning about how machines can be controlled. They looked at a range of machines and the kinds of controls they had. They then went on to look at a range of electronic toys to see how they could be controlled. By the age of nine, they successfully use a word processing program, modifying and editing text as they wish. They know how to access information from the Internet or a computer based encyclopaedia. Pupils enter data into a database and search for information. They create imaginative pictures and add text to pictures they have created.
60. Teaching is good. The teachers use ICT well to teach other subjects. In one case, the teacher went through a story on the computer to show how it could be edited before going back into the class to undertake other work in a literacy lesson. In those lessons using ICT, pupils learn well because of the good teaching. Teachers have good relationships with their pupils, know the programs they are teaching and use good teaching strategies. All pupils are well included in lessons and achieve appropriately. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because they are well supported.
61. Leadership and management are satisfactory. A capable subject leader has been recently appointed. She has a vision for the subject and the desire to succeed. There is a clear subject policy and detailed scheme of work to help guide teachers. She has had

the opportunity to monitor lessons, teachers' planning and pupils' work. Teachers have been trained and this has helped to raise confidence levels and skills. A new assessment scheme has been introduced but is still in the early stages of implementation. The school is adequately resourced in this area and has a good range of software to deliver the curriculum. However, some computers are becoming old and will shortly need to be replaced.

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

62. There is effective use of ICT across the curriculum. Pupils have good opportunities to use the technology in lessons, such as art, design and technology and numeracy. In one lesson, pupils were using ICT effectively to investigate direction as a part of a mathematics lesson. Work from other subjects is used well in ICT lessons. In one case, pupils were searching for scientific information during a lesson on using the Internet. Teachers use the Internet to find materials to support their teaching. In one case, an effective assembly was illustrated with a picture of well-dressing found from a web site. There were no cases seen of ICT being used specifically to support pupils with special educational needs.

### **HUMANITIES**

63. Religious education was inspected separately on behalf of the governing body by an inspector from the Diocese of Bath and Wells. No lessons were observed in geography and history, so pupils' work was sampled in these subjects.
64. In **geography**, pupils in Year 4 have a good understanding of their village. They draw accurate and detailed maps, using keys to identify key features. These maps are based on aerial photographs which the pupils study and use. Very good use is made of literacy and ICT skills to write geographical accounts, including factual information on the village pubs, main streets and the school itself.
65. In **history**, pupils in Year 2 have a good understanding of the causes of the Great Fire of London. They use their literacy skills successfully in sequencing the events that happened. In Year 4, pupils show a good understanding of schools in the Victorian era. They benefit from firsthand experience of visiting a museum with a Victorian schoolroom. Pupils make good use of literacy and ICT skills when they write letters explaining the benefits of schooling to parents of children who were not attending school, such as chimney sweeps. In Year 4, pupils have a very good understanding of life in Ancient Egypt and benefited from working with the media department of Frome Community College to make and present their own video production on the topic.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

66. Insufficient lessons were seen in order to make secure judgements about provision in art and design, design and technology, music and physical education.
67. In **art and design**, by the age of nine, most children can enthusiastically create effective images. In the work on display, pupils have created subtle images. They know about the impressionist style of painting and use the lack of precision to make effective pictures. All pupils achieve well in the subject, including those with special educational needs.
68. Art is used effectively for display across the school and as a medium for exploring other subjects. In science, they had undertaken life drawing of spring flowers and the life-cycle of a caterpillar. The school has a subject policy and scheme of work.
69. In **design and technology**, by the age of nine, most children can enthusiastically create effective artefacts. In the work on display, pupils have created puppets and bags using textiles. They know about how to design models, create lists of materials and evaluate their work. In some cases, ICT was used to create designs. All pupils achieve well in the subject, including those with special educational needs.
70. Design and technology is used well to link with other subjects. Pupils measure materials, they use electrical circuits when making torches, and pneumatic systems to make moving models. The school has a good subject policy and detailed scheme of work.
71. In **music**, by the age of nine, most children can sing enthusiastically and can read aspects of music notation. They enjoy music lessons and behave well. The one lesson seen had been planned well and the member of staff taking it had good relationships with the pupils. The pupils were putting together a piece consisting of a song and several short compositions. They had successfully learned the song and could sing well and in tune whilst clapping a rhythm. They then worked in small groups to compose short sets of sounds to illustrate the story and were working well at this. Their listening and appraisal skills were good.
72. Pupils have the opportunity to learn instruments at the school, including recorders and piano. They go out to perform in festivals with other schools. They enjoy music from other cultures such as flamenco and samba as a part of the rich curriculum offered.
73. No lessons were observed in **physical education**. However, evidence from teachers' planning shows that pupils receive their full entitlement to the requirements of the National Curriculum. All pupils are taught swimming and have regular lessons on a Friday. The school hall is adequate for the teaching of gymnastics and dance and there is a good range of resources to support teaching and learning. Pupils benefit from a good range of extra-curricular activities, including cricket, tennis, football and 'A Taste of Sport'.

## PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

74. An appropriate scheme for **PSHE** is in place and covers all statutory requirements. Education about drugs misuse, sex and relationships is undertaken. Topics included are avoiding bullying, racism, moods and knowing myself. Some pupils have looked at aspects of government and democracy, healthy living and fair trade. Circle Time is used to develop pupils' self-esteem and ensure they all have the opportunity to talk and explain their feelings. In addition to learning through PSHE lessons, pupils' views and aspirations are considered and fed into the school improvement plan by the headteacher.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	3
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>2</b>
Pupils' achievement	2
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	4
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	1
Accommodation and resources	2
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
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>2</b>
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	2

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

