

## **INSPECTION REPORT**

### **ST. ALDHELM'S C of E VC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Shepton Mallet

LEA area: Somerset

Unique reference number: 123753

Headteacher: Mr Roger Whitewick

Lead inspector: Mrs Joyce Cox

Dates of inspection: 15<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> March 2004

Inspection number: 257553

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school: Primary  
School category: Voluntary controlled  
Age range of pupils: 4-11  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll: 183

School address: Chelynch Park  
Doulting  
Somerset

Postcode: BA4 4PL

Telephone number: 01749 880376

Fax number: 01749 880166

Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs Janice Minchin

Date of previous inspection: March 23<sup>rd</sup> 1998

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

St. Aldhelm's is a Church of England voluntary controlled school, which serves the village of Doulting, and the surrounding villages. A minority of the pupils come from the village but most pupils come from the nearby town of Shepton Mallet. The school is smaller than other primary schools and has six classes. Reception and infant pupils are taught in separate classes but juniors have to be taught in mixed year groups. It is a very popular school and is over subscribed in some year groups resulting in large classes in the juniors and crowded accommodation. The number of pupils entitled to free schools meals is in line with the national average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is below the national average and no pupil has a Statement of Special Education Need. Almost all the pupils are of white ethnic heritage and no pupil is at an early stage of learning English. The children's attainment on entry to the school is similar to that of others of their age.

The school has received several awards including Silver Artsmark and Basic Skills Quality Mark in 2001 and Investors in People Status in 2002. In 2000 the school was awarded a School Achievement Award for improved results in national tests.

The school hall is shared with the village community.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
25074	Joyce Cox	Lead inspector	English Science Geography English as an additional language Special educational needs
9880	Tony Comer	Lay inspector	
25461	Joan Walker	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology History Music
31334	Barbara Atcheson	Team inspector	Foundation Stage <sup>1</sup> Mathematics Religious education

The inspection contractor was:

Altecq Education  
102 Bath Road  
Cheltenham  
Gloucestershire  
GL53 7JX

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<sup>1</sup> The Foundation Stage begins when children reach the age of three and ends at the end of the reception class. It is a distinct stage in preparing children for later schooling and is based on six areas of learning. These mainly refer to communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; and personal, social and emotional development, but also includes knowledge and understanding of the world; physical and creative development.

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

The school provides a **good** quality of education within a warm and very caring Christian ethos. It succeeds in including every pupil in all aspects of school life. Pupils' achievement is good overall and is often very good in reception and in the Year 5/6 class. Standards are above average in speaking, listening, reading, writing, mathematics, and information and communication technology by the end of Year 2. Year 6 pupils attain above average standards in speaking and listening and information and communication technology. The headteacher is a very good leader. Teaching is good throughout the school being particularly strong in reception and in the Year 5/6 class. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher provides very good leadership and has succeeded in creating a cohesive, hard working staff team who are all very committed to future improvements.
- Pupils' overall standards of attainment are above average at the end of Year 2.
- Very good support for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development ensures that pupils have very good attitudes to learning, enjoy lessons and behave well.
- The quality of teaching is good and as a result pupils' achievement is good.
- The school's very good self-evaluation strategies have identified a 'learning gap' in Years 3 and 4 and it has taken good steps to address this.
- The cramped accommodation in some classrooms makes practical activities difficult.
- Pupils' attainment and achievement in science could be higher.
- There is good provision for children in the Foundation Stage.
- Although the programme for personal, social and health education (PSHE) is good it is not yet planned for systematically in all subjects.

The school has made good improvement since the previous inspection. All the areas identified for improvement in the previous report have been tackled effectively. For example, standards and achievement in mathematics have improved considerably. Skilful and sensitive leadership by the headteacher after the previous inspection united the staff and focussed the school on the correct range of measures to move forward.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

#### Year 6 results

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	All schools			Similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	C	B	C	C
Mathematics	C	C	B	B
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.

The pupils' achievement is **good**. Reception children achieve well and are on course to attain all the Early Learning Goals<sup>2</sup> by the time they enter Year 1. Many children attain above the expected level in their personal and social development and in their mathematical and physical skills. Infant pupils' achievement is good and Year 2 pupils attain above average standards in speaking, listening, reading, writing, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT). They attain average standards in science. In 2003 Year 6 pupils' attainment in national tests was average in

<sup>2</sup> These are expectations for most children to reach by the end of the foundation stage. They refer mainly to achievements children make in connection with communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; and personal, social and emotional development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical and creative development.

English, above average in mathematics and below average in science. Year 6 pupils' attainment was not so high in science as in English and mathematics because of insufficient coverage of the whole curriculum due to the 'learning gap' in Years 3 and 4 resulting in fewer pupils achieving the higher Level 5.

The current Year 6 pupils achieve well in many subjects as a result of consistently good or better teaching. Pupils attain above average standards in speaking, listening and ICT and average standards in mathematics. Standards in reading, writing and science are average and one of the school's priorities is to continue to raise standards in these subjects. There is no noticeable difference between the attainment of boys and girls, although the school is monitoring the attainment of the junior boys in English who appear to be performing slightly below the national average in tests. The school has also put in place strategies to raise attainment and achievement in science and results in national tests have been rising steadily since 2001. Pupils with special educational needs and those from other minority ethnic groups achieve as well as other pupils because of the good support they receive from all staff.

The school makes **very good** provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, which ensures that pupils have very good attitudes, and behave well. Attendance is well above the national average.

### **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The school provides a **good** quality of education. Teaching is **good** as is pupils' learning. Pupils like and respect their teachers and persevere well even when they find the work hard. In the reception and Year 5/6 class teaching is always at least good and often very good. Assessment is good and teachers use assessment information well to challenge all pupils, apart from the higher attaining pupils in science. The curriculum is good and there is very good provision for enrichment activities such as music, drama and sports. Pupils receive very good support, advice and guidance. There are good links with parents and very good links with the community and other schools.

### **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are **good**. The headteacher is a very good leader. He skilfully enables all staff to feel involved in school development and provides a very clear steer for improvement. Management is good. Subject co-ordinators are very committed and enthusiastic and work hard to raise pupils' standards and achievement. School funds are targeted where they are most needed and the headteacher, school secretary and the governing body monitor spending carefully. Governance is good and governors have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The chair of the governing body is a very experienced governor and makes a significant personal contribution to the work of the school.

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

Parents are very happy with the quality of education and care which the school provides. They particularly like the headteacher and feel that he has very high expectations and sets high standards for the whole school community. They justifiably have concerns about the large class sizes and the cramped accommodation and would like to secure a seventh classroom so that pupils can be taught in separate year groups.

Pupils are very happy to be at the school, saying that they have lots of friends and enjoy using the large outdoor play equipment. They like all the staff and say that their lessons are interesting and fun. Year 6 pupils enjoy the many responsibilities they have in school and appreciate their 'funny, friendly headteacher.'

### **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Improve the cramped accommodation so that pupils can carry out practical work more easily.
- Raise pupils' attainment and achievement in science.
- Implement the PSHE programme as identified in the school development plan.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

Pupils attain above average standards at the end of Year 2 and average standards at the end of Year 6. Pupils' achievement is **good** throughout the school.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average in speaking, listening and ICT by the end of Year 6.
- Year 2 pupils attain above average standards in speaking, listening, reading, writing and mathematics.
- Achievement is now much more consistent across the school.
- Pupils' achievement is good in English, mathematics and ICT throughout the school.
- Standards have improved in mathematics since the previous inspection.
- Higher attaining pupils achieve well in English and mathematics but could be challenged further in science in some classes.

#### Commentary

##### Foundation Stage

1. The attainment of the reception children on entry to the school is above that of other four year olds in communication, language and literacy and similar to that of other four year olds in their mathematical, personal, social, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development. Children's achievement is good overall and they attain the expected levels for their age on entry to Year 1. Many children exceed the expected level in their mathematical, personal, social and physical skills as a result of very good teaching in these areas.

##### Key Stage 1

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	17.5 (16.8)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	15.6 (13.3)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	17.7 (17.0)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 25 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. In national tests in 2003 Year 2 pupils attained well above average scores in reading and mathematics and above average results in writing, indicating good achievement from when they started in the reception class. Pupils' results in national tests have been rising steadily since 1999. This improvement is particularly evident in mathematics and is due to good leadership by the co-ordinator and very good teaching in both the Year 1 and Year 2 classes.
3. The achievement of the current Year 2 pupils is good and they attain above average standards in reading, speaking and listening, writing, mathematics and ICT. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in science, as higher attaining pupils are not always sufficiently challenged in some science lessons. Standards are average in science, religious education and physical education.

## Key Stage 2

4. In national tests in 2003 Year 6 pupils attained average scores in English, above average scores in mathematics and below average scores in science. Pupils did not achieve as well in science in 2003 because few pupils attained the higher Level 5 as higher attaining pupils are not challenged sufficiently and the 'learning gap' in Years 3 and 4 meant that pupils missed vital parts of the science curriculum. The attainment of the current Year 6 is similar to that of the results of the 2003 pupils apart from mathematics where pupils' attainment is average. Year 6 pupils' achievement is good in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology as higher attaining pupils are challenged and attain above the expected Level 4. Year 3, 4 and 5 pupils could be challenged further in science. Teachers' planning indicates that work is planned to meet the needs of higher attainers but this does not always happen in reality. Year 6 pupils achieve well in many subjects because of the good and often very good teaching they receive.
5. The school's very good self-evaluation strategies have identified a 'learning gap' in Years 3 and 4. In 2003 the school successfully implemented good measures to improve this. Effective tracking of pupils' achievement by the school demonstrated that pupils made good progress in the reception and infant classes but unsatisfactory progress in the lower juniors. The very good teaching in the Year 5/6 class accelerated pupils' attainment and achievement but could not compensate entirely for certain crucial gaps in pupils' learning and hence the lower results in national tests when compared to the well above average results in Year 2. Changes of staff and improved planning, together with considerably improved subject leadership by co-ordinators and rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning has begun to improve the 'learning gap.' The 'green shoots' of improvement were very evident in lesson observations and in work sampling during the inspection.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.8 (28.2)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	27.8 (27.2)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	28.0 (27.7)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 29 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

6. The school has made good progress in improving standards in mathematics since the previous inspection. Improved leadership, planning, monitoring, resources and staff training have ensured that all elements of the mathematics curriculum are fully covered. Higher attaining pupils are now effectively challenged in this subject.
7. Pupils with special educational need achieve as well as their classmates and attain standards that are high for their capability. This is the result of the good level of support they receive in the classroom from teachers and learning support workers. The very cramped accommodation means that there are limited opportunities for pupils to be taught in small groups outside the classroom.
8. Higher attaining pupils achieve well in many subjects, apart from science, as they are identified in teachers' planning and work is skilfully matched to their ability. The school has compiled a register of higher attainers and provides good additional opportunities designed to extend their learning. For instance, the headteacher leads a reading discussion group where more able Year 6 pupils can discuss specific authors and novels in depth.

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

Pupils have **very good** attitudes to work. Their behaviour is **good**. The school makes **very good** provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Attendance is **very good** and punctuality is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children in the Foundation Stage settle well into school routines and learn to work and play together.
- The school stimulates a desire to learn in pupils and their interest in school life is very good.
- Relationships are very good.
- Pupils are very keen to come to school and their attendance records in the current year are very good.

### **Commentary**

9. Children in reception respond enthusiastically to the rich variety of learning opportunities planned for them. All adults are very good role models who consistently project positive attitudes, foster very good relationships and support mutual respect. As a result, children are self assured and confident as they come into school at the beginning of each session. Parents agree that pupils are very happy and respectful in school. They feel that standards of behaviour are good and that pupils are treated in a very mature way by staff.
10. Pupils are really pleased to come to school because they feel valued and secure. At playtime, pupils play well together. Older pupils encourage younger ones, who are either reluctant or shy, to join in. Lessons are interesting and teachers and support staff are enthusiastic and encouraging. Because pupils have such a good attitude to learning, they are capable of responding positively to self-chosen challenges when given a free choice. They sustain concentration because activities are interesting and they feel settled and secure and confident to attempt new learning. The school council is very new but pupils are already playing an active part in the life of the school. They have put up mirrors in the boys' toilets and plan to buy a 'friendship stop' for the playground.
11. Behaviour in and around school is good. There have been no exclusions in the last four years. Staff have high expectations of the conduct they expect. Pupils come into school in an orderly way. They hold doors open for each other and say 'please' and 'thank-you'. Pupils are enthusiastic and keen to involve themselves in the wide range of extra-curricular activities. The school actively promotes positive behaviour and has a whole school approach to cultural diversity, designing a curriculum to promote positive attitudes to ethnic differences. Pupils say that school is a friendly place and that there is no bullying. If someone is unkind to them pupils know that they can go to an adult and that something is done about it.
12. Teachers and support staff value pupils' ideas and encourage them to develop feelings of self worth. Very good planning supports pupils as they develop values and beliefs, providing them with opportunities which foster curiosity and build on interesting experiences. The highly effective role models of the staff support children as they develop a moral awareness and begin to take full responsibility for themselves and their own actions. The school promotes the Christian way of life. Pupils know that they will be treated fairly and learn to treat others in a similar way. Relationships between all members of the school community are very good. Pupils like and trust their teachers and are confident in asking for help if they need it. Teachers are highly effective in enabling pupils to learn how to treat other pupils. A very good example was seen in a Year 1 physical education lesson where one pupil complained that another would not share. When the teacher questioned her about what she said about the pupil concerned she said 'He's not a good partner, we must let others have a turn'.
13. Provision for pupils' cultural development has improved considerably since the previous inspection. As the majority of the pupils come from a White-British background the school has

worked hard to make sure that pupils have a raised awareness of the multicultural world around them. 'Difference' assemblies celebrate cultural diversity. Pupils study black authors such as Benjamin Zephaniah. A Senegalese drummer provided a two-day workshop for pupils so that they could experience the music and culture of another country first hand.

## Attendance

14. Attendance has been maintained at well above the national median since the previous inspection. There are effective monitoring procedures in place and parents and carers ensure the regular attendance of their children. Pupils' punctuality is good and lessons begin on time.

### Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 2002/3

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	4.1	School data:	0.3
National data:	5.4	National data:	0.4

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

## Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll
White – British	181
Black or Black British - African	1
Chinese	1

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a **good** quality of education. Teaching is **good**. In the reception and Year 5/6 class teaching is always at least good and often very good. Assessment is good and teachers use assessment information well to challenge all pupils apart from the higher attaining pupils in science. The curriculum is **good** and there is **very good** provision for enrichment activities such as music, drama and sports. Pupils receive very good support, advice and guidance. There are **good** links with parents and **very good** links with the community and other schools.

## Teaching and learning

The school has succeeded in maintaining the **good** quality of teaching seen during the previous inspection, which ensures that pupils' learning is **good**. Assessment is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have very good relationships with pupils and high expectations for pupils' behaviour.
- The Year 5/6 teachers are skilled at providing challenging work for all pupils.
- Teachers are aware of pupils' different learning styles and use a good variety of highly effective teaching techniques to meet different learning needs.
- Older pupils are very involved in their own learning and understand exactly what they need to do to improve their work.
- There is insufficient focus on specific scientific vocabulary and higher attaining pupils are not always sufficiently challenged in some science lessons.
- Assessment procedures are used effectively to inform planning, track pupils' progress and to challenge all pupils, apart from the higher attaining pupils in science.

- In a small number of lessons the pace is too slow.

## Commentary

15. Improved and permanent leadership and management following the previous inspection initiated a re-assessment of the curriculum and teachers' planning and teaching styles. Lesson delivery and planning have improved considerably since the 1998 inspection as a result of all teachers critically examining their teaching and the way in which pupils learn and strive to improve. Regular and effective monitoring by the headteacher, senior managers, subject co-ordinators and the local authority advisory team has also improved the quality of teaching.
16. Teaching in the reception class is consistently good or better in all the areas of learning. The teacher has a very good understanding of the way in which young children learn and together with a talented learning support assistant plans interesting and exciting activities such as following a set of clues to locate the 'Gingerbread Boy.' As a result children are very happy, settled and achieve well in their first year at school. Reception staff have very good relationships and manage children's behaviour very well. They keep detailed assessments of children's attainment and achievement.
17. Although overall teaching is good, a significant number of lessons have very good features and are leading to very good learning and achievement by pupils. Teaching is consistently good in English. A particular strength is the way in which teachers maintain pupils' interest by skilful questioning. Infant and junior pupils are frequently encouraged to discuss their learning and to refer to specific vocabulary in texts to justify their opinions. This ensures that pupils are involved and interested in lessons, and work well together. Junior pupils are taught literacy in year groups, which ensures that good use is made of the headteacher's considerable expertise in teaching English to Year 6. As a result pupil's attainment and achievement is increased as junior teachers can focus on one single year group instead of two.
18. Teachers and learning support assistants have very good relationships with pupils and their high expectations for pupils' behaviour ensures that pupils have very good attitudes to learning, enjoy their work and apply themselves well. Learning support assistants who are well trained and experienced make an invaluable contribution to pupils' learning. They are very effective in supporting pupils with special education needs as they rephrase and simplify teachers' instructions to ensure pupils understand what they have to do. A particular strength is the way in which older pupils are aware of how they are achieving and what they need to do to improve their work. This is due to the high quality of Year 5/6 teachers' marking, which is not always as evident in other junior classes. In a small number of lessons, teachers' pace was not brisk enough. For example, in physical education an over long introduction and slow pace meant that pupils only had a very short period of time to actually be involved in physical exercise.
19. In the Year 5/6 class teaching is consistently good and in several lessons it was very good, clearly raising pupils' attainment and achievement. Pupils benefit from having two lively, challenging teachers who have very good subject knowledge, high expectations of pupils' behaviour and interesting techniques that engage and inspire the pupils. For instance, in a science lesson Year 5/6 pupils were challenged to devise their own experiments, recording techniques and presentation styles. In other year groups, teachers' planning clearly identifies what pupils of different abilities are to learn but in reality this does not happen and higher attaining pupils do not achieve as well as they might. Specific scientific vocabulary is not always clearly defined so pupils are unclear as to exactly what terms such as 'evaporation' actually mean, which impairs their achievement.
20. There is good teaching of pupils with special educational needs. All teachers plan work, which matches pupils' varying ability and learning support assistants provide sensitive and unobtrusive support in classes. Pupils have clear, specific targets to achieve, which are used in planning work. Older junior pupils are very involved in writing and assessing their progress towards the targets on their individual education plans.

21. The school has good procedures for gathering, collating and analysing data about how well pupils are doing. This information is used to create targets for pupils to work towards and to assist teachers in their future planning for pupils' individual needs. As a result older pupils are very aware of exactly what they need to do to improve their work. Class profiles give a clear picture of ability levels for each pupil and also help teachers to plan for the needs of all pupils. Pupils' work is regularly scrutinised by the subject co-ordinators and feedback is given to individual teachers so that they can plan even more effectively for pupils' various learning needs. Teachers' marking is inconsistent. All teachers provide encouragement and support when marking pupils' work but not all teachers comment exactly how pupils can improve their work.

#### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 29 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	9	14	5	0	0	0

#### The curriculum

The school provides its pupils with a **good**, interesting and fully inclusive curriculum. Opportunities for enrichment are very **good**. The **satisfactory** accommodation and **good** resources meet the needs of the curriculum.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a very good range of activities for learning beyond the school day.
- Participation in the arts is very good.
- Cramped accommodation impinges on practical activities and small group work.
- There is no formal scheme of work for the teaching of personal, social and health education and citizenship

#### Commentary

22. The curriculum is well planned and provides a good range of interesting activities for all groups of pupils. It meets statutory requirements including provision for religious education and collective worship. Improvement since the previous inspection is good and the national strategies for literacy and numeracy are effectively implemented. Whilst the school provides effective personal, social and health education including sex, alcohol and drugs misuse, there is no scheme of work. This has been clearly identified by the school and appropriate action is being taken to plan for pupils' future learning. A fully inclusive curriculum ensures good equality of access for all pupils. For example, the deployment of learning support assistants is planned to support areas that will be of maximum benefit to the pupils. The curriculum is planned to promote positive attitudes to ethnic differences.
23. The curriculum is enriched very effectively by theme weeks, which cover topics such as Somerset and the wider multi-cultural world, which has a very good impact on pupils' cultural development. The school has a strong link with the arts and holds the Silver Artsmark. French is taught throughout the school and the school takes part in many collaborative projects with professional artists such as the author David Orme. There is a wide range of after school clubs, which cater for all groups of pupils including the 'Higher Attaining Enrichment' afternoons, which enable higher attainers from all year groups to work with others across a range of subjects. The school effectively promotes participation in a wide variety of sports at all levels from the Mendip Olympics to inter-school tournaments. The curriculum is further enriched by, a very good number and range of visits to art galleries, museums and theatre productions. Many visitors come to the school to discuss their experiences and adventures with the pupils. For instance, one of the local parishioners talked to Year 2 pupils about her

Christian beliefs. Pupils were very interested and involved and maturely expressed their opinions about God and Jesus.

24. Overall the accommodation is satisfactory. There is a small computer suite, which enables groups of pupils to practise their skills effectively. There is good outdoor space with a large field and an exciting play area complete with wooden galleon, a brightly coloured large pencil maze and a wooded area. However, two classes are housed in small, dilapidated temporary classrooms. This is not conducive to providing a rich learning environment. It is also difficult for teachers to teach practical activities to large mixed junior classes in such confined areas. Classrooms in the main school are small making practical subjects such as science and design and technology difficult. Intervention programmes to further raise standards have not been restricted because there are no small group rooms or activity area where these can take place. As the library is housed in the main thoroughfare of the school it does not encourage study skills. Time is lost whilst pupils get out and put back furniture and apparatus in the community room and the hall. Resources successfully meet the needs of both the pupils and the curriculum and in ICT, English and mathematics resources are good.

### Care, guidance and support

The school's procedures to ensure that pupils are cared for and protected are **very good**. The support, advice and guidance that pupils receive about their achievements and their personal development are **good**. The school's arrangements to involve pupils in its work and development are **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is a very caring environment.
- Pupils are involved in all aspects of school life.
- Pupils have trusting relationships with adults in the school.
- The school has a very good induction programme for children in reception.

### Commentary

25. The school provides a happy environment that is conducive to learning. Adults get along well with each other and pupils benefit from the good team spirit among staff that is so evident. Pupils feel safe and settled when they work and play. Policies and procedures for child protection and for promoting the general welfare of pupils are now fully in place and are very effective. These have improved since the previous inspection. All pupils have trusting relationships with one or more adults in the school. Teachers and support staff know pupils and their families well and cater for their needs. They provide very good role models for the pupils. This very good provision ensures that pupils' achievement is good and that they enjoy their primary education.
26. The advice, support and guidance that pupils receive throughout their time at school are good ensuring that they feel valued and achieve well. Pupils say that their teachers always find time to talk to them and to listen to their concerns. However, the assessment and recording of pupils' personal, social and health education are still informal.
27. Parents appreciate the very good induction arrangements for the youngest children. Effective communication with pre-school providers enables staff to get to know the children before they start. In addition there are weekly meetings for parents and pre-school children in the hall in the summer term before they start school. These sessions provide parents with important information, such as the school's approach to teaching literacy and numeracy. Children also take home an activity pack and book each week, which very effectively begins the home/school partnership.

28. There are very good arrangements to involve pupils in the work of the school. The recently formed school council meets regularly and represents the views of all pupils. Older pupils have a very good understanding of their attainment and achievement and are consulted when setting new targets in literacy and numeracy. Pupils with special educational needs make valuable contributions to the annual reviews of their individual education plans. Pupils are confident to express their views and suggestions because they know that they will always be listened to and that their ideas are taken seriously, for example, buying additional fruit trees to improve the outdoor area. Pupils' opinions are sought and acted upon when compiling the school improvement plan. Year 6 pupils appreciate being consulted and say they feel that they are 'treated as adults and not talked down to.'

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

There are **good** links with parents and **very good** links with the community and other schools and colleges.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents have very positive opinions of the school.
- Pupils' experiences are enriched by very good links with the local community.
- The school has very good links with other schools, which ensures that teachers can share expertise and resources.

### **Commentary**

29. The parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire (33 per cent) or who attended the parents' meeting (14) have very positive views of what the school provides and achieves. The inspection evidence supports these views and also agrees with the concerns of some parents about class sizes and the classroom accommodation.
30. The school encourages parents to become involved in the life of the school and in their children's education. Parents are consulted about the School Improvement Plan, a good number of parents help out in the classroom and attend the 'achievement assemblies', and the Friends of St Aldhelm's association is very supportive. There is also very conscientious group of parent governors.
31. The information that parents receive, through meetings, newsletters, notice boards and reports, is of good quality. The very informative weekly newsletters are a good example of how home school communication has improved since the previous inspection. Parents say that any concerns they may have are dealt with very quickly and they feel very involved in all aspects of the school's work. Pupil reports now give good information about pupils' progress, attainment and personal development, but there is little evidence of the setting of targets or the inclusion of strategies for improvement. Homework diaries provide an effective means of two-way communication between home and school.
32. There are strong links with the local parish and the school enthusiastically participates in many aspects of village life, including the Doultong Show, which enhances pupils' personal and social development. There are also effective links with the National Association of Decorative and Fine Arts Societies and pupils' attainment and achievement in art is improved considerably as a result of this connection. Links with other local schools, primarily although not exclusively through the Shepton Mallet Community Learning Partnership, are effective and benefit both pupils and teachers. Pupils are very well prepared for the move to secondary education. Year 6 pupils make several visits to their new schools and secondary staff visit the school. Parents receive good quality information to enable them to select which secondary school their child will attend.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **good**. The quality of leadership by the headteacher is **very good**. The management and leadership of other key staff are **good**. The governance of the school is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The extremely clear vision and high aspirations of the headteacher.
- The school has identified a 'learning gap' in Years 3 and 4 and has taken good steps to improve this.
- The governors' understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement is very good.
- The school's self-evaluation of its performance is very good.
- The procedures for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning by the headteacher are very good.

### Commentary

33. The headteacher has a strongly principled vision for the future of the school that is firmly focused on improving standards in teaching, learning and pupils' achievement. He is a very good leader and skilfully enables all staff to feel involved in whole school management. The deputy head is very supportive of the headteacher and believes the whole team management approach of the school works very well. The inspection team supports this view. The effectiveness of this work can be seen in the recent improved National Curriculum test results at Key Stage 1, and in pupils' very good attitudes and good behaviour. The school's aims are clearly reflected in all school activities. One of the most effective strategies employed to raise standards has been the rigorous analysis of test results to determine pupils' strengths and weaknesses. From this, individual targets are set and work is well matched to meet pupils' individual needs and raise their achievement. The exception to this is science where higher attaining pupils are not challenged sufficiently in some classes. Another good effect of the school's very good procedures for self-evaluation is the realisation that there was a 'learning gap' in Years 3 and 4. The school made staff changes and monitored very carefully the curriculum coverage, planning of lessons, teaching and learning for pupils within these year groups to ensure improved achievement. The 'green shoots' of improvement were very evident in lesson observations and in work sampling during the inspection. Standards and pupils' achievement are definitely rising because of the successful improvement strategies.
34. The management structures of the school are good, which means that the leadership's strategic vision is successfully implemented. Good management has a positive effect on achievement because it is focused on detailed analysis of pupils' performance and the tracking of pupils' progress over time. Subject managers have much to offer to the strategic management of the school with their clear focus on pupils' achievement and high standards. The headteacher ensures there is regular monitoring of teaching and learning throughout the school. This has led to improved teaching and raised standards in mathematics throughout the school.
35. The governors have a very good understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement within the school. The chair of governors is a very experienced and enthusiastic governor who is highly effective in leading the governing body. She gives excellent support to the headteacher but is always prepared to challenge decisions and issues when appropriate. The governing body do not have a structure of committees but have decided to pilot a portfolio approach. This process is constantly monitored to judge the impact it has on the working of the school and governing body. They are fully involved in the strategic planning and in drawing up the school's priorities for development. The governing body fulfils their statutory duties effectively.
36. The headteacher, staff and governors of the school ensure that it is a fully inclusive school. All pupils are treated with the same respect and attention regardless of race, age, gender or

ethnicity and inclusion for all pupils is good. The school promotes its very good ethos throughout the life of the school.

## Financial information

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

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	431,854	Balance from previous year	12,510
Total expenditure	418,294	Balance carried forward to the next	26,070
Expenditure per pupil	2,311		

37. Financial planning by the headteacher and governors is good, and therefore educational priorities are well catered for. The school development plan is costed to ensure that all actions can be financed. The carry forward figure is high because the governors wanted to safeguard current staffing levels and ensure any 'claw back' of funds as a result of a fall in pupil numbers could be met. Day-to-day administration is satisfactory.

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

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

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **good**.

### **Commentary**

38. The attainment of the reception children on entry to the school is above that of other four year olds in communication, language and literacy and similar to that of other four year olds in their mathematical, personal, social, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development. The children achieve well in all areas of learning because of consistently good teaching. Enthusiastic and stimulating teaching from the co-ordinator inspires and motivates the children and also provides a very good role model for adults. By the time they enter Year 1 most children have attained the nationally expected Early Learning Goals in all areas of learning and some are working within the next programme of study in mathematics, physical, personal, social and emotional development. Very effective cross-curricular work helps children to make secure links in learning. Good planning provides exciting, challenging activities and effective assessment, monitoring and tracking of children, ensures that all children benefit from their experiences in the secure, welcoming atmosphere of the class. The accommodation is adequate but the outdoor provision is limited by its location. This has been clearly identified by the school and appropriate action is being taken. Children with special educational needs achieve well because of the good support they receive. Induction procedures are very good. They form a sound basis for strong relationships with parents. Staff work very well together as a team. Their sensitive intervention helps all children to succeed. The leadership and management of the co-ordinator are very good. The guidance for the Foundation Stage has been fully implemented and improvement since the previous inspection is good.

### **Personal, social and emotional development**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Adults provide very good role models of caring and considerate behaviour.
- Children are given choices in many activities to help them learn to play and become more independent.
- All staff have very good knowledge of the children's needs and give this area of learning priority in all teaching plans.

### **Commentary**

39. Staff are very skilful at planning stimulating experiences to capture the children's interest. These help the children develop concentration skills, share, and have the confidence to investigate, explore and try new activities. Children form good relationships with adults and with each other they work well together, sharing toys, cooperating with each other in activities and waiting patiently for their turn when using the apparatus in the hall. They dress and undress themselves and manage their own personal hygiene with a high degree of independence. They make very good progress in this area of learning. All are in line to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the time they enter Year 1 with many children exceeding these goals.

## **Communication, language and literacy**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very good cross-curricular links reinforce learning.
- Staff are skilled at encouraging children to communicate.

### **Commentary**

40. Children make steady and consistent gains in their communication, language and literacy development. Most children come into the reception class speaking clearly, audibly and with confidence. Good questioning skills enable children to reflect and structure their thinking. Positive encouragement gives children confidence and ensures that they are all involved in their learning and are confident to talk. For instance, when retelling the story of 'The Gingerbread Man' with the learning support assistant, children demonstrated that they had learnt to speak clearly and coherently to the rest of the class. Children are skilfully encouraged to discuss their learning in all lessons. Most children can make their own three letter words when given the letters 'an' because they are competent in linking sounds to letters. Regular story times increase children's awareness of books and their enjoyment of stories. Children are given good opportunities to develop secure early reading and writing skills. By the end of the year most children will reach the expected goals for their age.

## **Mathematical development**

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children's learning is made both exciting and enjoyable by high quality teaching.
- Well-planned, interesting practical activities effectively support learning.

### **Commentary**

41. The teacher and learning support assistant are very skilled at engaging the children in interesting and practical mathematical tasks, which ensures that children work hard, persevere and learn a lot. For instance, children are completely absorbed and watch in complete silence as a toy gingerbread man's buttons are positioned to add to five. They quickly learn to recognise a pattern when adding to five. An insistence on accuracy ensures that all children use the correct mathematical vocabulary as they read number sentences and that numbers are written correctly. Children have a secure understanding of which everyday objects are taller or shorter than their gingerbread man, because of the highly effective support of the learning support assistant. As a result of very good teaching and learning children will reach the goals they are expected to attain by the end of the reception year with a high proportion exceeding these.

## **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The children enjoy a wide range of interesting activities that give them an increasing number of experiences of their own world.
- Staff use questions very effectively to enhance the children's knowledge and understanding of the world about them.
- Children have good access to tools and resources.

## **Commentary**

42. Most children are working at levels expected for their age. Imaginatively planned activities support learning well, stimulate children's curiosity and enhance their understanding. Through skilful use of questioning and sensitive interaction by the teacher, children acquire the notion of floating and sinking as they build boats to carry their Gingerbread Man across the water. The role-play area extends early experiences beyond the home and school, giving children the opportunity to make sense of a widening community. Children have many opportunities to use computer programs. They can click and drag and use the mouse to draw and fill in the Gingerbread Man. Children's learning is good and they make good progress in this area of learning and all are in line to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the time they enter Year 1.

## **Physical development**

Provision in physical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The quality of teaching and learning is very good and children's achievement is very good.
- In the hall a good range of strategies challenge and inspire the learning needs of all children.

## **Commentary**

43. Children pedal wheeled toys at speed and change direction carefully in the secure outdoor area outside the classroom. They work collaboratively, taking turns and helping to push when required. In the hall, children move with confidence and respond well to the challenges from the teacher. Effective teaching helps them to make very good progress in their skills so that they move with a high degree of control. They really enjoy their work in the hall and become engrossed as they extend their floor work, in a very creative way, on the apparatus. All children achieve very well, developing skills quickly and securely. Children develop their manipulative skills well by handling dough, scissors and brushes, and manipulate small construction equipment with dexterity. Very good teaching ensures that all children are in line to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the time they enter Year 1 with a high proportion exceeding these.

## **Creative development**

Provision in creative development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- A wide range of imaginatively planned activities extends the children's experience.
- Skills such as cutting and sticking are developed well and the children's achievement is good.
- Role-play and other well-planned, stimulating activities encourage the children to use their imagination.

## **Commentary**

44. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Most children are in line to attain the Early Learning Goals by the time that they enter Year 1. A well-planned curriculum together with a wide variety of materials and media allows children to explore colour, texture, shape and form, using different tools with safety. Children use scissors and paste with confidence as they become absorbed in making their own collage. They gain great enjoyment as they experiment with colour as they paint. Staff interact and support role-play very well. Children sing simple songs from memory and match movements to the sound. The teachers' commitment and enthusiasm creates a very positive working atmosphere and as a result children have the confidence to try new activities.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average in reading and writing by the end of Year 2. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6 pupils attain above average standards in speaking and listening.
- The co-ordinator is a good leader and monitors teaching and learning effectively.
- Teachers' enthusiasm for literature stimulates pupils' interests in books very well.
- Pupils use their language and literacy skills well in other subjects.
- The school has worked hard to address the 'learning gap' in the Year 3/4 class and pupils' attainment and achievement are steadily improving.

#### Commentary

45. Standards in English are rising because of the school's focus on improvement in the subject. This is particularly evident in writing and in improving the attainment and achievement of the Year 3 and 4 pupils. There have been some variations in national test results over the last few years because of the make up of particular year groups. In national tests in 2003, Year 2 pupils attained well above average results in reading and above average results in writing indicating good achievement from attainment on entry to the school. Year 6 pupils attained average scores in English because there were several pupils who had weak reading skills. The school has identified a 'learning gap' in Years 3 and 4 where pupils do not make the expected progress. This was a contributory factor to the average English results in 2003. Skilful and sensitive leadership has addressed this problem. There have been staff changes, improved planning, tracking and monitoring and Year 3 and 4 pupils achieved well in English lesson during the inspection.
46. The inspection found that pupils, including those with special education needs and higher attaining pupils achieve well throughout the school. This is achieved through good support and effective planning for different abilities. There was no noticeable difference between the achievement of boys and girls but the school keeps a careful eye on boys' attainment and achievement to ensure they reach their potential. Interesting strategies such as the use of film and sound tracks to inspire pupils' writing have been implemented and these appear to foster the boys' imagination to write creatively.
47. Standards in speaking and listening are above average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 and pupils' achievement is good. Most pupils speak confidently and clearly expressing their thoughts and opinions sensibly. Teachers encourage pupils to talk to each other about their learning in many subjects, which extends their ideas and clarifies their thoughts. Pupils are also expected to report back their learning to the rest of the class at the end of lessons. Unfamiliar words and new vocabulary are shared and defined with pupils in most subjects, which accelerates their understanding. In literacy lessons Year 6 pupils are encouraged to stand and repeat together important information and useful strategies such as the features of a narrative text. This re-enforces their learning and provides a valuable framework for their writing.
48. Pupils achieve well in reading. Standards are above average at the end of Year 2 and average at the end of Year 6. Higher attaining Year 6 pupils attain above the expected Level 4 in reading. They develop their reading skills well and also demonstrate a real love and enjoyment of books. This is because many of the staff and the headteacher, in particular are passionate about children's literature and convey their knowledge and enthusiasm to the pupils. Very good opportunities are provided for pupils to meet famous authors such as Michael Morpurgo and to study the work of the poet Benjamin Zephaniah. Pupils have many opportunities to read in

school and most parents hear their children read at home which accelerates their progress. Pupils are clear about the strategies they need to use to work out unfamiliar words and Year 2 pupils use their phonic knowledge confidently to tackle new words. The school library is small and is situated in a corridor, which makes access difficult. The school in conjunction with the governors have good plans to extend the library so whole classes can use it for research.

49. Staff have worked hard and successfully to improve standards in writing. Standards are above average at the end of Year 2 and average at the end of Year 6. Higher attaining Year 6 pupils attain the higher Level 5. Junior pupils are taught in separate year groups for literacy, which improves their achievement and enables the school to make very good use of the headteacher's considerable expertise and enthusiasm. All pupils achieve well due to consistently good or better teaching. Very good use is made of a 'virtual' author in residence called David Orme. He visits the school on a regular basis to advise staff and pupils about their writing and is also available via e-mail to provide the pupils with useful hints on how to improve their story writing. For instance, he advised Year 6 pupils to not only describe what they can see when setting the scene but also to describe the sounds they can hear.
50. Teaching and learning is good overall throughout the school and of a high quality in Year 6. Teachers work hard to plan purposeful and enjoyable activities designed to develop pupils' literacy skills and this enables pupils to achieve well. Pupils concentrate well in lessons and work hard. Marking is good in Years 5 and 6 and clearly indicates how pupils can improve their work and attain a higher level in national tests.
51. The co-ordinator provides good leadership. She has a very good understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement in English and provides good support and advice to her colleagues. She is a highly effective classroom practitioner and sets a very good example to other staff. There have been good improvements in the English provision since the previous inspection.

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

52. The use of language and literacy across the curriculum is good. The skills taught in literacy lessons are used well in other subjects. Pupils produce well-written accounts in history and Year 5/6 pupils are developing a clear style for recording their observations in science relevant to the investigation being under-taken. All pupils use speaking and listening skills well in class discussions and debates and in the school council knowing and adhering to conventions of speaking such as turn taking and asking relevant questions. The success of the cross curriculum work is the result of pupils being encouraged to read widely, draw on this and information researched on the Internet and to see themselves as story tellers intent on engaging the interest of the reader or listener in the subject they are writing or talking about. This was very evident in a Year 2 religious education lesson where Year 2 pupils maturely and sensitively discussed why they believe in God.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There has been a significant improvement in standards in Years 3 and 4.
- Good planning provides an effective structure for learning.
- Provision is constantly reviewed in the light of effective analysis of data and tracking of pupil progress.

## Commentary

53. In national tests in 2003 Year 2 pupils attained well above average results when compared to all pupils nationally and with those from similar schools. Year 6 pupils attained above average standards both nationally and when compared to pupils in similar schools. The school has worked very hard to raise standards in mathematics and has succeeded because of improved teaching, curriculum planning and assessment. At the beginning of Year 1 standards in mathematics are above average. As a result of good teaching and learning progress is maintained so that by the end of Year 2 pupils are attaining standards that are above average. A whole school review identified areas for particular focus, following a dip in standards in Year 3 /4. A real drive to improve the quality of teaching and learning has had a direct impact upon improving the standards attained in that class. However, this has not been in place long enough to affect standards throughout the whole of the juniors and standards of attainment at the end of Year 6 still reflect that dip. Attainment is in line with the national average at the end of Year 6. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection both in terms of raised standards and achievement and also in enabling the school to meet the needs of all pupils in a highly focussed way.
54. The overall quality of teaching is good. Where the quality of teaching and learning is very good or excellent as in the Year 5/6 class, higher attaining pupils discuss and collaborate well, effectively articulating their thinking, as they develop their own strategies for problem solving. So highly charged was the learning atmosphere in one Year 5/6 mathematics lesson that there was spontaneous applause when a pupil who had struggled to rise to the challenge, used subject specific vocabulary to accurately sort shapes according to a prescribed number of obtuse or acute angles. The learning support assistant supported lower achieving pupils in a highly effective way, so that all pupils were able to access the learning at their own level. Through careful planning junior teachers work hard to ensure that within mixed age classes each age group is catered for. The curriculum is significantly enriched by the provision of a more able mathematics groups, which approaches mathematics through the pupils' various learning styles, thereby enabling all pupils to achieve their potential and attain the higher Level 5 in national tests.

## Example of outstanding practice

In an excellent mathematics lesson, to investigate the sum of the angles of a triangle, the teachers' tremendous enthusiasm coupled with her very secure subject knowledge infected pupils with a remarkable eagerness to learn. The very quick pace of the mental warm-up session ensured all pupils were actively involved as the teacher checked and reinforced previous learning to make certain that pupils were building on a secure base. So highly charged was the learning atmosphere that there was spontaneous applause when a pupil who had struggled to rise to the challenge, used subject specific vocabulary to accurately sort shapes according to a prescribed number of obtuse or acute angles. The learning support assistant supported lower achieving pupils in a highly effective way, so that all pupils were able to access the learning at their own level. Higher achieving pupils used and applied previous learning to a very high standard in order to calculate a given angle in a triangle. Not a moment was wasted as the teacher questioned, challenged and pushed the pupils to recall past learning and build upon it. Pupils responded with high-level participation and absolute concentration. They were stimulated and inspired by the teacher's excellent subject knowledge that enabled the lesson to move at a swift pace with a clear direction for learning. Expectations were consistently high and appropriate, and all learning was very thorough. The lesson ended with pupils feeling tired, but with a real sense of achievement.

55. Where the quality of teaching and learning is weaker, although still satisfactory, the standards attained by pupils in those lessons dips correspondingly. There is a slower pace and learning objectives are not made clear to all pupils. Most lessons, however, are well planned with interesting, challenging activities, which are delivered with pace and enthusiasm, ensuring that pupils of all abilities make good progress and achieve well. Through careful planning teachers work hard to ensure that within mixed age classes each age group is catered for. The curriculum is significantly enriched by the provision of a more able mathematics group, which approaches mathematics through the pupils' various learning styles.
56. Although there are very good examples of marking that assists pupils in understanding their mistakes and setting targets for further achievement, not all marking fosters improvement. The mathematics curriculum is very well led and managed by a strong co-ordinator who has a very clear understanding of what needs to be done to further improve standards.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

57. Mathematics skills are used well in other subjects. For instance, in Year 5/6, pupils use careful measurements in their science lesson, and record them in tables and graphs. Pupils can suggest reasons for the rise and gradual fall of the chart, using appropriate mathematical language. All teachers competently use mathematics in the day-to-day class routines and infant pupils can use computation to work out the number of hot school meals required at lunchtime.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are rising steadily but higher attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged in some lessons.
- Specific science vocabulary is not always explained and defined clearly.
- The cramped accommodation in the Year 4/5 outside mobile classroom makes carrying out practical investigations very difficult.

### **Commentary**

58. The 2003 Year 2 teacher assessments in science reveal that Year 2 pupils attained above average standards. Year 6 pupils attained below the national average in national tests in 2003. This is due to the impact of the 'learning gap' in Years 3 and 4 where insufficient coverage of the curriculum led to pupils not achieving as well as they might. The current pupils enter Year 1 with average standards in the subject. By the end of Year 2 they attain standards that are average and this means that their achievement during this time is satisfactory. Pupils' achievement is now satisfactory in Years 3 and 4, although higher attaining pupils do not always receive sufficiently challenging work. Year 5 and 6 pupils' achievement is good as a result of high expectations and challenging work, which is planned to meet the needs of all abilities, including the higher attaining pupils. Standards at the end of Year 6 are average but the school has evidence to suggest that more pupils should achieve the higher Level 5 in national tests in 2004.
59. Pupils' attitudes are very good and this has a significantly positive impact on standards and achievement as pupils behave in a sensible and mature way when carrying out investigations. Throughout the school pupils discuss openly with the teachers the concepts they are learning. They willingly contribute suggestions to the way in which such investigations may be carried out and recorded to ensure fair and consistent results. This makes good use of their language

and literacy skills. The expectations of such behaviour means that by Years 5 and 6 pupils are trusted to handle a wide range of scientific apparatus and carry out investigations with the minimum of intervention in practical work. This leaves the teacher to concentrate on challenging the results and hypotheses being developed by the pupils. This ensures that Year 5 and 6 pupils learn well.

60. Overall teaching and learning throughout the school are satisfactory. It is of a high quality in the Year 5/6 class as the teacher provides very good opportunities for pupils to design, perform, record and evaluate their own experiments. Higher attaining Year 5 and 6 pupils are always challenged to achieve their best. However, there is some inconsistency throughout the rest of the school in ensuring that higher attaining pupils are challenged in science lessons. Teachers' planning indicates that work is planned to meet the needs of different abilities but this does not happen in reality and so higher attaining pupils do not always make the expected gains in their learning. Some teachers do not place sufficient emphasis on ensuring that pupils understand specific scientific vocabulary, which restricts pupils' attainment in these year groups. The cramped accommodation in the two dilapidated temporary classrooms makes practical work very difficult. The co-ordinator provides good leadership and satisfactory management and is implementing a clear action plan to raise standards further. There has been satisfactory progress since the previous inspection.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers' skills are rapidly improving.
- Standards are above average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to their learning and this is having a good impact on their learning.
- Developments in the subject are well managed.
- The curriculum in ICT is planned well and ensures that pupils systematically build on their prior knowledge and understanding.
- ICT is used well in other subjects.

### **Commentary**

61. There have been good improvements to the ICT provision since the previous inspection. These improvements have had a positive impact on pupils' interest and attitudes to the subject and as a result the standards that pupils achieve. Pupils achieve well throughout the school and by the end of Year 2 and 6 standards are above average. This is because pupils have opportunities to work not only on the computers in the computer suite but also have regular opportunities to practise newly acquired skills such as highlighting and editing text in the classrooms.
62. Good emphasis has been placed on developing teacher's skills and confidence and this is the main reason why pupils are now achieving well. Overall, teaching is good throughout the school because lessons are well planned and ensures pupils systematically build on their prior knowledge. As a result, pupils like ICT and are highly motivated to learn. Pupils' work is monitored and pupils have their own floppy disc to record their work on. In discussions with pupils and viewing their work, it is evident that all aspects of ICT are covered. For instance, pupils are very confident when using computers in many subjects to record their work. Pupils self evaluate their own work and talk enthusiastically about it. The co-ordinator manages and leads the subject well. She has worked effectively to support colleagues and has a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement. She ensures that all staff keep pace with new initiatives and training.

## Information and communication technology across the curriculum

63. Good use is made of ICT in other subjects. Teachers carefully plan how they will use information and communication technology in all their lessons. Pupils learn that ICT skills can support their work in other subjects. Pupils' work reveals that they can use computers in a variety of ways, for presentation of work, investigations, research and data management. Teachers, support staff and pupils make particularly good use of digital cameras in many subjects.

## HUMANITIES

64. No lessons were seen in **history** and **geography** during the inspection. From an analysis of samples of completed work, from work on display around the school and discussion with pupils it is judged that all aspects of the National Curriculum are covered in both subjects. There is every indication that standards are in line with the national average and that pupils' achievement is at least satisfactory. The history and geography curriculum is enhanced by day visits, for example, to study the local environment. Information and communication technology effectively supports learning in both subjects through Internet access for research. Pupils practise their writing skills well in history and geography as a scrutiny of pupils' work revealed very little use of worksheets.

## Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Learning makes an effective contribution to pupils' personal, social and moral development.
- There are good opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills in religious education lessons.

## Commentary

65. Two religious education lessons were seen during the inspection. Samples of work and discussions with pupils clearly indicate that standards are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Lessons seen were of a good quality and motivated pupils to achieve well. Good links with literacy were seen in a lesson in Year 5/6 where pupils classified the books of the Bible, researching the different genres. Religious artefacts are of good quality and well organised. Teachers use resources well during demonstrations and to aid explanations and this contributes to pupils' developing skills. Lessons provide effective opportunities for pupils to practise their speaking and listening skills, demonstrating that they have thought about what they have learned and formed personal opinions from their learning. As a result pupils' social, personal and moral development is well supported. Pupils enjoy their lessons and in discussion they commented that they would like more religious education lessons.
66. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good. All teachers are now confident to teach the subject as a result of effective in service training and there is a scheme of work, which supports learning well. Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism and Islam are studied. A four year rolling programme ensures that the mixed aged classes in Years 3 to 6 cover all topics but at different levels. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. There is no manageable form of assessment and the results from discussions and drama are not recorded. There are only a few visits that enrich pupils' cultural experiences. The co-ordinator is aware of these aspects for improvement.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

67. Too little evidence was gathered to make secure judgements about the provision in art and design. Only one lesson was seen in art and design and one in music. Design and technology was not a focus in this inspection. Physical education is reported in full. The work of pupils was scrutinised, displays of work were looked at, planning files and the subject co-ordinator's files were examined and discussions were held with staff and pupils.

### Art and design

68. Work seen in **art and design** indicates that standards are average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 and pupils' achievement is at least satisfactory. The teaching in the one lesson seen was good. It built on previous art skills and pupils' knowledge of sculptures. The teacher gave the class photographs of a variety of sculptures, which gave the pupils a broad understanding of styles and forms. The pupils helped one another to create models, some of which were very imaginative, such as, a family on the beach making sandcastles. The school received a Silver Artsmark in 2001.

### Music

69. Only one music lesson was seen. Pupils have opportunities to learn a good variety of instruments including recorder, harmonica, guitar, clarinet, violin and piano. Many pupils have weekly singing lessons with a visiting specialist. There are many opportunities for pupils to perform in front of an audience. For example, to the whole school in assemblies, to their parents and at the Somerset music Christmas celebration concert in Wells Cathedral and other local music festivals. In the one lesson seen which was a whole class recorder session, the teaching was satisfactory and pupils' achievement was satisfactory.
70. Pupils obviously enjoy whole school hymn practices where they sing rhythmically and in tune with clear enunciation and obvious joy. The standard of singing across the school is good. In assemblies music is used well to enrich pupils' cultural and spiritual development as they listen to a very wide range of composers and musicians from different times and cultures including classical music, sporting anthems and pop. Pupils participate in a number of high quality school productions each year, which requires them to learn and perform a wide range of songs and to play a variety of musical instruments. The co-ordinator is keen and hard working and leads the subject well.

### Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Visits by well-qualified coaches enhance and enrich the curriculum.
- There is a good range of after-school activities.
- Pupils' self-evaluation is good.

#### Commentary

71. Standards in physical education are average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory throughout the school in dance, gymnastics and sporting skills. The vast majority swim well by the time they leave the school and attain the expected levels.

72. Teaching and learning throughout the school are good. In lessons teachers give due consideration to health and safety and ensure that pupils warm their bodies up before beginning the activities, and perform cooling down exercises at the end of the session. Teachers are also careful to ensure that pupils wearing earrings have them covered up with plasters. Most teachers have good subject knowledge, manage the pupils well and have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. There is a brisk pace to the lessons and pupils are encouraged to demonstrate good practice to inspire other pupils and raise achievement. Teachers also model activities themselves, when appropriate, and so act as good role models for the class, who strive to copy their teachers' movements. Pupils are very interested and involved and their efforts are valued and recognised by the teachers. Pupils keep records of their achievement and record what they do well and what they need to improve on. While the hall can accommodate most classes in the space provided, it is extremely cramped for the Year 5/6 class, which has 36 pupils.
73. The subject co-ordinator is knowledgeable and enthusiastic and leadership and management are good. The provision for curriculum enrichment in sport is good with a wide range of extra-curricular activities such as dance, rugby, cricket, and netball available to pupils. These are well attended and some have the benefit of being led by outside experts. These activities and the opportunities that pupils have to participate in competitive sporting events with other schools are very effective in improving the confidence of pupils and in raising their self-esteem.

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

74. Only one lesson was seen in this area of the school's work and so no judgements are made about overall provision. The school sees pupils' personal development as an important part of its work. The programme for personal, social and health education is good and includes work on diet, health, sex, drugs and personal safety. This programme helps pupils develop a safe and healthy life style, gain confidence and interact with others. Currently the subject is taught as a discrete subject but the school plans to develop a scheme of work that will provide a more cross-curricular approach. The school council is in its infancy but is developing rapidly. Each year group used a different democratic election system to elect its representatives providing pupils with opportunities to take part in and witness democracy at first hand.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

### *Inspection judgement*

### *Grade*

<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is	3
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>4</b>
Pupils' achievement	3

<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	2
Attitudes	2
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	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
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	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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