

INSPECTION REPORT

WELLS CENTRAL C OF E JUNIOR SCHOOL

Wells, Somerset

LEA area: Somerset

Unique reference number: 123777

Headteacher: Mr S Turner

Lead inspector: Averil R Anderson

Dates of inspection: 17th - 19th May 2004

Inspection number: 258336

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior school
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	7 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	315
School address:	Keward Avenue Wells Somerset
Postcode:	BA5 1TS
Telephone number:	(01749) 678 066
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Appropriate authority:	Local education authority
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs G Deamer
Date of previous inspection:	18 th January 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Wells Central Voluntary Controlled Church of England Junior School is a larger than average sized junior school. It is situated in pleasant grounds within a modern housing estate on the outskirts of the city. There are 315 pupils on roll. Pupils come from an average range of social, economic and academic backgrounds; most live in owner-occupied houses. Almost all are White British; only eight are from minority ethnic backgrounds. Attainment on entry is above average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is below the national average. The number of pupils with statements of special educational needs is well below the national average. The percentage of pupils whose mother tongue is not English is low. When compared with other schools, the percentage of pupils eligible for school meals is very low. In 2002, the school was awarded the Healthy Schools Award and the Link Community Development Award.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23733	Averil Anderson	Lead inspector	Mathematics Geography History Special educational needs
9999	Rona Orme	Lay inspector	
32336	Anthea Meek	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Art and design Music
17343	Sandra Morris	Team inspector	English Design and technology Physical education Religious education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school does not provide an effective standard of education. It has serious weaknesses in standards in English and mathematics, the use of assessment to raise standards and the leadership of the headteacher in raising standards. It provides unsatisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Teaching and learning in English and mathematics are unsatisfactory.
- Leadership and management are unsatisfactory.
- Assessment data and other information are not used consistently to raise standards.
- Pupils enjoy school and their attitudes are very good.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- Participation in the arts and sporting activities outside the school day is good.
- The school's links with the community are good.
- Behaviour, levels of attendance and punctuality are good.

Improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory because the steps the school has taken have not led to standards in English and mathematics improving enough. Despite the headteacher's many improvements throughout the school, including the actions taken to improve the quality of teaching and learning, systems are not rigorous enough to ensure that agreed actions are followed consistently. Consequently, standards have not risen swiftly enough. However, the majority of the key issues from the previous inspection have been addressed satisfactorily. There are now schemes of work in place; clear roles and responsibilities for the senior management team are in place and the introductions to lessons are shorter and more tightly focused. The school improvement plan has improved but is too long and lacks sufficient focus.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Standards throughout the school are unsatisfactory. Standards in English, mathematics and science have fluctuated over the past years. The school anticipates that this year's results will be higher than those achieved in 2003 but will not meet their own set targets. Pupil achievement is unsatisfactory in English and mathematics because too many pupils fail to reach the expected standards by the age of 11 years and too few reach the higher levels that are expected in view of the levels of attainment reached on entry to the school. The table shows that in comparison with the results in similar schools, the school's results in mathematics and science are in the lowest five per cent and that results in English are well below the average. Pupils are not reaching the standards they are capable of in English and mathematics. Standards in the arts and the sporting elements of physical education are higher

than in other subjects. Achievement by pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good overall. Pupils have very positive attitudes and enjoy coming to school. Behaviour and attendance are good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is unsatisfactory. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory because of the unsatisfactory teaching in English and mathematics which has led to pupils' underachievement in these subjects. Improvements are taking place and some very good teaching was seen during the inspection. However, the improvements have not been enough to overcome the unsatisfactory teaching, particularly in Year 4. Assessment procedures are unsatisfactory because the information gained is not used consistently throughout the school to help pupils improve their learning.

The curriculum is satisfactory, with very good opportunities to participate in sport, the arts and other activities inside and outside school. Accommodation overall is satisfactory. The library and the information and communication technology (ICT) suite are of a high standard but the mobile classrooms used by the older children are very old and rapidly coming to the end of their useable life. Teachers make very good use of these buildings, which are due to be replaced in the near future. Links with the community and other schools are good; links with parents are satisfactory.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. The headteacher and senior staff have a good understanding of the areas needing improvement but have not pursued their action plans with sufficient rigour to ensure that improvements are occurring in all classes and all years. Subject co-ordinators provide satisfactory leadership but are not given adequate support by the senior management team to ensure that the plans for their subjects are followed through by all members of staff. Governors are enthusiastic and committed to the school. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses but as yet have not insisted on a more rapid pace of change in order to hasten an improvement in the standards of learning.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

A large majority of parents are happy with the school. A considerable minority felt that their child had been bullied or harassed, but that staff took appropriate action. No instances of bullying were observed during the inspection. Pupils like being at school. Most pupils feel there is an adult they could go to if they were worried. Fifty-seven per cent feel that their lessons are mostly, or always, interesting.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Ensure that pupils make at least the expected progress in all classes throughout the school.
- Make use of monitoring information to identify priorities for raising standards in the core subjects across the school.

- Ensure that assessment is being used to identify individual pupils' learning needs.
- Share the instances of very good teaching and learning with all members of staff and then rigorously monitor teaching across the school.
- Ensure all classes and year groups consistently adhere to agreed policies and practices.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in subjects

Pupils' achievement is **unsatisfactory**. Standards in English and mathematics are well below those expected in comparison with the standards in similar schools (where pupils attained similar results at the end of Year 2). An analysis of work completed throughout the year showed that achievement in these two subjects was unsatisfactory. Standards in science are now satisfactory. Standards in all other subjects inspected are at least satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in English and mathematics are unsatisfactory.
- Too many pupils do not reach the expected standard in English and mathematics by the age of 11 years.
- Too few pupils reach the expected higher levels of which they are capable.
- Standards in the extra-curricular areas of music and sport are good.
- Achievement by pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory.

Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.9 (26.2)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	26.0 (25.6)	26.8 (26.7)
science	27.5 (28.3)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 82 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

1. Since the last inspection in 1999, standards in English, mathematics and science have not kept pace with improvements seen nationally. In national tests, they reached a peak in 2001, and fell in all three subjects in 2002. In 2003, they continued to drop in science but improve in English and mathematics. Compared with results in all schools nationally, standards in English were broadly in line with the average. In mathematics and science, they were in the bottom 40 per cent. The school anticipates that the results for 2004 will be higher than those achieved in 2003 but are not as confident that they will reach the targets they themselves set.
2. Comparisons with schools whose pupils reached similar results at the end of Year 2 show that by the end of Year 6, Wells Central pupils are far behind. In English, the school's results are within the results obtained by the bottom quarter of such schools and in mathematics and science, the school was ranked in the bottom five per cent of similar schools across the country.
3. A study of pupils' work over the past year shows that work in English and mathematics was not of a sufficiently high standard, considering the level of work pupils were achieving when they entered the school in Year 3. For example, in Year 4, standards of speaking and listening/debating skills, particularly for the most able, are below average. Pupils are

unable to apply the features of a paragraph when working on an individual text even though they are able to identify what constitutes a paragraph in class discussion. Their work is often untidy, of little quantity, with inaccurate punctuation and spelling. Standards in science, ICT and religious education are satisfactory. Standards are satisfactory in geography, history, art and design, physical education and personal, social and health education. It was not possible to make judgements about standards in design and technology and music. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and values are **good**. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good**. Their attendance is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy school and have very good attitudes.
- Behaviour is good.
- Levels of attendance and punctuality are good.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- A considerable minority of parents and pupils express concerns about bullying.

Commentary

4. Pupils are happy to come to school and to take part in all the activities on offer. They talk and write with enthusiasm about lessons, extra activities, people and facilities. Teachers are well regarded. Relationships are good amongst all pupils whatever their gender, ability or ethnicity, and pupils display very good confidence and self-esteem. They talk to visitors with polite assurance. Pupils are eager to learn when they are offered interesting lessons or tasks that are well matched to their previous achievement. They are keen to take responsibility. They stand for election to represent their class on the school council, and some undertake lengthy training to serve as 'peer mediators'.
5. Pupils behave well. Playtimes are friendly and pupils act sensibly as they move around the school. Pupils with special educational needs or physical needs are fully involved in all activities. Behaviour in lessons is mostly good.
6. A considerable minority of parents, and some pupils in conversations with inspectors, report some instances of bullying and harassment. They consider that the school takes adequate action. No bullying or rough play was observed during the inspection.
7. There are regular opportunities for pupils to express their opinions and any areas of concern. They display a mature spiritual development in the questions they pose and listen with respect to the opinions of others. They also understand that some questions cannot be answered.
8. Pupils are able to distinguish right from wrong and can express their opinions on moral development, both their own and others. Group time, known as circle time, provides opportunities to develop moral codes, and relationships throughout the school are good. Adults in the school provide very good role models and treat each other and the pupils with respect and consideration. A system of peer mediation (where pupils try to help each other solve difficulties) has been introduced, and there are numerous opportunities

for pupils to take on responsibility, such as answering the phone at lunchtimes or setting up equipment for lessons.

9. Assemblies are used to address issues of social responsibility and a number of charity fund-raising ventures are a feature of the school. The School Council meets regularly to discuss a wide variety of topics and is proud of the ideas it has put forward which have been accepted. Pupils demonstrate an understanding of equality of access, and respect the beliefs of others.
10. Pupils have a good appreciation of their own and other cultures and have established links with countries such as Uganda and Ghana, including a system of pen pals. Displays around the school reinforce this.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.6	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.

11. Attendance is above the national average, and levels of unauthorised absence are below the national average. Pupils arrive in good time for the beginning of school and for each session.
12. There have been no exclusions during the school year prior to this inspection.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is **unsatisfactory overall**. However, teaching and pupils' learning are unsatisfactory in English and mathematics. The curriculum is broad but not balanced. There are good opportunities to participate in sport, the arts and other activities inside and outside the school. Assessment is not used effectively to raise standards.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is **unsatisfactory**. Despite recent improvements, it is still not of a sufficiently high quality in English and mathematics to bring standards up to a high enough level, considering pupils' ability and attainment on entering the school in Year 3. Teaching in English and mathematics lessons during the inspection ranged from unsatisfactory to very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Unsatisfactory teaching and learning in English and mathematics, resulting in low standards.

- Unsatisfactory use of assessment to improve standards.
- Unsatisfactory use of targets to help pupils improve their learning.
- Improvement in teaching and learning in science.
- Very good teaching and learning observed in two classes at either end of the school.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 30 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0 (0%)	3 (10%)	15 (50%)	9 (30%)	3 (10%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

13. The very good teaching observed ensured very good learning because pupils were engrossed in their work, really challenged to think and articulate their ideas and so make very good progress. A good example of this was in a Year 6 lesson where pupils discussed and debated difficult issues within the topic of "What is Life?". The good teaching across the school was characterised by clear planning, with lively activities which stimulated pupils' interest and enthusiasm. For example, in science, where Year 3 pupils planned a fair test comparing the absorbency of different papers they could not wait to carry out their investigations and prove their hypotheses. During the lesson, they had improved their collaborative skills and increased their scientific understanding. In Year 4, where teaching, and subsequently learning in English, were unsatisfactory, planned learning objectives were not met because the pace of the lessons was too slow and expectations for the given task were not made clear. For example, in the writing of a diary by a character in the study of 'The Diary of A Killer Cat', and in another lesson where the moral issues of the story were being identified, pupils were given insufficient guidance with their work. Consequently, they did not reach the high standards of which they were capable.
14. Less satisfactory aspects of teaching were found in the analysis of pupils' work in English and mathematics during the past year where insufficient guidance was given to pupils on how they might improve their work, assessment was not used adequately to ensure that all pupils were working at the correct level and pupils were not making sufficient progress. The use of target-setting across the school is inconsistent. For example, in mathematics, some pupils have 'set' targets in their books, some do not. Targets last for six months and the whole set of pupils have the same target, irrespective of their ability within the set. Some targets are repeated in the second half of the year even though pupils are recorded as having achieved the target during the first half of the year. Pupils commented that they felt their English targets might help their learning but as they "had only had them for two weeks, it was hard to tell". Targets are displayed in some classrooms but no references to class, set or individual targets were made in any of the lessons observed. The school has not yet reached the targets it sets itself for pupils at the end of Year 6. It has not accurately used the information it has gathered in setting these targets.
15. Analysis of work produced during this academic year shows that learning in English and mathematics, although improving, is not yet of a sufficiently high quality and is therefore unsatisfactory. Analysis of work in science and other subjects shows that teaching and learning are satisfactory.

16. Evidence of good teaching was seen in a range of subjects where all pupils made good progress. Pacy questioning at suitable levels for pupils of differing abilities caught and held their attention very well in a Year 5 ICT lesson, enabling them to successfully use websites to research the Trojans. Good management in a Year 6 outdoor PE lesson ensured that pupils had every opportunity to improve their personal performance in running, throwing and long jump. All pupils enjoyed the activities and successfully achieved the objective of 'Beat Your Best Scores'.
17. Assessment is unsatisfactory because the data obtained is not used rigorously enough throughout the whole school in setting targets for individual pupils to enable them to make the greatest possible progress. There is a lack of consistency across the year groups in the way that assessment is used to assist pupils' learning. The teachers within year groups work well together but are not always following the accepted school strategy on the use of assessment procedures. There is a lack of authoritative leadership to insist that school procedures are followed correctly to ensure that the information available is used to push up standards. The present assessment co-ordinator is not a member of the senior management team and therefore does not have the necessary authority.

The curriculum

The curriculum provides **satisfactorily** for the needs and interests of all pupils. Visits, visitors and out-of-school activities add good enrichment and variety. The school accommodation and resources are satisfactory overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are very good opportunities for enrichment through a good range of extra-curricular activities, special events and trips.
- The inclusion of all pupils, including those with disabilities, is good.
- Too much time is spent on silent reading and there are inconsistencies in the teaching of guided reading. (Guided reading is where the teacher and classroom assistant each read with a group of pupils while the rest of the class work on their own).

Commentary

18. The curriculum meets statutory requirements and all aspects of the National Curriculum are covered. Pupils with disabilities and special educational needs are included and benefit from all aspects of the curriculum. There is a broad range of subjects taught, supported by very good opportunities for enrichment through a programme of visits and special events. For example, teachers from the secondary school supported an Arts Week, the school takes part in the Wells Festival of Literature and a local MP visited the school as part of citizenship studies. Pupils in Year 4 organised a 'Pirates Day' as part of their studies on the Tudors and Year 6 pupils visited Bristol to study bridges. Personal, social and health education lessons are planned to connect well with other subjects and have a positive impact on relationships.
19. There is a wide range of opportunities provided outside the school day, including sport, music and gardening. These clubs are well attended and enjoyed by the pupils. Both boys and girls take part in all sports, including netball and football. Pupils talked enthusiastically about their Year 6 camp at Osmington near Weymouth, where they took part in quad biking, abseiling, rock climbing and walks on the beach.

20. Although the curriculum is broad, it is not well balanced. This is because too much time is spent on silent reading and there are inconsistencies within and between year groups in the amount of time teachers spend supporting reading, irrespective of the needs of the pupils.
21. There are adequate resources for all subjects. The new library is a welcoming and well-resourced area to which all pupils have access. Although the accommodation in the mobile classrooms is cramped and old, teachers have worked hard to ensure that the display contributes to a bright and vibrant learning environment.

Care, guidance and support

Care for pupils is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils trust their teachers.
- Pupils' views are sought and valued.
- Induction arrangements are good.
- Individual targets are not used effectively to help pupils improve.

Commentary

22. The majority of pupils talk with appreciation of their teachers and say they feel able to consult them about problems. The school council is well established and members talk confidently about their achievements and contribution to the life of the school. Some pupils have undertaken training to become 'peer mediators', and they make a positive contribution to pupils' sense of wellbeing and ability to manage their relationships.
23. There are good arrangements for the induction of new pupils both into Year 3 and later in the school. Parents are satisfied with these arrangements. Overall, the school makes satisfactory provision for the care of pupils. Child protection arrangements are good and meet statutory requirements. However, in the very sunny weather during the inspection, the ICT suite was uncomfortably hot and no fan was provided. Also, pupils were allowed to eat lunch outside in the full sun rather than encouraged to sit in the shade. Few sunhats were in use during any outdoor activities.
24. The school does not help pupils to set individual targets to improve in English or mathematics. At present, groups of pupils are given the same target to achieve. These are often too broad to help pupils understand what they must master to make progress. More specific targets are used for individual pupils with behavioural problems. However none of these targets were seen to be used or referred to during the inspection.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's links with parents are **satisfactory**. Links with the community and other schools are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good links with the community provide extra experiences for pupils.
- Liaison with the infants and secondary schools is good.

Commentary

25. The school maintains positive links with other schools and the community. Close liaison with the local infants school ensures that pupils transfer smoothly into the junior school whilst maintaining their connection if they wish. For example, Year 6 pupils have the opportunity to help at lunchtimes in the infants school. The school's re-enactment in 2003 of the Queen's coronation, to celebrate the Golden Jubilee, reflected the positive links with Wells Cathedral and its voluntary choir, and with many parent and community volunteers.
26. The school provides satisfactory information for parents. Annual reports meet statutory requirements for reporting pupils' progress. The school used a well-designed questionnaire to find out parents' views but these views were not specifically incorporated into the school improvement plan. Governors report that a significant number of parents do not actively contribute to the work of the school, and have formed a Parent Involvement Group to address this. Some parents provide valuable and effective help in classes.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are unsatisfactory overall. The management of the school is satisfactory. The governing body provides satisfactory direction for improvement, but the pace of change is too slow to have yet had an impact on standards. The leadership provided by the headteacher to raise standards is unsatisfactory. There has been insufficient improvement since the last inspection, particularly in the raising of standards.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a lack of rigour in the assessment process as an aid to target improvement.
- The senior management team is insufficiently focused on weaknesses within some year groups.
- Recent action plans have been developed.
- The governing body is enthusiastic and committed to school improvement.
- There is a climate within the school that is ready for change.
- The school development plan needs a sharper focus on its priorities.

Commentary

27. The headteacher has a good understanding of the areas required for improvement, and recently-appointed senior staff are committed to supporting this. In spite of the many innovations and improvements to the school since the appointment of the present headteacher, there is still a lack of pace and drive required to inspire all staff to work as a team to raise standards adequately. This is partly due to considerable staff absence and changes in the senior staff over the last two years. However, there has been adequate time for standards to have risen more quickly than they have done so far. The roles of the deputy headteacher and senior teacher are being developed and the senior management team is now in a position to make a real difference to standards.

28. Performance management is in place and this is now being used as a tool to target standards, but there is no staff development plan, although courses are being targeted in literacy and numeracy. Job descriptions are now provided, an improvement since the last inspection, and they reflect the additional responsibilities of senior staff. Leadership given by subject leaders is satisfactory but the use of assessment and monitoring of teaching and learning are underdeveloped. Training is in place for teaching assistants, which they value and find useful.
29. The governing body is enthusiastic, knowledgeable and very supportive of change, but its members are too sympathetic to the past staffing difficulties and unwilling to make too many changes too soon. Consequently, standards have not risen as quickly as they might. They are careful in spending money and look for best value when buying services. They are well aware of the poor standards in the school and the chair of governors has introduced a school improvement plan committee to address this. They have also identified a concern about communication with parents and have established a parent involvement group, comprising governors and parents, with the aim of increasing the involvement of parents in raising standards. All governors now have a curriculum responsibility and meet with the relevant subject co-ordinator, reporting back to the governing body, but have not yet developed a sufficiently challenging attitude. They fulfil all their statutory responsibilities.
30. The school development plan is too detailed and does not focus sharply enough on priorities, in particular the raising of standards in English and mathematics and the quality of teaching and learning across all year groups.
31. The leadership and management provided by curriculum co-ordinators are satisfactory but limited, and do not take enough account of the whole school picture. All co-ordinators have a clear remit and an expectation to raise standards. However, their work is not sufficiently monitored by senior managers in supporting their efforts to achieve this in all classes. Likewise the role of the assessment leader is not sufficiently developed and, in consequence there is a lack of use of a central database relating to standards and expectations across all year groups and subjects. The leadership and management of the special educational needs co-ordinator are good. She provides good support for pupils and staff alike.
32. School self-evaluation is in the early stages of development and is not yet being used to target underachievement and demand higher standards. Monitoring of pupil progress is also limited and a system of target-setting is a recent development which needs a higher profile within the school in order to inspire staff and pupils.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	722,324
Total expenditure	754,233
Expenditure per pupil	2,394

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	70,089
Balance carried forward to the next year	38,180

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 2

ENGLISH

The provision in English is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards achieved by the pupils are too low.
- Pupils do not make consistently satisfactory progress in all classes.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils are too low in Year 4.
- There are examples of very good teaching in Year 3 and good teaching in Year 6.
- The subject leader has good subject knowledge and provides a good role model for teaching.
- Assessment is not used effectively to plan work which meets the needs of all pupils.
- Reading time is not well used and does not always contribute to pupils' progress in reading.

Commentary

33. Despite the fact that standards are similar to those at the time of the last inspection, they have not risen at the same rate as national standards because pupils do not make consistently satisfactory progress in all classes on entry to the school. Their achievement has been unsatisfactory. In recent years, pupils in Years 3 and 4 have made poor progress and despite at least sound progress in Year 5 and good progress in Year 6, pupils have still not made up for previous underperformance. There has been an improvement and pupils in Year 3 are making satisfactory progress this year. However, pupils currently in Year 4 made poor progress last year and continue to make poor progress because teaching is unsatisfactory.
34. In the 2003 national tests, standards for Year 6 were in line with the national average. However, fewer pupils attained the higher level than pupils nationally. The school anticipates that this year, standards will be similar overall but with more pupils gaining an above average level in reading and writing.
35. In 2003, standards in Years 3 and 4 were well below average. However, standards of the current Year 3 pupils are at least average and are better than last year. Year 3 pupils can write neatly and independently. Most are beginning to join their letters. The more able pupils can retrieve information from a non-fiction text and transfer it to another task. In one Year 3 lesson, the standards of reading and writing were above average. Pupils wrote carefully-worded postcards to a famous author, using the information about the apostrophe to good effect.
36. Standards in both reading and writing remain well below average in Year 4. The presentation of written work in Year 4 is untidy and too little work has been completed. The pupils in Year 4 do not have a clear idea of how to improve their work and report that much of the work set is 'too easy'. Inspection evidence confirms that this is the case and pupils are insufficiently challenged. As a result, pupils of all abilities are working well below their capabilities. Some more able pupils in the current Year 6 have written poems

of a very high standard, using exceptionally good vocabulary and demonstrating a very good understanding of poetry styles.

37. Teaching overall is unsatisfactory. However, during the inspection, very good teaching was observed in Year 3 and good teaching in Year 6. All lessons observed in Year 4 were unsatisfactory.
38. Where teaching was good or better, pupils made good progress and enjoyed their lessons. In good lessons, the objectives of the lesson were clear, pupils worked at a good pace and remained engrossed throughout. Teachers made skilful use of questions to challenge pupils' thinking and modelled writing effectively so that pupils understood how to construct and improve their work. In one very good lesson, the teacher gave a practical demonstration of how to contract words by cutting out letters and replacing them with an apostrophe. Pupils successfully practised this skill when writing postcards.
39. In Year 4, the series of lessons planned lacked pace and it took too long for pupils to achieve a written outcome. Lessons were not linked effectively to previous learning and the objectives of the lesson were inappropriate or unclear to the pupils. Teachers have low expectations of the pupils and the lessons lack challenge, especially for the more able pupils. As a result, work is too often unfinished, untidy and of a below average standard. A few pupils were not fully engaged with their work throughout the lesson but all behaved very well. Some work is not marked and there is little marking which informs pupils about how to improve.
40. Assessment systems and targets have been introduced and pupils in Year 6 are involved in evaluating their work so that they know how to improve. However, few teachers make reference to the targets in lessons or when marking work. In the majority of classes, the assessment of writing is too infrequent and teachers do not take sufficient account of assessment information when planning work to match individual pupils' needs. Under-performing pupils have been identified for extra support and teaching assistants make a satisfactory, and sometimes good, contribution to lessons. However, the pace of change has been too slow and the use of the assessment systems for reading and writing is inconsistent.
41. Homework is not set regularly in all classes. No homework was set or reviewed in lessons observed during the inspection. Pupils report that less homework is set in literacy than in mathematics and they are unclear about what they should do at home on a regular basis.
42. The leadership of the subject is sound but management is not yet satisfactory. The subject leader has a good knowledge of the subject and provides a good role model for teachers, particularly in Year 6. There is a comprehensive plan for improvement but there are too many new initiatives, which have not been firmly established. There have been recent improvements in planning and the foundations for further improvement are in place. This is evident in the good display of literacy prompts and writing targets in each classroom. Resources have been improved and the new library is very welcoming and well used.
43. There is inconsistency in the amount of time spent on silent reading, both within year groups and across the school. Most pupils spend too much time reading silently and insufficient time is given to guided reading supported by an adult. In a very good reading

lesson, parents made an important contribution to the work, the tasks were varied and as a result, all pupils were engaged fully. Too often in reading lessons, pupils have chosen books which they cannot read or which they will be unable to finish. As a result, their time is not well used.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

44. The links between literacy and other areas of the curriculum are sound. Links with other subjects have been identified within the curriculum and are built into teachers' planning. Non-fiction books are used for research in various subjects. Pupils are confident in speaking and listen well to others. This was evident in some good religious education lessons in which pupils were discussing some important moral issues and asking relevant questions. Pupils work well together and communicate ideas effectively to each other and their teachers.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards attained by pupils are too low.
- Teaching pupils in groups organised by their levels of attainment enables teachers to plan more effectively for different levels of ability.
- Assessment is not used effectively across the school to plan work to meet the needs of all pupils.
- Targets are too general and are used too inconsistently across the school to be of real help to pupils. The lack of reference to targets within lessons inhibits pupils' progress.
- The subject leader's knowledge and enthusiasm are good. The subject is well placed for improvement.

Commentary

45. In 2003, in comparison with all schools nationally, pupils at the end of Year 6 achieved just below average standards. In comparison with similar schools, Wells Central pupils' achievements in national tests at the end of Year 6 are in the bottom five per cent of the country. An insufficient number of pupils reach the higher levels that are to be expected in the light of the levels of attainment reached by pupils on entry to the school in Year 3. Too many do not reach the level expected nationally nor does the school achieve its own targets. The school anticipates that more pupils will reach the expected levels in 2004 but is not confident that its own targets will be achieved. Achievement is thus unsatisfactory. Achievement of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory.

46. Good teaching and learning occurred where teachers' planning was specific to the various needs of the pupils according to their abilities. For example, in a Year 4 lesson where pupils were looking for lines of symmetry, the tasks were the same for above average and average ability pupils but the way the pupils went about solving the problems was different. The teacher had annotated her plans with hints to help her during the lesson and she continually gave pupils pointers to solve the problems without giving them the answers. Where teaching was satisfactory, teachers missed opportunities to extend the more able pupils in the group by setting them challenges that were too easily solved and by not simplifying tasks for the less able pupils. This was evident in a Year 3 class who were learning to add numbers using a variety of different strategies.
47. Target-setting is inconsistent across the school. Some books analysed had class targets in them, others did not. In some instances, the same target was apparently set for the whole year, whereas in other classes the targets were changed mid-year. The 'traffic light' system of recording progress in achieving targets was rarely used. In no lessons observed was any reference made to targets. The marking of work is consistent in that it is almost always done and, where pupils mark their own or each other's work, it is checked. However, only occasionally was work commented upon; usually the comments were positive but rarely did they give the pupil an understanding of how he or she might improve their work and thus raise standards.
48. Leadership of the subject is satisfactory, but management is at present unsatisfactory. The subject leader has a clear vision for the future and knows how she wants to raise standards. All areas of the National Curriculum are covered in the scheme of work and are being addressed consistently across the school. The subject is well placed for improvement, provided strategies agreed upon as school policy are followed by all classes and all years. At present, the inconsistent implementation of such strategies and of the use of targets hinders progress in learning.

Mathematics across the curriculum

49. Evidence of good links between mathematics and information and communication technology were seen in the use of spreadsheets in Year 6 to find the area and perimeter of shapes and in science, in the recording of findings to show degrees of pollution and dirt.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**, with some good features.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The focus on investigative science is good.
- Cross-curricular links are good.
- Teaching and learning in lessons are good.
- Assessment and monitoring processes are unsatisfactory.
- The challenge to high achievers is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

50. Standards in science by the age of eleven were below average when tested against national standards in 2003, and the school's target was not met. They were well below average when measured against the results in similar schools and in relation to prior attainment. The standards attained by the present Year 6 are in line with the national expectation. Satisfactory progress since the start of the year could be seen in work books in all classes, showing all pupils are achieving satisfactorily.
51. Pupils enjoy the investigative aspect of science and work well together to establish fair tests. They use scientific vocabulary effectively and provision for pupils with special educational needs is good, support being provided, for example, by scribing their scientific thoughts and ideas.
52. Standards of teaching in all lessons seen were good, and in almost all lessons, achievement was also good, although standards were only satisfactory. In the best lessons, work was well planned, the objectives were clear and built on previous work. Pupils were eager to pursue scientific enquiry and could discuss their findings in good scientific vocabulary. Opportunities were lost, however, to challenge more able pupils to reach a higher standard.
53. Science is well linked to other areas of the curriculum, for example history, art and design and mathematics, and good opportunities are used to link scientific discovery to everyday life, such as the nutritional components of foods and their link to healthy living.
54. Leadership of the subject is satisfactory. The co-ordinator is experienced and knowledgeable, with an infectious enthusiasm for the subject. Evidence of monitoring progress is in early stages and has not yet impacted on raising standards, particularly those of high achievers. The scheme of work lacks rigour in its progression and the use of assessment of individual pupils is unsatisfactory. Teachers show a lack of understanding in assessing pupils' work and the standards being achieved, leading to an inability to target work accurately and measure progress and standards effectively. The co-ordinator acknowledges that this is an area she would like to move forward.
55. Progress since the last inspection is satisfactory.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **satisfactory**. Standards at the age of 11 are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory, with some good initiatives recently introduced.
- Resources are good.
- The attitudes of pupils are good.
- Cross-curricular links are good.
- Technical support for the subject is good.

- Assessment and the tracking of pupils' progress are unsatisfactory.
- Monitoring of teaching is unsatisfactory.
- The new scheme of work is beginning to have a positive effect on standards.

Commentary

56. Standards in ICT are at least satisfactory. There are a few pupils who have been identified as gifted and they are appropriately challenged. Some of these pupils run a lunchtime club.
57. There is a new scheme of work in place which is in the process of being evaluated by all staff. From work seen in lessons and in discussion with the co-ordinator, the majority of pupils attain a satisfactory standard by the age of eleven. Pupils are keen to learn and enjoy the subject. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Achievement of all pupils is satisfactory.
58. Teachers' subject knowledge is satisfactory and work is carefully planned across all areas of the curriculum and links to everyday life. The standards of teaching in lessons seen were satisfactory or good, and teachers provided work to challenge pupils of different ability. Teaching assistants were used effectively to provide support for less able pupils. In the best lessons, pupils were given clear instructions, were constantly supported by adults and maintained an active and productive pace of work.
59. Further investment in resources has been made since the last inspection and this is ongoing, maintaining its positive impact on both teaching and learning. Good resources in the suite enable all aspects of the curriculum to be met, but greater use could be made of computers and other forms of technology in the classrooms in order to support the wider curriculum. Part of the school is not connected to the network, although building works are planned which will rectify this. Good technical support is in place, ensuring that the resources are consistently available. ICT is used to support other features of the school's life, and a PowerPoint presentation was well used as part of an assembly on 'Challenges'.
60. The recently appointed co-ordinator is enthusiastic and knowledgeable and is beginning to introduce more robust systems to monitor progress. An audit of software has taken place and this will be used to further enhance the cross-curricular links with ICT. The assessment of pupils' work is not yet sufficiently accurate and further work is needed to develop a portfolio of assessed work as a tool to measure progress and standards.
61. Progress since the last inspection is satisfactory.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

62. The use of ICT in other subjects of the curriculum is good. It is particularly well used in mathematics where, for example, spreadsheets are used to support work on shape. Digital microscopes are used in science, and the pupils are able to access the Internet to research history projects. Art work seen on display showed the use of electronic art programs and the digital camera is used to support many areas of the curriculum.

HUMANITIES

Religious education was inspected in full and is reported on below. It was not possible to observe lessons in geography and history but an analysis of previous work was made.

Provision in humanities is **satisfactory**.

Geography

63. An analysis of work, displays and planning was undertaken. Standards are at least satisfactory. Displays show good links with art.

History

64. An analysis of work, displays and planning was undertaken. Standards are at least satisfactory. Very good links with art and English were seen on display.

Religious education

65. During the inspection, it was only possible to observe two lessons and there was a limited amount of work available for analysis. Therefore, it is not possible to make a secure judgement about overall provision.

66. In both lessons observed, pupils attained at least above average standards. Pupils demonstrated a good awareness of spiritual and moral issues. They were able to discuss complex ideas in an articulate and meaningful way. They worked very well together in pairs and raised some thoughtful questions. In one lesson, pupils showed a good understanding of the life of Nelson Mandela. They demonstrated through the writing of interview questions for him that they understood and could empathise with his ideas and feelings.

67. The teaching in both lessons observed was at least good. In one very good lesson, the teacher encouraged pupils to express their views and reflect on some profound questions such as 'What is life?'. There was a high level of challenge and pupils made very good progress in their spiritual understanding.

68. The management of the subject is sound. There is a policy for the subject in place and the Somerset Scheme of Work is followed. There is guidance for teachers about progression in the subject and the co-ordinator has identified appropriate links with other areas of the curriculum.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

It was not possible to observe lessons in **art and design**, **music** or **design and technology**. **Physical education** was sampled.

Art and design

69. No lessons were observed and it is not possible to make a detailed judgement about standards of teaching and learning. Scrutiny of work, displays around the school and discussions with staff and pupils indicate that provision for art and design is satisfactory.

70. An analysis of pupils' work indicates that standards in art and design are at least satisfactory, with some gifted pupils achieving high standards. The scheme of work has been strengthened and the art display in corridors and classrooms is attractive. Standards of display are good, as are resources.
71. Pressprints and printing blocks made an effective display by Year 3 pupils and good links are established with other curriculum areas, such as a display of Tudor portraits using pasta, and the use of the digital camera to take photos of pattern around the school. Links have also been established with students from the neighbouring secondary school who have assisted pupils with a project on gargoyles.
72. There are also good links with other cultures, and effective use was made of visits by members of staff to Africa which were reflected in displays of printing on a Ghanaian theme. Display is also used to support subjects such as literacy, where careful thought is given to the use of prompts, for example, displaying beginnings and endings for creative writing.
73. The co-ordinator has recently undertaken an analysis of the subject and is making headway in developing areas identified for improvement. Assessment and the levelling of work throughout the school are underdeveloped.

Design and technology

74. No lessons were timetabled during the week of the inspection. Very little work was available for scrutiny so no judgements could be made. In the light of the previous inspection report about design and technology, this was disappointing.

Music

75. No lessons were observed and therefore no judgements can be made on standards of teaching and learning.
76. A high standard of singing was heard in collective worship, where pupils were heard to sing successfully in two parts. Their sense of pitch and rhythm is good and their enjoyment of the activity was evident on each occasion. Several members of staff have an interest in the subject and support extra-curricular activities.
77. Some very good instrumental teaching by peripatetic teachers was observed and pupils regularly play instruments during collective worship. A wide range of instruments was seen, including wind, strings, and percussion. These pupils form an orchestra and a band whose standards are good, and they perform with confidence. There is a culture of appreciation within the school where musical achievements were seen to be celebrated. Background music was played in the library, ensuring that all pupils may have an understanding of how music can be used to create atmosphere.
78. The co-ordinator has recently undertaken an analysis of the subject and is developing areas identified for improvement. Assessment and the levelling of work throughout the school are underdeveloped.

Physical education

79. It was not possible to make judgements on teaching and learning throughout the school. In the lessons observed, standards and progress were good in games and satisfactory in dance. Provision for physical education outside the school day is very good, with a good range of activities on offer. These are very well supported and include mixed netball teams and girls' football teams. Teams regularly achieve success in sporting fixtures against other schools.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

80. Provision in personal, social and health education is at least satisfactory. One session of circle time and two assemblies were observed. Within the lesson observed, pupils thought clearly and deeply as they discussed whether they could choose between one million pounds and a friend. The debate sparkled! Pupils articulated well the responsibilities of friendship such as loyalty, comfort, trust and honesty. The lesson was a very good preparation for work in secondary school.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	5
How inclusive the school is	4
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	5
Value for money provided by the school	5

Overall standards achieved	5
Pupils' achievement	5

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	3
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

The quality of education provided by the school	5
The quality of teaching	5
How well pupils learn	5
The quality of assessment	5
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	4
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3

The leadership and management of the school	5
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	5
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	5

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