

INSPECTION REPORT

WESTOVER GREEN COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Bridgwater

LEA area: Somerset

Unique reference number: 123733

Headteacher: Mr O R James

Lead inspector: Mrs L Brackstone

Dates of inspection: 28th - 30th June 2004

Inspection number: 258387

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	340
School address:	Westover Green Bridgwater Somerset
Postcode:	TA6 7HB
Telephone number:	(01278) 422 943
Fax number:	(01278) 446 003
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs A Hudson
Date of previous inspection:	8 th June 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Westover Green is a large primary school with 340 pupils on roll. There are slightly more boys than girls. The pupils are accommodated in 12 classes, most of which are mixed age groups. There is also a Speech and Language Resource Base that currently caters for 11 pupils, all of whom have statements of special educational need. Nearly all pupils are of white UK heritage. Most pupils come from an area of considerable social and economic deprivation. Three pupils come from a travelling community. There is a very high mobility rate of pupils within the school. Just under half of the pupils are eligible for free school meals and this is well above the national average. There are 77 pupils who have special educational needs which include difficulties with speech and communication, social and behavioural, multi-sensory, physical and moderate learning problems. The school is part of an Education Action Zone. The school received a School Achievement Award in 2002. Children start school as a rising five at the beginning of the autumn or spring term. Most attend one of the 17 pre-school settings that are available within the area. Attainment on entry is very poor. The current headteacher has been in place for just over 18 months.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21872	Mrs L Brackstone	Lead inspector	
11575	Mrs C Fish	Lay inspector	
24528	Mr G Muton	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography History
22790	Mrs J Pinney	Team inspector	English Art and design Design and technology Music Physical education
33163	Mrs J O'Hara	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology
30669	Mrs M Sandercock	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage Religious education
7465	Mr R Brent	Team inspector	Special educational needs

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	4 - 6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	7 - 11
Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	11 - 18
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	18 - 20
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECT	21 - 36
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	37

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **satisfactory school that provides a sound standard of education**. Although standards attained by the end of Year 6 fall well short of expectations, achievement is satisfactory in relation to the pupils' very poor attainment on entry into school. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, the curriculum provided is adequate and all pupils are fully included in the life of the school. Pupils are looked after well and their personal development is good. Their attitudes to, and behaviour in school are satisfactory. The leadership of the headteacher is very good and the school is well managed. Links with parents and the local community are good. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards in speaking and listening, reading and writing, mathematics, science and religious education fall well short of expectations.
- Standards in art and design are above the expected standards in Year 6. Standards in information and communication technology meet national expectations in Year 6.
- Leadership and management are good overall. The leadership of the headteacher is very good.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- Opportunities for enrichment within the curriculum are very good, but there is no secure outdoor play area for the Foundation Stage.
- Provision for moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils are well cared for, and the adults available give them good support.
- Links with parents and the local community are good. However, too many parents do not take enough responsibility for getting their children to school on time.
- The deployment of teaching assistants is not efficient and numbers employed do not meet the needs of these challenging pupils.
- Some statutory requirements are not met with regard to collective worship and the reports sent to parents about their children's progress.

THE SCHOOL WAS LAST INSPECTED IN JUNE 1998. THE ACTIONS IDENTIFIED FOR IMPROVEMENT ARE NOW BEING SYSTEMATICALLY RECTIFIED BY THE CURRENT HEADTEACHER. GIVEN HIS POTENTIAL, AND THE SUPPORT HE IS RECEIVING FROM THE LOCAL EDUCATION AUTHORITY, IMPROVEMENT CAN BE JUDGED TO BE SATISFACTORY OVERALL AND DEVELOPING WELL.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

Overall achievement is satisfactory, with pupils making steady progress throughout the school. This is despite many receiving very little support or encouragement from home.

Children start Reception with levels of attainment that are very poor. Social skills and language development are particularly weak. Because there is no Nursery, the children receive minimal time in the Foundation Stage. Consequently, despite good quality teaching and learning and an interesting curriculum, the children start Year 1 of the National Curriculum with standards that are still very poor. However, overall achievement in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Pupils continue to achieve satisfactorily in Years 1 and 2. However, by the end of Year 2, standards remain well below the expected levels in reading, writing, mathematics, and science. Standards in information and communication technology are below national expectations. Standards in religious education fall short of the expectations of the locally-agreed syllabus. On the other hand, standards in art and design are as expected and achievement in this subject is good. Pupils continue to achieve satisfactorily in Years 3 to 6, but by the time they are ready to transfer to secondary school, standards still remain below expected levels in English, mathematics and science. In Years 3 to 6, standards in religious education fall short of the expectations of the locally-agreed syllabus. Pupils achieve well in information and communication technology and attain national expectations. Achievement is very good in art and design because, by the end of Year 6, standards exceed those expected for this age group. Pupils with special educational needs, including those in the Speech and Language Resource Base, achieve satisfactorily in relation to their prior attainment on entry into school. No other judgements were made on standards in other subjects because they were not the focus of the inspection.

Pupils' personal development is good. It is promoted through **good provision for social, moral and cultural development.** **Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory.** Most pupils have satisfactory attitudes to school and behave appropriately in and around school. However, there are a significant minority of pupils who, at times, are challenging in their behaviour. Relationships in school are good. **Attendance is satisfactory,** but **punctuality levels are unsatisfactory.**

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a satisfactory standard of education. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. They are good in the Foundation Stage. Teachers and pupils enjoy positive relationships with their classes. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and all pupils are encouraged to be fully involved in lessons. Subject knowledge is good and different teaching styles are used appropriately to motivate the pupils and promote learning. Lesson planning, challenge of work and use of time are satisfactory overall. Homework adequately supports the pupils' learning. **The curriculum is satisfactory** overall and is very well enriched by a high quality range of activities. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. There is a sufficient number of teachers, but these challenging pupils do not have enough teaching assistants to fully meet their needs. The indoor accommodation is good but, because there is no secure outdoor area for the Foundation Stage, it is judged to be satisfactory overall. Learning resources are adequate. Pupils are well cared for and health and safety procedures are securely in place. There are **good links with parents and the local community.** **Partnerships with other schools and colleges are satisfactory.**

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the new headteacher is very good. He cares passionately about the pupils and has established a very positive rapport with all stakeholders. **The leadership of key staff is good.** The school is **managed effectively** and the office staff very competently

carry out day-to-day administration. **The leadership of the governors is satisfactory overall.** They are supportive of the school and have successfully shaped its future development through the appointment of the current headteacher. Their ability to challenge and support the senior staff is satisfactory and developing well. However, they do not ensure that the daily act of collective worship and the progress reports to parents from school meet statutory requirements.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are generally satisfied with the school. Those who attended the meeting for parents prior to the inspection felt extremely positive about the school, particularly since the arrival of the current headteacher. Response to the questionnaire was more mixed; a good number of parents were happy with all aspects of school life, but a small minority expressed concerns relating to bullying, the behaviour of some pupils, the quality of homework, the seeking of their views and the information they receive on their children's progress. However, inspectors felt that the only issue of concern they could endorse was that related to the information provided on pupil progress. **Pupils like their school** and are especially complimentary about their headteacher. They particularly enjoy going on school visits, sitting in the '*Garden of Tranquillity*' and receiving prizes for good behaviour.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve overall standards at the end of Year 6.
- Create a secure outdoor area for the Foundation Stage.*
- Encourage parents to take more responsibility for ensuring that their children arrive on time for school.
- Review the numbers of teaching assistants available for support in the classrooms.
- Ensure that all statutory requirements are met.

*Denotes that this has been identified in the school improvement plan.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Standards by the end of Year 6 are well below expected levels, but overall, pupil achievement is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in art and design are above national expectations by the end of Year 6 and overall achievement is very good.
- Standards in information and communication technology meet national expectations by the end of Year 6 and overall achievement in this subject is good.
- Standards in English, mathematics and science are well below average in Years 2 and 6.
- Standards in religious education fall well short of the expectations in the locally-agreed syllabus.

Commentary

Standards in the Foundation Stage

1. Attainment on entry is very poor in all areas of learning. Although the children achieve satisfactorily in the Reception class, by the time that they are ready to start Year 1 of the National Curriculum, standards are still far worse than is normally expected, particularly social skills and language development, which affect all other areas of learning. This is despite the quality of teaching being good in both Reception classes. There is no Nursery at Westover Green so children start the Foundation Stage curriculum in the Reception class. They are admitted either at the start of the autumn term or after Christmas, depending on when their birthday occurs. Consequently, this means that some of the children, particularly the youngest, only have two out of a possible six terms in the Foundation Stage. This is not a sufficient amount of time for them to make enough progress from such a low baseline to meet national expectations at the start of Year 1.

Standards in the national tests of 2003

2. In the national tests of 2003, recorded in the table below, standards in Year 2 were well below average in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards in the teacher assessment tests for science were also well below average. In comparison with schools with a similar number of pupils eligible for free school meals, standards were well short of expectations. Over the past three years, standards have been well below the national average.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2003¹

Standards in:	School results	National results
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¹ All levels of the National Curriculum are awarded a points score. The average score for all pupils taking the test is used to grade schools in each year. The expected average points at age seven is 15.5. Tables are adjusted to reflect the national average score before grading. The grades are shown in the summary.

reading	13.6 (13.9)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	12.1 (13.3)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	14.1 (14.0)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 47 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

3. In the national tests of 2003, recorded in the table below, standards in Year 6 were very low in English, mathematics and science. In comparison with similar schools, standards were well short of expectations. In relation to prior attainment in Year 2, standards were very low. Overall, standards have been declining over the past few years and trends have been below the national picture.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003²

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	21.9 (24.1)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	21.6 (24.2)	26.8 (26.7)
science	24.4 (26.1)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 50 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

Inspection findings

4. Current standards in speaking, listening, reading, writing, mathematics and science are well below those that are expected for Year 2 pupils. However, when one considers attainment on entry into school, the limited amount of time spent in the Foundation Stage, the high numbers of pupils with special educational needs, pupil mobility and the vulnerability of these pupils, it is evident that achievement is at least satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. During this academic year, one group of Year 2 pupils has experienced high levels of staff absence. This has necessitated the employment of a significant number of supply teachers, which the school has acknowledged as being unsettling for the pupils and has not promoted consistent achievement.
5. In the current Year 6, standards in speaking, listening, reading, writing, mathematics and science are also much less than expected. Pupil mobility at Westover Green is high, which means that achievement over time is difficult to judge. However, when individual test scores and work are analysed, it is evident that achievement is satisfactory overall in Years 3 to 6, despite a high level of staff absence.
6. In comparison to the results in the national tests of 2003, standards in both Years 2 and 6 have slightly improved. This is as a result of a more focused approach to the monitoring of teaching and learning, which has been undertaken by the headteacher and the local education authority during the past academic year.
7. Standards in information and communication technology are below national expectations in Year 2 and are as expected in Year 6. The pupils progress well with their information and communication technology skills and achievement is good overall from Years 1 to 6.

² All levels of the National Curriculum are awarded a points score. The average score for all pupils taking the test is used to grade schools in each year. The expected average points at age eleven is 27. Tables are adjusted to reflect the national average score before grading. The grades are shown in the summary.

This is as a result of effective and enthusiastic subject leadership and efficient use of its well-resourced computer suite.

8. Standards in religious education in Years 2 and 6 fall well short of the expectations of the locally-agreed syllabus. This is because the pupils' poor skills in speaking, listening, reading and writing make it difficult for them to discuss ideas, listen to the views of others or use appropriate vocabulary in their writing. In addition to this, the subject knowledge of the teachers is weak and pupils are not provided with sufficiently challenging activities to develop their knowledge and understanding.
9. Standards in art and design are in line with national expectations in Year 2. By Year 6, standards exceed national expectations. In relation to prior attainment, pupils achieve very well in this subject. This is because art and design enjoys a high profile in the school and is led by a very talented subject leader.
10. No differences were noted in the achievement of boys and girls. Judgements in other areas of the curriculum were not made because they were not the focus of this inspection.
11. Standards in English language skills and the use of literacy across the curriculum fall well short of expectations. This is because the pupils' speech and language is under-developed. For example, they do not have the appropriate vocabulary at their fingertips. Consequently, they use hand-motions and general phrases such as '*You know*' while they think hard for the correct words. This was evident in discussion with pupils who were explaining to an inspector why they liked science, but could not think of the words '*practical activities*' to describe what particularly appealed to them.
12. Pupils' competence in the use of their mathematical skills falls well short of expectations. This is because they do not have the mathematical understanding and confidence to use their knowledge to support other areas within the curriculum. Although the pupils' information and communication technology skills are not adequate in Year 2 for independent use in subjects such as English, history and geography, by Year 6, their skills support other areas of the curriculum satisfactorily. For example, the pupils are able to support their design and technology skills by using programs that link in with light controls.
13. At the time of the last inspection in 1998, it was felt that the overall attainment of most pupils in the subjects of the National Curriculum was broadly in line with national expectations. Standardised data from 2000 indicates that standards in English, mathematics and science have been generally much less than expected in Years 2 and 6. Since the headteacher took up his post 18 months ago, he has been very aware that these standards are just not good enough. He has been able to successfully halt the decline of standards through very good support from the local education authority, rigorous monitoring programmes and improved links with parents and the local community.

Standards and achievement of pupils with special educational needs, including those in the Speech and Language Resource Base.

14. The school uses information satisfactorily, from the Foundation Stage and its own tests, to identify pupils. They set targets for them, and these are included in their statements for special educational needs. The majority of pupils with special educational needs

achieve satisfactorily by Year 6. This is a result of overall satisfactory teaching and curricular arrangements across the school. However, more could be done to address progress by evaluating improvement on a pupil-by-pupil basis and developing techniques to help staff plan to meet the needs of all the pupils.

15. Attainment at the end of Year 6 cannot be judged for pupils in the Speech and Language Resource Base because the group is too small for valid comparisons to be made. However, school and local authority data indicates that attainment varies between individuals, according to the extent of each pupil's needs, but is overall well below the national average. Achievement is satisfactory because these pupils start from a very low base. Work is well presented and pupils are making good progress in relation to their social communication needs or stage of language acquisition. Pupils learn well in the Resource Base; progress in mainstream classes is satisfactory. Their relationships with each other, other pupils in the school and Resource Base staff are very good. However, in some classes where class management is uncertain, progress and relationships are less secure.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES, VALUES AND OTHER PERSONAL QUALITIES

The pupils' attitudes and behaviour are satisfactory. Their moral, social and cultural development is good. Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. Attendance is satisfactory, but pupils are not always punctual.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has worked hard to promote and improve attendance and this has resulted in a good improvement this year, but punctuality remains a concern.
- Relationships are good between all members of the school's community and the pupils enjoy coming to school.
- There are occasions when some pupils do not behave as well as they should.
- The school tries hard to ensure the pupils work in an atmosphere free from any form of harassment.
- The pupils' personal development is well supported by what the school provides.

Commentary

16. The school has put a lot of effort into raising the level of attendance, and the figures for this year have improved by nearly two per cent on the figures given below. This has been achieved by thorough monitoring of registers, telephoning home to find out why a pupil is away and following up on any unexplained absences through the educational welfare service and the family workers attached to the school. However, despite the best efforts of the school, not all parents respond, and so the level of unauthorised absences remains too high. There are still concerns about a number of families who have time-keeping difficulties and the school is continuing to work with them.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence

Unauthorised absence

School data	5.6
National data	5.4

School data	1.2
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

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Chinese

Number of pupils on roll
333
2
2
1
1

Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
12	2
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0

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

17. The relationships in school are good. The pupils get on well with each other, for the most part. On many occasions, they work well together in lessons and the playtimes seen were happy, pleasant times. In most classes, the good relationships that develop between the pupils and the staff do much to promote a positive working atmosphere. As a result, the pupils feel safe and valued. They are very willing take on any responsibilities, but are given too few opportunities for this. Most pupils enjoy coming to school and take part in the activities provided for them outside the classroom; all of these broaden their experiences and give them an insight into life beyond school and their local surroundings. Attitudes develop well from a very low level when the children enter the school in Reception. This is due to the great efforts made by the staff to develop an interest in what is going on, to work and play with others and into develop self-control. Attitudes in Years 1 to 6 are satisfactory because although many children enjoy school, including their lessons, there are a number who are not enthused and make comments about lessons such as *'That was boring'*.
18. The behaviour seen around school, in lessons and at playtimes is often good, but there are too many occasions when the pupils do not show enough regard for others, including running along corridors and bursting through doors without looking. In some lessons, there is a continual undercurrent of unchallenged misbehaviour that is a distraction to those pupils who want to get on. This is often related to weak behaviour management. Although the pupils spoken to were not concerned about behaviour, they did comment on this undercurrent in lessons. A small number of pupils experience extreme difficulty in controlling their behaviour; other pupils are often aware of this and are tolerant of them. The school has excluded some pupils in recent times. This is always a very last resort. The reasons for permanently excluding pupils have been extreme behaviour involving physical violence.
19. The school tries very hard to provide the pupils with a working environment free from harassment of any kind. They say that any bullying which occurs is handled well if a member of staff is told. They also say that the *'Calm Squad'*, which consists of trained peer mentors in Year 6, has a positive effect on playtimes.

20. In the Foundation Stage, very good teaching supports the important area of personal, social and emotional development. Teachers rightly recognise that very poor personal skills constrain children's learning across the whole curriculum, and work hard to improve them. This very clear emphasis in the teaching pays dividends and children achieve well, though levels are still poor when children leave Reception.
21. The pupils' personal development is good. Pupils make good use of opportunities to reflect, such as in the '*Garden of Tranquillity*', which they treat with great respect. In some classes, music is used well to create a sense of calm. Opportunities to be quiet and to think are present in some class assemblies. However, what is taught in religious education and many assemblies does not sufficiently underpin the pupils' spiritual development. Their moral and social development is good. The children in Reception are expected to behave well, which they find very hard, and are taught the difference between right and wrong and this develops as the pupils move through the school. Older pupils are encouraged to get along well together through residential experiences. They learn to respect others through the good example set by many staff. The pupils have a good understanding of cultural differences because the school provides them with a good range of activities and experiences. These range from visits to Anglican and Sikh places of worship to craft-work from Kenya. They learn about their own immediate culture through, for example, their celebration of the Bridgwater Fair.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The planned curriculum meets national requirements and gives the pupils adequate subject coverage. It is enriched very well by after-school clubs and well-organised visits that support work on specific topics. Pupils are well cared for and they are given good support and guidance. Links with parents and the community are good. Links with other schools and colleges are satisfactory.

Teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching and learning is **satisfactory**. Assessment is **satisfactory overall**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good in the Foundation Stage and assessment procedures are used well to support learning.
- Subject knowledge is good in all areas except religious education, where it is unsatisfactory.
- Resources are used well.
- Teachers insist on high standards of behaviour.
- Teaching assistants are used well to support learning.
- Equality of opportunity is good.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 42 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
2 (5%)	15 (36%)	15 (36%)	6 (14%)	4 (9%)	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.

22. The overall quality of teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage is good. Teachers enjoy very positive relationships with the children. They give the children lots of encouragement and praise and this helps them develop their self-esteem. Consequently, children start to apply themselves, with varying degrees of success, to the well-prepared learning activities. Teachers have a very good understanding of the needs of these very vulnerable children and plan effectively a range of purposeful activities to maintain their interest and develop good levels of engagement. All adults involved with these young children very conscientiously try to develop positive attitudes and behaviour. An effective range of teaching methods is deployed to maintain the children's interest, notably the use of first-hand experiences and the encouragement of appropriate language. For example, this was evident in the Foundation Stage trip to Hestercombe Gardens. The adults involved in this trip reinforced words that related to water such as 'lake', 'stream', and 'waterfall'. Although there are not enough teaching assistants to meet the needs of these children, those involved with these youngsters are used very well, particularly on visits out of school. However, when a class is left in school, it is clear that the level of support is not high enough to meet the needs of those left behind. For example, when one of the two Reception classes goes swimming, the other one is left with only the teacher in the classroom and this is inadequate for children who have such a high level of need.
23. Teaching and learning is satisfactory in Years 1 to 6. All pupils are encouraged to be fully involved in all lessons and removal from sessions for specialist work is kept to a minimum. Teachers insist on high standards of behaviour, and pupil management is generally calm and supportive. This was well illustrated in a very good art and design lesson in a Year 4/5 class when the high quality pupil management ensured that no time was wasted on unruly pupils. When behaviour management is unsatisfactory, lessons become less successful because a significant number of pupils do not develop their knowledge and thus underachieve. This means that the quality of learning is as good as it could be.
24. Subject knowledge is generally good and this promotes the acquisition of knowledge, understanding and skills in most subjects. However, teachers have an insecure understanding of religious education. Consequently, the content of these lessons is not always appropriate and pupils do not always develop their knowledge and skills in this subject area. In fact, three out of the four unsatisfactory lessons observed during the inspection were religious education sessions.
25. Teaching assistants are available in classes for support, they are used well to help pupils to acquire skills and to apply themselves to their tasks. For example, in a very good art and design lesson in a Year 3 and 4 class, there were four teaching assistants available for support. This meant that the pupils worked hard because they were helped to apply themselves well. However, in another class during the same afternoon, a class teacher was observed dealing on her own with a group of challenging pupils. Consequently, too

many pupils were distracted by the weak behaviour of these pupils and quality learning was made impossible.

26. Resources are used well to maintain the interest of the pupils and to make good use of learning opportunities. This was evident in a lesson using the computer suite, where the individual computers and the interactive whiteboard encouraged the pupils to work collaboratively in pairs. Good use is made of visits to motivate the pupils in their learning and help them develop skills from first-hand experiences. For instance, Year 6 pupils, who had visited a Sikh Temple and Coventry Cathedral during their residential visit the previous week, remembered a good amount of detail about the two different places of worship. This visit also promoted their cultural development, so good use was made of the time available.
27. Lesson planning is satisfactory. Most teachers clearly identify a learning objective. This helps to challenge the pupils and encourage them to understand what they are learning. This was evident in a very good Year 1 lesson, where pupils were developing techniques on how to write questions that could help them find out information. During this session, they were asked to write questions about what they had to find out before they went on their school trip the next day. In this particular session, the class teacher modelled how questions could be asked to seek out information. This motivated the pupils and encouraged them to think of questions with their partners. Homework is given to pupils on a regular basis, but the support provided at home does not always equal that provided in school.
28. Teaching assistants work extremely hard and make a good contribution to the progress of pupils with special educational needs. There is good liaison between teachers and assistants. However, the deployment of teaching assistants is unbalanced, with the result that help is not distributed equally across the classes. At times, the links between schemes of work and special educational needs provision is not clear and consequently, the needs of all pupils are not always met. Teachers have a good command of their subjects, but a significant minority of staff have difficulty in tailoring the work and learning materials to the needs of those pupils with learning difficulties, which hinders their achievement. Overall, teaching of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory.
29. Teaching by the staff in the Speech and Language Resource Base, including the support staff and speech therapist, is good. All understand thoroughly the needs of the pupils and make good provision for the teaching of basic skills, especially social communication. Planning is very good for small group work; it is satisfactory in mainstream classes. Similarly, the behaviour management of those with emotional and behavioural needs is very good in the Resource Base; it is less good elsewhere. Good strategies in a lesson aimed at developing letter-writing encouraged pupils to listen carefully and to set their letters out carefully. In some lessons, teachers do not use cued articulation and associated signing and body language to help those pupils with more acute difficulties. The inclusion of social targets in the individual education plans helps pupils to relate positively to each other and to adults, and the quality of their personal development improves as a result. Teachers also work hard to use parental and community links to raise achievement; for example, pupils derive great benefit from visits in and around the local area.
30. In the last inspection, procedures for tracking and checking pupils' progress were identified as areas requiring improvement. Assessment is good in the Foundation Stage

where teachers use the information gained from their observations to inform future planning which will fully meet the needs of the pupils. Procedures for tracking and checking progress are good in Years 1 to 6, with rigorous systems in place to support learning in English, mathematics and science. However, teachers do not always use the information they have gained to respond to individual needs or to help the pupils understand what they need to do to improve. Day-to-day marking is encouraging to pupils, but not always used well enough by teachers to inform future planning. In all other subjects, tracking and checking procedures are at an early stage of development and are just being introduced consistently through the school.

The curriculum

The quality, breadth and balance of curricular opportunities are satisfactory. Opportunities for enrichment are very good. The quality and quantity of accommodation and resources are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision and participation in sports, the arts and other activities is very good.
- All pupils are fully included in all aspects of school life.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- There are insufficient numbers of support staff to meet the very demanding needs of the pupils.
- The main part of the accommodation is very good but the outdoor facilities for the Foundation Stage are unsatisfactory.
- The current organisation of year groups creates difficulties in curriculum planning.
- The curriculum for Year 1 pupils does not take sufficient account of their low attainment.
- The arrangements for collective worship do not meet statutory requirements.

Commentary

31. The curriculum meets statutory requirements and includes a range of learning opportunities for all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. These opportunities are open to all pupils so that the equality of access and opportunity is good. Subject co-ordinators play a leading role in making sure that all programmes of work are planned appropriately. However, some difficulties have been encountered with the current class organisation (whereby age groups are sometime spread across several classes) in making sure that lesson content is not repeated or essential aspects missed. These difficulties have been recognised by the school and appropriate action is being taken. The main review of the curriculum is scheduled for this coming autumn. In the meantime, curriculum development is satisfactory. The current arrangements for a daily collective act of worship do not meet statutory requirements. Whilst the arrangements for assembling pupils in different groups is satisfactory, these assemblies do not always include an invitation for pupils to participate in an act of worship. At times, they are confused with religious education sessions.
32. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is good and is based on a nationally-recommended programme of study. It is well planned and ensures that rich opportunities are given to extend the taught curriculum by taking children out of school for visits. However, one weakness is the provision for physical development because the

accommodation fails to meet the requirement for a safe and secure outdoor area in which children can work and play.

33. When pupils enter Year 1, many of them are still working towards the early learning goals that are designed for the Foundation Stage children. The school is aware of the modifications to the curriculum which are necessary to make the learning opportunities of its Year 1 pupils more suitable for their stage of development, including the provision of outdoor facilities and play equipment.
34. Provision for pupils with special education needs is good. Individual education plans are prepared appropriately, although there is an occasional emphasis on literacy targets at the expense of, for example, behavioural or numeracy objectives. The formal and informal monitoring of individual education plans and their associated targets is satisfactory. The provision in statements is implemented well.
35. Pupils in the Speech and Language Resource Base have a good curriculum. There are good arrangements for them to take part in mainstream lessons, and independence skills are developed well. Pupils were often seen learning, playing and talking with a range of classmates and other friends. Individual education plans are drawn up carefully; in particular, there is a good balance of social and linguistic targets, closely tailored according to need.
36. A particularly strong feature of the school is the quality and range of extra opportunities it provides. This enrichment of the curriculum includes a very good range of lunchtime and after-school clubs which, besides the more usual sport and music clubs, also includes maths, drama, ocarina and chess. One of the teaching assistants is an enthusiast for sport and encourages pupils to join her rounders and athletics clubs. Parents help with football and there are good connections with local clubs. Further participation in sport is promoted by the involvement of the school in inter-school tournaments. Year 6 pupils attend a series of physical education lessons at the local comprehensive school and swimming has been introduced into the curriculum after a lapse of three years.
37. A range of musical opportunities is available to pupils, including three choirs and four recorder groups. Specialist music teachers are employed to improve this rich provision. The headteacher has a special interest in music and drama and, with the support of other staff, enters the school in several music and drama events. Every opportunity is taken to provide enriching activities for the pupils so that all classes go out of the school on visits, including residential trips for Years 3 to 6. Artists, authors and other visitors are regularly invited into school. All these opportunities for enrichment have a positive impact on the pupils and enhance their experiences very well.
38. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is satisfactory overall. Pupils are prepared well for the next stage of their education. Year 6 pupils visit their new school, and teachers from the comprehensive schools come to school to talk to them. Pupils transferring to the nearest secondary school at Chilton Trinity have a series of afternoons there so that they are completely familiar with their new school when they arrive at the start of the new academic year.
39. The main facilities in the school are very good. There are spacious classrooms, some of which have mini computer suites. There is also a very good central computer suite, spacious school hall, central library area and impressive physiotherapy facilities.

However, one class is housed in a temporary building, thus making it a little remote from the rest of the school. The outdoor facilities for the Reception children and some of the Year 1 pupils are unsatisfactory. There is no designated safe and secure area which can be used as an integral part of the school day. The match of teachers to the needs of the curriculum is satisfactory in Years 1 to 6. However, there are insufficient support staff to meet the very challenging needs of these children. Although there may be a good number of teaching assistants in classes where there are pupils with speech and language difficulties, there are not enough support staff available in other classes. For example, during one afternoon session, one class had four teaching assistants deployed in it, while at the same time, another teacher was observed managing a class out in the mobile classroom with no support to help her work with a significant number of challenging pupils. Apart from a deficiency in large outdoor play equipment for the younger pupils, resources are good overall.

Care, guidance and support

The school makes good provision to ensure the pupils' welfare, health, safety and care. Good advice, support and guidance are given. The school has good systems for taking the pupils' views into account.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school staff show genuine concern for the pupils in their charge.
- The pupils are provided with good support, guidance and advice because the school makes very good uses of the information it has about the pupils' personal development.
- Good procedures are in place to promote the pupils' health and safety.
- The pupils have a real voice in the work of the school through the school council.

Commentary

40. The staff in school form good relationships with the pupils and show genuine concern for them. In the school's questionnaire to older children last year, no child said that the staff in school did not listen to them. This sense of being valued in school helps the pupils to concentrate on getting on with their school life. The school is very vigilant in child protection and staff report concerns well if they arise. It tries hard to build good relationships with the local social services with regard to those pupils looked after in the community.
41. The school uses the pastoral information it has about the pupils very well to target support where it is needed. There are pupils in school who experience difficulties with social and emotional issues. These are well supported by, for example, the behaviour support team, which works particularly well with the school's special needs co-ordinator. The school has a good induction programme for those children who start in Reception, which helps the staff get to know them before they begin school. Pupils starting at other times said how well they were helped to settle because of the support given to them by the staff and by their peers. Academic information is used satisfactorily to target support where it is needed. The school celebrates the pupils' successes, both academic and personal,

each week at assemblies to which the parents are invited. These occasions do much to raise the pupils' self-esteem.

42. The school provides well for the health and safety of the pupils, except for one area of concern that has been mentioned to the headteacher. Well-trained staff provide first aid after accidents and these are recorded well. There are suitable arrangements to notify parents of any bumps to the head. All required tests are carried out on alarms, appliances and equipment at the correct time. The school is well maintained and provides a clean and cheerful environment for the pupils to work in.
43. The school council meets regularly to talk about anything that affects what goes on in school and is developing a high profile. It is a strong forum for pupils to express their views because time is provided in class to discuss what should be talked about and what has been decided. The school values the views and opinions of the pupils. For example, the school council was invited to be part of the selection process for the new deputy headteacher, providing a range of questions for the candidates. The school is also eager to seek the pupils' individual views and so, every two years, it carries out a survey with the older pupils about aspects such as uniform and school dinners.
44. The identification and assessment procedures for pupils with special educational needs are satisfactory. There are also adequate arrangements for monitoring, reviewing and target setting. The pupils benefit from some good school systems, but, currently, the arrangements for pupils with special educational needs are neither sufficiently robust nor linked effectively to the school's assessment arrangements. As a result, pupils with behavioural needs, for example, are subject to a variable provision.
45. Pupils in the Speech and Language Resource Base receive good quality support. Adults know the pupils well and are aware of their individual needs. For example, an effective multi-disciplinary approach through the speech therapist, educational psychologist and other professionals contributes to pupils' achievements by ensuring that their needs are both identified and addressed. The resource base has good procedures for monitoring academic and personal development. Pupils' strengths and weaknesses are identified through accurate screening arrangements and levels of attainment are recorded carefully. Good use is made of assessment data to formulate targets in the more important areas of language development.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The links with parents and the community are good. Those with other schools are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school works hard to develop a good working relationship with parents and to involve them in its work to the benefit of their children.
- The school seeks the parents' views regularly.
- Reports to parents about their children are unsatisfactory.
- The school is a willing participant in local events and actively seeks help with its work.

Commentary

46. From the time children are enrolled, the school works hard to try to break down barriers by establishing and nurturing a good relationship with the parents. It extends a warm welcome to parents and endeavours to discuss any problem or concerns with them as quickly as possible. The presence of the headteacher at the gate before and after school each day means that he can quickly take any immediately required action; parents find this reassuring. The school has programmes of adult education, including one about positive parenting, but regrettably, numbers attending are low. Meetings are held at which the parents can discuss their children's work with teachers. The school also holds regular informal open times after school when the pupils' work is on display and parents are asked to come and look at it. The school has set up a community group of parents and this is becoming active in organising and running events that are both social and fundraising. The school employs family liaison workers to further develop the relationship between home and school, with positive effects. The school's provision of a breakfast and after-school club is well used by parents.
47. To more actively involve the parents, the school seeks their opinions well on aspects such as the behaviour policy and the provision of only fruit at break times, which is a very successful initiative. The school surveys the parents through questionnaires every two years; responses from this are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. The staff listen carefully to what the parents tell them about their children and use this information well.
48. Generally, the information provided for parents is of good quality; it is well focused and clear. However, the annual reports to parents on how their children are doing are unsatisfactory. There are a number of omissions. They do not, for example, contain any targets for improvement, precise attendance information or anything about progress.
49. The school takes part in many activities organised for schools in the locality. It is a regular participant in the Highbridge and Weston Festivals and recently took part, with other pupils from Years 5 and 6, in a production of '*Yanamamo*' at Bridgwater Town Hall. Links between the school and a local secondary school provide sporting opportunities for some pupils. Satisfactory arrangements are made for the transfer of pupils to their secondary schools. However, work with other local schools to share expertise, to tackle common difficulties together, or to undertake joint training to provide a common approach remains underdeveloped.
50. The school enjoys good relationships with the local community and tries hard to develop links with businesses. It enjoys some success, with a local 'Do-it-Yourself' store providing the resources for the '*Garden of Tranquillity*'. A '*reading buddy*' link with the Income Tax office staff is proving very successful, with improvement in the reading results of the Year 6 pupils involved.
51. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are encouraged to co-operate in reviews of progress and are encouraged to help with their children's learning. The Speech and Language Resource Base has very good links with parents, as evidenced by both the home-school books and parents' positive comments about the support which they are offered. These play a significant role in helping pupils' achievement.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the headteacher and key staff are good and the school is well managed. The governance of the school is satisfactory overall and developing well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership of the headteacher is very good.
- Leadership of key staff is good.
- The school is effectively managed.

Commentary

52. The headteacher has a very clear vision for the future of the school and feels passionately that the pupils at Westover Green deserve the best possible education. He is well supported by his dedicated and hard-working staff who share his commitment to the children attending the school. The headteacher is gradually establishing a culture which is eager to take on new initiatives and share professional issues with other professionals. He is fully committed to raising standards and is successfully developing a strategic leadership team that supports this aim. They are working hard to ensure that the curriculum on offer is interesting, fully meets the needs of all pupils and is capable of raising the standards attained by the pupils. He is looking forward to the start of the new academic year when his newly-appointed deputy headteacher and special educational needs co-ordinator join this team.
53. The headteacher and his subject leaders are fully committed to meeting the needs of all the pupils and ensure that all children are included in the life of the school. Leadership of the Foundation Stage, special educational needs, literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology and art and design is good. The headteacher and senior leaders know that standards are low in many key areas and they understand what they need to do to improve. The role of other subject leaders is satisfactory overall and developing well. Co-ordinators have ensured that there are up-to-date policies and programmes of work for their subjects. The rigorous monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning, using a common format, has been introduced by the headteacher and has been adopted well by the English, numeracy and information and communication technology leaders who use the information gathered to inform them of strengths and weaknesses with regard to the quality of teaching.
54. The school has above average numbers of pupils with special educational needs. The management of the provision is good, but there are weaknesses in strategic leadership. The headteacher has the improvement of the special educational needs provision and the development of inclusion as major priorities and the governors have produced an appropriate staffing structure to reflect this. However, the special educational needs co-ordinator's current role is limited in terms of her responsibilities for whole-school teaching quality and curricular improvement. Additionally, the success of subject leaders in enhancing the achievement of pupils with special educational needs is extremely variable, and arrangements for addressing the problem are undeveloped. It is upon the resolution of the problems associated with the management of the provision that future improvement depends.
55. The quality of leadership and management of the speech and language resource base is good. The teacher in charge has a secure strategic grasp of the developments necessary for further improvement, including the need for continuing professional development for all staff in teaching speech and language acquisition skills. Management and organisation are very good. As a result, there is a very good capacity within the present systems for continuing improvement.

56. The governance of the school is satisfactory overall. Governors have a good understanding of the strengths of the school and are fully aware of the need to improve standards. Through their very successful appointment of the current headteacher and a good number of new staff for the next academic year, the governors are successfully shaping the direction in which the school is moving. They are also becoming more involved in development planning and gaining confidence in school issues through their committee structures. The headteacher provides them with very detailed information about all aspects of school life, and this enables them to support the work of the senior staff and challenge decisions made at this level. The governors' annual report to parents and their school prospectus meet requirements. However, the governing body does not fully meet its statutory requirements. This is because not all the collective worship sessions comply with legal requirements. In addition to this, the governing body does not ensure that the reports written by the teachers to inform parents of children in Years 1 to 6 fully inform them of the progress they have made.
57. Since his appointment 18 months ago, the headteacher has gradually introduced into Westover Green a culture that is self-evaluative and subject leaders are developing this aspect of their work well. With the introduction of regular testing programmes, the school is now starting to collect standardised data, which they are able to analyse, and patterns have started to be noted. This is now being rigorously fed into future plans for school development. Strategic planning is good, with allocated finances matching the priorities set out for action. The school development plan is clearly set out and linked to the most relevant areas identified for development. The profile of continual professional development for staff has been raised and courses undertaken have a close links with the foci on the strategic development. Performance management procedures are also securely in place and linked well to development planning.
58. Staff illness has been a major problem during the past two years. This has resulted in a high turnover of staff and a significant use of supply teachers that has been most unpopular with pupils. It has also had a negative impact on standards in those classes who have been affected. The most recent appointments made, which include the new deputy head and special educational needs co-ordinator, are very much seen by the headteacher and governors as a positive move forward, where there will be a freshness of approach with new ideas being brought in from outside the school. The headteacher is also fully aware that there is a need to reconsider the deployment of teaching assistants around the school so that they can be best used to support the teachers. He is also fully aware of the need to make all staff aware of a better balance between home and school life and is working hard with governors to ensure that expectations are reassessed. Links have also been recently re-established with a teacher training institution in Bristol and this is providing another extension of professional development beyond the school. Induction procedures for staff new to the school are satisfactorily in place. A further development for this will be planned for the next academic year when a '*buddy system*' will be introduced, because there will be a large number of new staff starting at the school.
59. Day-to-day administration is very good. The office administrator is extremely well organised and deals with matters relating to pupils and parents very competently. The finance officer manages financial affairs very well and all financial matters are efficiently organised. Both governors and staff understand well the principles of best value. They regularly consult parents and pupils on school issues; comparisons with other local

schools and schools on a national level are made on pupil performance. A range of tenders are sought to ensure that contracts given actually do provide the very best value for money, such as when the new physiotherapy suite was installed. Governors are also developing their ability to challenge the senior team and require them to justify decisions that are made. The large carry-over figure from the last financial year which is evident in the table below was as a consequence of the very high staff turnover. This has been earmarked to fund an outdoor area for the Foundation Stage and to pay for an additional teacher to cover staff illness or absence due to attendance at professional development courses.

60. The school has faced a significant number of barriers to achievement during the past few years. These have included a large number of staff absent with long-term sickness, declining numbers on roll, a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, considerable mobility and lack of parental care and support. However, the school has a good capacity to improve. This is because the headteacher understands the needs of the pupils very well. He is well supported by the committed staff and has been able to appoint a considerable number of new staff for the next academic year. The headteacher is also supported well by the local education authority and has gained the respect both of parents and the local community.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	1,068,579
Total expenditure	1,000,614
Expenditure per pupil	2,914

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	-1,880
Balance carried forward to the next year	67,965

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

At the time of the last inspection, provision for children in the Reception classes was good. Although much of it has been well maintained since then, current provision can only be judged as satisfactory. This is because requirements have changed and are now more rigorous. The curriculum is securely based on the Foundation Stage curriculum³, a nationally-recommended programme of work, which covers all areas of learning well. The planning ensures that rich opportunities are given to extend the taught curriculum by taking children out of school for visits. However, the accommodation fails to meet the requirement for a safe and secure outdoor area in which children can work and play, and there are sometimes too few support staff with teachers to meet recommended levels or to meet the needs of the children.

The children with birthdays between September and April enter Reception on a full-time basis at the start of the term in which they will be five, with May to August birthday children starting in January. This means that some children have three terms in the Foundation Stage whilst some have only two. The vast majority start school with levels of attainment that are far below those expected and, when they leave Reception, standards are very poor in comparison with what is found nationally. The vast majority of children do not have sufficient time in the Foundation Stage to reach the early learning goals by the time they enter Year 1.

The quality of teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage is good, with almost half the teaching being very good, and this is an improvement since the last inspection. Adults very positively encourage the children in their learning; they praise their successes and insist on high standards of behaviour. Children's progress is very carefully checked and tracked, and this ensures that their tasks are very well matched to their needs, so that the children's level of achievement is satisfactory. In spite of this, by the time the children reach Year 1, standards across the areas of learning remain very poor and far below the expected levels. As well as not having sufficient time working on the areas of learning in a Foundation Stage setting, this is also because of the impact of the very poor skills in communication and very low levels of personal development when children come into school.

By the time children enter Year 1, many still have very poor skills in writing and in reading, a very poor understanding of mathematics and very poor knowledge of the world around them. The strong emphasis on fostering the children's creative and aesthetic development mean that skills and knowledge in this area, although below what is usually expected, are not significantly

³ This consists of six areas of learning: personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy development; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical development; and creative development. Each area of learning is made up of four stages or 'stepping stones', from which both progress and standards can be measured.

so in painting and appreciating music. Levels achieved in personal and social development are poor as are those in physical development, mainly due to poor fine motor skills like pencil control, which also inhibit writing and drawing skills.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Children achieve well in this area of learning.
- Very good teaching and the very warm relationships which exist between teachers and children ensure that personal and social development is well promoted in all activities.
- The vast majority of children start school with skills far lower than are usually found, and very few will achieve the early learning goals.

Commentary

61. Although children in Reception start on different '*stepping stones*' across the wide range of social development, the vast majority demonstrate skills at a very poor level. Whilst nurturing the early skills and knowledge in other areas of learning, very good teaching rightly focuses very strongly on this important area, recognising that this shortfall constrains children's learning across the whole curriculum. This pays dividends and children achieve well; their personal and social development improves. However, they enter Year 1 with poor skills and very few children will achieve the early learning goals.
62. Most children have very little confidence and have very poor skills when working independently. Very good teaching is constantly evident. Tasks are devised to promote the children's consideration for others and many, given reminders, can now conform to the expected behaviour code. For example, when visiting Hestercombe Gardens, the vast majority behaved very well and remembered the rules for good conduct. This represents good achievement in this area of learning as many children are easily distracted and have a very short concentration span. For the vast majority, the short time they spend in the Foundation Stage is insufficient to give them the personal skills they need to tackle any independent learning and, as yet, most are still on the early '*stepping stones*'. They have very limited awareness of the needs and feelings of others, so that working together is very difficult for them. However, teaching very precisely focuses on each child's capabilities. Teachers prepare tasks very carefully to nurture concentration and promote sharing. Staff are invariably patient and calm; they use encouragement to inspire children and praise to acknowledge good responses, so that children are given very good opportunities to develop their personal, social and emotional skills.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Teachers talk to children with respect, warmly encouraging them to join in.
- Children are given good opportunities to enjoy stories.

- The teaching to develop writing is very well focused on developing skills.
- Few children have the appropriate skills to reach the early learning goals.

Commentary

63. Teaching across this area of learning is precisely focused on each child's needs. As a result, children achieve reasonably, but because of very poor levels when they enter school, very few will reach the early learning goals by the end of Reception.
64. Very good teaching incorporates well-planned opportunities to speak and provides a very good range of opportunities for listening. Teachers use a good range of vocabulary, well adapted to each child's needs, engaging children well in an attempt to enthuse them. Discussions such as those on the visit to Hestercombe Gardens ensure that all children have thinking time so that they respond when adults talk to them. For example, one child was able to name a foxglove when discussing how tall it was in Hestercombe Gardens, because she had '*drawn one and painted it at school*'. A few children speak clearly and confidently, and skilled teaching ensures that the children achieve well. However, for many children, speaking out loud is still very challenging. Many give one-word answers and few appear to enjoy sharing what they know. Although children gain in confidence and develop their skills appropriately, communication skills are still on the earliest '*stepping stone*' when children enter Year 1.
65. Children experience a range of books. Favourites are read to them very expressively so that they are engrossed in the stories, though very few are as yet confident to join in with well-known words or phrases. This sharing of stories contributes positively to their understanding of how enjoyable books can be. A wide range of strategies is employed to teach early reading skills, but when matching simple words like '*at*' and '*the*', many children found it hard to concentrate, to pronounce the words and to complete the task. Teachers organise regular sessions to change reading books, sharing these with parents and carers. However, generally, children's reading skills as they enter Year 1 are very poor and very few will achieve the early learning goals.
66. In writing, the analysis of work indicates that when they enter school, the vast majority scribble, some make marks, and a very few form recognisable shapes. Careful attention to responding to each child's needs ensures good achievement so that children are led forward through the early writing skills and realise that writing conveys meaning and that particular shapes have sounds. Children have insufficient time in the Foundation Stage for the vast majority to learn how to write words and sentences; a few master the skill and will achieve the early learning goals by the beginning of Year 1, but the vast majority are far below the expected levels.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Teaching is based on very secure assessments.
- Mathematical development is fostered across all areas of learning.
- In counting activities, good teaching ensures secure sequencing of numbers.

Commentary

67. Teaching in this area of learning is good. Secure assessments and precise planning ensure that teaching meets each child's needs well. Number rhymes, shape work and pattern work are incorporated into everyday activities, such as the visit to a formal garden, and give this area of learning a reasonable profile. These activities engage children's interest and enable them to achieve and learn at a satisfactory level. Simple counting activities are a regular part of the day. For example, in one lesson, as well as a short well-focused whole-class session to remind children of the sequence of numbers to 20, groups of children worked together pleasantly on accurately-prepared counting tasks. Less capable children had to identify numbers and stick the right number of petals to flowers, while more capable children worked with their teacher, learning to count in tens to 100. The organisation made a very good contribution to fostering personal and social skills. However, the vast majority of children enter school with extremely poor understanding so that these opportunities to develop early mathematical skills cannot make up the shortfall in the time in Reception. Although by the time they enter Year 1, many can count to ten and some confidently understand the sequencing of numbers to 20, other areas of mathematical development are still very poor and only a very small minority will attain the early learning goals in mathematics.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Teaching is very good and well supported by visits and other practical activities.
- Across the whole area of learning, there is regular and accurate assessment of achievement.
- Extremely poor levels of knowledge when the vast majority of children enter school mean the early learning goals will not be achieved.

Commentary

68. Teaching in this very wide area of learning is very good. The vast majority of children enter Reception with an extremely poor level of general knowledge and very significant shortfalls in understanding. Planning is very good and ensures that children experience at first hand a wealth of activities to stimulate their interest. However, a significant number have a very short concentration span and the lack of personal, social and communication skills inhibits learning. The high emphasis placed on learning through experience and experiment means children achieve well. Planning has enabled children to think about the many ways water occurs in the world and this was backed up on their visit to Hestercombe Gardens, when they saw a waterfall, a lake and a stream, and floated canisters downstream for friends to pick out. They water their plants regularly and have hatched chickens in an incubator. These activities are extremely worthwhile and

support learning well. Conversations between adults and children support their learning well, but short concentration spans and poor memory skills mean children do not retain much of the information. Regular assessments are made and teachers plan very carefully to try to make up shortfalls in knowledge. However, because they have limited time in Foundation Stage, by the time they enter Year 1, most will only reach the earliest 'stepping stone' of learning, which is very poor in comparison with what is expected by this age.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Children's gross motor skills, such as climbing, skipping and running, are developing appropriately.
- Children's fine motor skills, such as holding pencils, crayons and scissors are very poor on entry into school.
- Accommodation is unsatisfactory; there is no secure outdoor learning area.

COMMENTARY

69. Teaching in this area of learning is satisfactory. Planning ensures a range of opportunities to develop fine and gross motor skills. Suitable opportunities to use the outdoor area are planned into the week. However, a significant unsatisfactory element in the provision is the lack of a secure outdoor fenced play and work area. This means that many activities linked with promoting physical development cannot be prepared beforehand and children cannot extend their learning out-of-doors without very close adult supervision. Children use wheeled toys and skipping ropes and play games like follow-my-leader with reasonable skill. However, during the inspection, the organisation and management of the outdoor physical activity session was considerably hampered by the lack of a secure outdoor area, particularly as the teacher also had insufficient adult support. Many children have poor fine motor skills. Tasks such as drawing and sticking are regularly incorporated in the programme and children tackle these tasks reasonably confidently. From a very low starting point, skills improve reasonably so that achievement is satisfactory. However, the vast majority of children will not achieve the early learning goals across this area of learning.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Teaching provides good opportunities to experiment with colour and children achieve well.
- Children have a range of opportunities to enjoy music which support their spiritual development well.

Commentary

70. Many children enter the Reception class with very low levels of expertise and understanding in the area of creative development. Teaching in this area of learning is good and children achieve well, though most will not reach the early learning goals by the beginning of Year 1. Planning ensures that children have a range of opportunities to use art across the areas of learning and there is a good supply of materials to promote children's enthusiasm. For example, dinosaurs are decorated with mathematical patterns; large numbers and letters are created in mosaic; foxgloves and poppies are painted using colour mixes, and the records of what happened when the chicks hatched or children went on visits are recorded pictorially. Many children lack pencil control and their drawings are very immature, with figures at levels on the first 'stepping stone'. However, their appreciation of music is almost appropriately developed; regular opportunities to listen ensure children were able to sit for several quiet and reverent minutes listening to Saint-Saëns' *The Swan*, remembering the day before, when all had seen a swan glide across the lake at Hestercombe Gardens. Simple songs are a regular part of the programme and children sing with reasonable enthusiasm and reasonably tunefully.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision for English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well below average in Years 2 and 6.
- Standards are improving because of the success of recent initiatives.
- The subject is well led and managed and well placed for improvement.

Commentary

Standards

71. National comparative data in 2003 shows that for pupils in Year 2, standards in reading and writing were well below the national average and well below those of similar schools. For pupils in Year 6, standards were in the lowest five per cent both nationally and in comparison with similar schools. Standards have declined since the last inspection and, for the past four years, the trend has been below the national trend.
72. The current headteacher and subject co-ordinator are well aware, and concerned, that some pupils have hitherto not been achieving to their full potential. As a result, language has been a priority for improvement within the school and recent initiatives to improve attainment are beginning to have a positive effect. Although standards remain well below average overall, inspection evidence and the school's own assessments confirm that there has been a significant improvement in attainment since last year, particularly for pupils in Year 6. During the inspection, no differences were noted the achievement of boys and girls.

73. Many pupils start school with poor language skills which, together with high mobility among pupils, creates a significant barrier to learning. In addition, in some classes, pupils' progress has been adversely affected by staff absence, resulting in the use of several different teachers during the year. However, inspection evidence confirms that those pupils who have remained at the school since Reception have made steady progress and their achievement is satisfactory overall against their low attainment on entry to the school.

Speaking and listening

74. Standards are well below expectations in Years 2 and 6. Many pupils have a limited vocabulary and lack confidence when speaking, expressing themselves in short and repetitive sentences. Nevertheless, pupils make satisfactory progress against their poor level of attainment on entry to the school. The improvement of speaking and listening has been a priority for development and teachers have received training in techniques for the development of these skills. As a result, achievement is beginning to improve as teachers apply these techniques successfully in lessons. For example, in Year 1, pupils made good progress in their oral development because the teacher and learning support assistant effectively demonstrated how to ask sensible questions and listen carefully to the answer before pupils were given the opportunity to practise this in pairs. In Year 6, the teacher extended pupils' speaking skills very effectively as she encouraged them to express themselves as fully as possible in their answers to her searching questions.

Reading

75. Pupils make satisfactory progress in their reading, although standards remain well below average overall. In Year 2, more capable pupils use non-fiction books effectively to find information. In Year 6, more capable pupils scan a text efficiently in order to select specific words from the text. However, many pupils are constrained in their reading by their limited vocabulary and lack of general knowledge. Pupils are given the opportunity to read a wide range of books and read regularly to an adult. Some older pupils are particularly well supported by adult volunteers who act as '*reading buddies*' and regularly hear them read. All pupils have opportunities to borrow books from the library. It is well stocked and organised and books are categorised and labelled clearly. Colourful displays and comfortable seating help to ensure that pupils enjoy choosing books to read. In lessons, teachers use guided reading sessions effectively to systematically develop strategies for decoding unfamiliar words and to deduce information from texts. Where teaching is good or better, the teachers inject enthusiasm and expression into their own reading, which prompts pupils to do the same.

Writing

76. Standards in Years 2 and 6 are well below average. However, pupils achieve satisfactorily from their starting points, including those from the Speech and Language Resource Base and those with special educational needs. In Year 2, a few more capable pupils use capital letters and full stops accurately and are beginning to add descriptive words to improve their writing. In Year 6, pupils use punctuation, including speech marks, with reasonable accuracy and are developing an appropriate style of writing to suit a specific purpose. For a significant number of pupils, the skills of sentence construction, spelling and handwriting are weak. Scrutiny of pupils' work shows that there is inconsistency in the teaching of these skills. However, as with reading,

inspection evidence indicates that achievement is improving. This is because of the successful implementation of improved tracking and targeting procedures. Teachers have a good understanding of where their pupils are and what they need to do to improve, which is beginning to lead to higher expectations and raising of standards. Individual targets for pupils are effectively enhancing their own understanding of their learning.

Teaching

77. At the time of the last inspection, the quality of teaching was good. Teaching is now satisfactory overall, although there were many good and very good features observed during the inspection. Where teaching is good or better, teachers are secure in their understanding of the subject and their knowledge of the National Literacy Strategy. Lessons are well planned, with clearly-focused learning objectives that are shared with the pupils, so they can judge for themselves whether they have achieved the objective by the end of the lesson. Pupils with special educational needs and those from the Language Resource Base make similar progress to the other pupils, due to good support from well-briefed learning assistants, which enables them to take a full part in lessons. Teachers have high expectations and work very hard to engage pupils' interest. Pupils are managed well, with teachers using a range of teaching strategies to successfully hold the pupils' attention. Good relationships have been established so pupils have positive attitudes to their work. In these lessons, teachers provide appropriately challenging work for individual needs. However, scrutiny of pupils' work indicates that this is not always the case and progress is limited where pupils are given the same task, regardless of their varying abilities. Although teachers in parallel classes plan together, the quality and quantity of the work produced varies, which has led to inconsistencies in achievement. For example, progress is limited when careless spelling and untidy presentation is ignored. Marking is not always used effectively to move pupils forward in their learning. Information technology is used satisfactorily to support learning.

Example of outstanding practice.

Excellent teaching was observed in one lesson in Year 6.

The focus of the lesson was to identify themes and language in poems and comment critically on their impact. The teacher read the poem, *'Miller's End'*, by Charles Causely so expressively that the pupils were totally enthralled from the start. Her knowledge of each pupil's capabilities was excellent; questions about the poem were asked at precisely the right level so that previously inarticulate pupils were able to express themselves clearly and perceptively. Confidence was improved because the ethos for inclusion was excellent and all pupils knew that their opinions would be listened to and valued.

In their group work, pupils rose to the challenging tasks they were given and worked very hard. In the guided reading session, as they scanned a poem to analyse its impact, pupils were clearly developing their own love of poetry as a result of the teacher's own enthusiasm for the subject. For example, one pupil referred to a poem by Christina Rossetti he had enjoyed.

For the plenary at the end of the lesson, a pupil elected to sit in the *'hot-seat'* in the role of a character from one of the poems. The teacher encouraged the pupils to think very carefully and articulate clearly their questions to the character. As a result, the pupils raised very pertinent questions. The teacher's management was excellent. She was encouraging, sensitive and supporting and the pupils enjoyed their learning as they were allowed to inject gentle humour into the session. Pupils' thoughtful and reflective questions, and the answers that were given, showed that the learning objective had been very securely achieved.

Leadership and management

78. The subject is well led and managed. The co-ordinator is very knowledgeable and is herself an excellent role model for the teaching of English. Over the past two years, she has had a more influential role in the management of the subject and has worked hard to successfully improve standards. Test results are now analysed very carefully for areas of weakness and priorities for development are established. Good tracking procedures are in place and these are used effectively to establish support groups and set individual targets for improvement, although she is aware that there is some inconsistency in the way these are applied throughout the school. Because of the good leadership and management of the subject, English is well placed for standards to continue to improve.

LANGUAGE AND LITERACY ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

79. Teachers provide effective role models in their own use of language with pupils. In most lessons, pupils' vocabulary is improved as unfamiliar words are introduced and explained. Discussion as a way of learning, particularly when pupils discuss an issue in pairs, is used to positive effect. The National Literacy Strategy has been well implemented since the last inspection and is beginning to be adapted to meet the needs of the school. There are some good examples of pupils using their literacy skills well in other subjects. For example, Year 4 pupils use similes most effectively when writing about '*The Blitz in World War II*', one pupil describing the blackout as '*It is like thick, black mascara surrounding you in a cage*'. However, pupils' poor language skills have an adverse effect on standards.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards attained by pupils in Year 2 and 6 are well below average.
- The quality of teaching is inconsistent.
- Leadership of the subject is good.
- Progress towards establishing good assessment procedures are good.

Commentary

Standards

80. Standards of work seen at the end of Year 2 are similar to those attained in the national tests in 2003, which were below average. Inspection findings indicate that just over three-quarters of the Year 2 pupils are working within the expected level for their age group. However, very few exceed these expectations so that overall standards fall short of expectations. In the 2003 standardised tests for Year 6 pupils, standards were in the lowest five per cent of results nationally. Inspection findings indicate that less than half of the current Year 6 pupils work within the expected level for their age group. Although this is disappointing, the number of pupils exceeding the expected level has increased and this is an improvement on the standards last year. Nevertheless, overall standards remain well below average. Improvement from the time of the last inspection is satisfactory.

81. When they enter school, pupils' mathematical awareness and development is very low. Some pupils achieve well, and a small minority do not make expected progress, but the

achievement of pupils overall, including all those with special educational needs, is satisfactory. There is no difference between the attainment of boys and girls or those from minority ethnic groups.

82. By the time they have completed Year 2, most pupils understand numbers up to 100, recognise odd and even numbers and do simple addition and subtraction calculations. However, very few pupils have any understanding of numbers up to 1000, understand decimal notation of money or are able to work out problems using multiplication and division. About half of the Year 6 pupils multiply and divide numbers by 10 and 100, and confidently add and subtract decimals. These pupils choose the right calculation to solve problems and use fractions and percentages to describe proportions. A small minority of more capable pupils can multiply and divide three-digit numbers and numbers involving decimals. These pupils can reduce fractions to their simplest forms, use simple formulae and solve problems involving different probabilities.

Teaching

83. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. In lessons observed during the inspection, the quality of teaching and learning ranged from satisfactory to very good. In the best of these lessons, teachers had very good relationships with their pupils, treated them with respect, made learning both exciting and challenging and insisted on good behaviour. Pupils responded with enthusiasm, worked hard and showed genuine interest in their work as well as being polite and well behaved.
84. However, evidence from pupils' books shows that there are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching which in turn affect the quality of learning. Some, but not all, of this inconsistency has been due to the employment of temporary teachers during staff absence. Expectations from teachers about the quality or quantity of work are often not high enough to promote higher achievement. Teachers' marking does not give sufficient guidance to pupils or help with the assessment of their progress. There is also insufficient attention paid to the different capabilities of pupils so that the same tasks are often presented to all abilities. Younger pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to develop their recording skills in their exercise books. Many classes contain some very challenging pupils, but the current deployment of teaching assistants results in some teachers having to manage mathematics lessons without any assistance

Leadership and management

85. The subject leader has worked very hard to monitor the quality of both teaching and pupils' work and this has helped the school develop a sharper focus on achievement. She has responded well to the opportunities provided by the headteacher to play a leading role in the drive to increase achievement, and, with her own teaching of the subject, provides a good role model for her colleagues. Teachers have been given individual reports on the quality of lessons and whole-staff meetings have discussed the strengths and weaknesses in the subject so that teachers are more aware of how they can improve. Pupils' answers to national and optional tests have been thoroughly analysed and the conclusions passed on to teachers so that gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding can be given due attention. A great deal of emphasis has been put

on the tracking of pupils' performance so that those making less than expected progress can be identified; additional tests have been put in place to help with this process. Good progress is being made to ensure that information from the tests and other assessments can be used to plan lessons effectively so that all capabilities are appropriately challenged. Good progress is also being made to establish ways of giving groups of pupils' realistic targets so that they know what they have to do to improve.

MATHEMATICS ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

86. This is an underdeveloped part of the subject. Teachers do not take full advantage of the many opportunities available for pupils to use and apply their skills, knowledge and understanding of mathematics when studying other subjects.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in science are below average at the end of Year 2 and well below average at the end of Year 6.
- Pupils' enjoyment of practical and investigational activities aid learning and most pupils have positive attitudes to learning.
- The science co-ordinator is a passionate leader, but has yet to develop robust monitoring and evaluating systems.

COMMENTARY

Standards

87. Inspection findings indicate that standards attained by pupils are below average at the end of Year 2, and well below average at the end of Year 6. This indicates that there has been an improvement since the standardised test results of 2003 when standards were well short of expectations at the end of Year 2 and were in the lowest five per cent of results nationally at the end of Year 6. At the time of the last inspection, standards were below national expectations at the end of Year 2 and below average at the end of Year 6. This means that standards have been in decline since then. However, in relation to attainment on entry into school, the high pupil mobility and the disruptions caused by staff absence, achievement is satisfactory for all pupils, including all those pupils with special educational needs. During the inspection no differences were noted in the achievement of boys and girls and this is a similar picture over time.

88. Work in pupils' books shows they have a satisfactory understanding and knowledge of the areas of study covered. Most pupils are able to record their conclusions, but pupils' books indicate there is not enough opportunity for pupils to write up their experiments at length. Many struggle to find the language to express their learning; consequently, they find it hard to write down their observations and work is often incomplete. Marking in books is inconsistent and often consists of just ticks. This does not provide the pupils with information about what they need to do next to improve. Discussions with pupils in Year 6 indicate that they are able to articulate their knowledge and understanding of reversible and irreversible changes in materials such as plaster of Paris. They use appropriate scientific vocabulary to describe food chains, starting with green plants, and

can describe a fair test using constant and variable factors to show understanding of the spread of harmful organisms.

Teaching

89. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teacher exposition is clear and staff work hard to engage all pupils. Lessons are practical and interesting. For example, pupils in Year 1 were able to explain that there were different types of roots. This was because they were given the opportunity to handle a variety of plants with their roots and make careful observations with magnifying glasses. In another very good and well-paced lesson in a Year 5/6 class, pupils were given the opportunity to explore interdependence and adaptation in relation to plants. The pupils' interest was captured by a wide range of resources such as cacti, water-lily and Venus fly-trap plants. They handled the plants with care and most were able to make detailed observations before sketching and labelling diagrams in their books. In this lesson, pupils responded well to the opportunity to talk in pairs, exchange views and to construct questions leading to closer observations or deeper research. They showed curiosity and wanted to know such things as '*what keeps plants in water?*' and '*what kind of insects do Venus fly traps eat?*' Pairs of pupils independently used search engines on the computers in their own class mini computer suite. Less capable pupils were well supported by a teaching assistant. At the time of the last inspection, the marking of pupils' work was considered to be variable and this remains a weakness. Overall, behaviour management is often very good. Pupils respond by behaving very well and applying themselves in line with their teachers' high expectations. They enjoy science and say it is fun when it includes experiments.
90. During the inspection, an excellent lesson in a Year 1/2 class, which was based on plants and seeds, was observed. In this session, difficult scientific concepts were taught in an inspiring and highly effective way, which was linked to the real-life experiences of the pupils. The lesson was based on the previous day's outing and was well prepared and resourced.

Example of outstanding practice

The ethos for inclusion was excellent in this Year 1/2 class because throughout the lesson, the teacher referred to pictorial and written prompts and used hand signs to engage pupils with speech and language difficulties.

During the whole-class session, all pupils were given the opportunity to handle, sort, observe and name either fruit or vegetables of their own choice. Pupils were confident to ask questions and to say when they did not know the name for '*lettuce*', '*grapefruit*' or '*celery*'. The teacher ensured the learning linked to real life by inventing a problem; the food trays from which the pupils had seen animals being fed had been tipped and needed sorting as not all animals could eat the same kind of fruit or vegetable. The teacher asked if the pupils could help. Pupils of all capabilities were involved and worked hard to articulate their ideas. The teacher's knowledge of each pupil's capabilities was excellent and evident in pupils' responses to the differentiated group work that followed. All pupils showed interest and excitement and maintained a high level of engagement with the task of finding seeds within fruit. A teaching assistant and a lunchtime supervisor who joined the class, supported less capable pupils very well. All adults talked with the pupils about their findings as the pupils made careful observations through mini magnifying-glasses to search for seeds. They then made careful sketches of their findings in their books. One pupil told the learning assistant that '*peppers have seeds despite being a vegetable!*' During the plenary, the teacher surprised the pupils with two exceptions to their findings; a strawberry with seeds on the outside and a cucumber, which, although a vegetable, does have seeds. The

pupils' knowledge and understanding increased throughout the lesson because of their good listening and active involvement. Interest was maintained to the last moment of this lesson because, before the pupils were dismissed, each found an adult and were able to say one thing which they had learnt that lesson. It was clear from their response that the learning objective had been securely achieved!

Leadership and management

91. The science co-ordinator is an enthusiastic leader. She is fully aware that changes need to be made in order to ensure that the pupils cover all the programmes of study in this subject and has developed a scheme of work that will ensure skills are taught consistently. The subject co-ordinator recognises the barrier posed by poor language skills for many of the pupils and is actively seeking ways to improve these to support learning. For instance, she has worked with the speech therapist from the Education Action Zone to develop a system of symbols that can be used with each topic of work. Ways to stimulate learning through practical approaches have been the focus of staff meetings. The subject co-ordinator has had little opportunity to monitor the quality of teaching across the school, and this means that there is no clear overview of strengths and areas for development or how this might be addressed. A short improvement plan has been devised and the introduction of target-setting systems is scheduled for the next academic year.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in information and communication technology are below national expectations in Year 2. By Year 6, they are as expected and this indicates that overall achievement is good.
- Good use is made of the well-equipped computer suite.
- The subject is well led and managed.
- Information and communication technology complements learning in subjects such as science and English.
- The system to maintain a record of pupils' progress to assess standards is at an early stage of development.

Commentary

Standards

92. Standards attained at the end of Year 2 are below national expectations. This indicates a decline since the last inspection when they were as expected. Standards are as expected at the end of Year 6 and have been maintained at this level since the last inspection. In relation to the prior attainment of the pupils, the high mobility and significant staff absences, achievement is good overall. Pupils with special educational

needs, including those in the Speech and Language Resource Base, also achieve well. There are no differences noted in the attainment or achievement of boys or girls.

93. In Year 2, the pupils develop confidence in finding their way around a keyboard and use the mouse as a control pad. However, because their literacy skills are so poor, they find difficulty in using their skills to write stories and present different types of information. By Year 6, the pupils choose different sizes of font and select a wide range of colours. They search the Internet for information, understand the main features of control technology and enjoy playing games on the computers.

Teaching

94. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Teachers make good use of the computer suite to teach skills progressively. Lessons are planned appropriately and the key skills to be learnt are clearly shared with the pupils. This ensures that achievement is consistent. Teaching is very good when lessons relate closely to real-life experiences. For instance, in a very good lesson in a Year 4/5 class, the pupils made very good progress and were really productive throughout the session because the teacher used resources very well to consistently challenge the pupils to work to the best of their capability. In this session, the focus was the use of controlling devices. Pupils worked well in pairs and showed skills of screen control to program instruction sequences. By the end of the lesson, most pupils were able to build up a sequence of events for a set of traffic lights.
95. Teachers motivate the pupils in information and communication technology lessons and they enjoy using their skills across the subjects for research. They are also enthusiastic about computer games and benefit from the challenge of working through different levels. Pupils understand why there is the need for restrictions on their use of the Internet. They speak with confidence and use the correct technological vocabulary when they describe processes such as modelling. During the inspection, one unsatisfactory lesson was observed. This was because behaviour management was not firm enough. Consequently, a significant proportion of pupils made limited progress in the lesson and, as a result, achievement was unsatisfactory.

Leadership and management

96. Subject leadership and management are good. The co-ordinator has good subject knowledge and is keen to promote pupils' information and communication skills across the school. She has been in post for only one year, but has rectified all the weaknesses highlighted during the last inspection. The co-ordinator ensures that governors understand the strengths and weaknesses of the subject and has worked well with the local education adviser to provide teaching and non-teaching staff with appropriate training. Teaching plans and samples of pupils' work have been collected to begin to build a portfolio to assist the tracking of pupil attainment. However, as yet, this is still underdeveloped as a tool for whole-school target-setting. The subject co-ordinator has begun a cycle of classroom observations across the school but the process of monitoring and evaluating is in the early stages of development.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

97. Links across the curriculum are developing. From displays and samples of pupils' work seen, there is evidence that younger pupils use a design package to produce patterns and different font sizes and colours to write instructions for making a cup of tea. Year 4 pupils' displays show developing word-processing skills to produce their poems on World War Two. In Years 5 and 6, pupils' work shows they use their computer skills to extend their design and technology knowledge, as seen by their sketched and printed plans of their ideal bedroom. Teachers model the use of information and communication technology skills well across the curriculum. For example, in a literacy lesson for Years 4 and 5, the teacher skilfully used a PowerPoint presentation to prepare the pupils for writing a powerful opening paragraph. Information and communication technology skills were used effectively to support English in a Year 1/2 class where pupils had to find missing phonemes. Year 6 pupils also used their computer skills to calculate totals and percentages and make independent use of an Internet search engine to support their research on plants.

HUMANITIES

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have deteriorated since the last inspection and are now below average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
- Teaching is unsatisfactory overall.
- Art is used well to record pupils' knowledge and understanding.

Commentary

98. Standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are below the expectations in the locally-agreed syllabus. Standards have deteriorated since the last inspection and this is unsatisfactory. Although there are good links with art, which is used well for recording, poor skills in literacy have a significant impact on standards, as recording is often reliant upon these skills. Given their very poor knowledge and understanding of the world when they enter the school, achievement over time is satisfactory by Year 2. However, the evidence from lessons observed in Years 4, 5 and 6 shows that all the pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory and this is confirmed by the analysis of work.
99. The evidence of work indicates teaching in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory. However, only one short lesson was seen so no overall judgement can be made about the teaching. Year 2 pupils understand very basic details, such as that Muslims use some special equipment like prayer mats when they pray. They have a reasonable knowledge of the life of Jesus, which is presented in interesting ways, evoking captions from more capable pupils like '*Hip hip hooray for Jesus the healer*' on a Palm Sunday picture.
100. Between Year 3 and Year 6, four lessons were seen and although teaching was good in one lesson, it was unsatisfactory in the rest. The evidence of work in Year 6 bears out the judgement that teaching is unsatisfactory. There is a lack of clarity about the teaching of religious education whilst making links with other areas of the curriculum. Some teachers have insufficient subject knowledge, so that there is a lack confidence in the teaching.

The teaching places insufficient emphasis on making lessons exciting and informative, yet reflective. As a result, pupils do not become involved in what they are doing and often, behaviour is unsatisfactory. However, when teaching is good, tasks are well prepared and clearly explained. For example, accurate references are made to the Creation story as told in the Bible and three major faiths before setting pupils tasks in small groups. Time is used well so that pupils have to work quickly and staff, including support staff, engage pupils in worthwhile discussions. This ensures that pupils reflect upon how pollution damages the environment and affects wildlife and how war affects people. Discussion and the use of key vocabulary support the development of speaking and listening well. Links to information and communication technology are satisfactory.

101. The subject is well resourced, with visits to places of worship and visitors from a range of faiths making a significant contribution to the provision. It is not possible to make a judgment about the leadership and management of the subject leader because just prior to the inspection, she had left to take up a headship elsewhere in the authority. As yet, teaching has not been monitored, but planning and pupils' work have been scrutinised on a regular basis. This has given the co-ordinator a reasonable picture of the provision. Assessment procedures are securely in place. This puts the school in a good position to improve.

HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY

102. Two geography lessons were observed during the inspection but it was not possible to see any history being taught. However, pupils' books were examined together with work on wall displays. Discussions were held with Year 6 pupils and the two teachers who are looking after the leadership and management of these subjects. The evidence for **history** indicates that pupils are presented with a satisfactory range of learning opportunities. However, owing to some difficulties with overall curriculum planning, some pupils have studied particular topics more than once. The reading and writing capabilities of pupils are reflected in the quality of recorded work, which is below expectations for pupils in Years 2 and 6. Teachers organise stimulating displays of artefacts and these help to promote pupils' interest. The sampling of evidence for **geography** indicates that pupils are given a satisfactory range of learning opportunities. However, the amount of recorded work is insufficient for pupils to develop sufficiently well their mapping and other geographic recording skills. Teachers are very aware that many of their pupils have very little knowledge or experience about the world beyond their immediate neighbourhood. This was illustrated by older pupils asking the headteacher if they were '*still in Bridgwater*' when the coach they were travelling on had reached Weston-super Mare. To compensate for this lack of knowledge, there are many displays of maps and photographs around the school aimed at raising pupils' awareness of place. Trips out of school, including residential visits for Years 3 to 6, make a very good contribution to pupils' knowledge and understanding.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design

Provision for art and design is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above national expectations by the end of Year 6.
- The quality of teaching is very good, so pupils achieve very well.
- Presentation of pupils' work is very good.
- The school makes very good use of visiting artists and visits to art galleries and exhibitions.

Commentary

103. Standards meet national expectations at the end of Year 2 and are above expectations in Year 6. Pupils develop their skills well and use a wide range of materials, as was evident in the many striking displays around the school. Throughout the school, pupils learn to use their observational skills and explore colour and shading through various different media and techniques, including computer programs. Clay is used well and a good range of three-dimensional work was on display. The school makes very good use of visiting artists and frequently visits art exhibitions and galleries, recognising the importance of seeing art first hand. Pupils are given very good opportunities to explore ideas and meanings in the work of artists, craftspeople and designers. This makes a valuable contribution to their learning.
104. Pupils are very interested in art, keen to learn and appreciate new knowledge and the good resources they receive. In discussion, pupils said it was their favourite subject. They are very proud of their work. For example, Year 6 pupils were very keen to explain how they had made wall hangings using textiles, which were of a high quality. All over the school there are many examples of beautifully presented artwork, some framed and displayed in their own right, such as prints in black and white, while other examples, such as watercolours of landscapes, are part of larger displays.
105. Pupils receive very good teaching and this helps them to achieve well. Teachers are secure in their knowledge of the subject and transmit their own enthusiasm to the pupils, resulting in very good achievement. They plan very well, so pupils receive lively lessons and are well motivated to work hard. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported in lessons so they are fully included and make progress commensurate with that of the rest of the class. In the lessons observed, pupils were designing and making masks. There was good development of skills as Year 3 pupils investigated a wide variety of materials, while Year 5 pupils designed masks for a story character, carefully considering how they would create features and express emotion.
106. The co-ordinator provides good leadership and management. She demonstrates a high level of expertise and commitment and regularly holds workshops for other teachers to disseminate good practice. The school has maintained the high standards and quality of teaching since the last inspection. The provision for art and design is a strength of the school.
107. Very few lessons were seen in **design and technology**, **music** or **physical education**, because these were not the focus of the inspection, so it is not possible to make a judgement on provision in these subjects. However, inspectors spoke to co-ordinators and pupils and looked at teachers' planning and pupils' work.
108. In **design and technology**, there were few samples of completed work available for scrutiny. However, scrutiny of pupils' designs in books, discussions with pupils and teachers' planning indicate that the key elements of the subject - investigation of ideas,

learning a range of skills and designing and making - are covered appropriately. In conversation, pupils confirmed that they used a range of materials and tools for a variety of projects. A portfolio of pupils' work, levelled against the descriptors of the National Curriculum, indicated that standards in the subject are in line with national expectations.

109. **Music** has a high profile within the school. Over 80 pupils belong to one of three school choirs and about 30 pupils benefit from tuition in recorders, ocarina and piano from visiting specialists. From Year 1, specialist teachers are used to enhance pupils' learning. Pupils who are regarded as gifted and talented are given every opportunity to develop their skills through extra tuition in musicianship. The school choirs perform regularly at venues around the town and have performed with distinction at local festivals. Concerts and productions are an important feature in the life of the school, and these contribute positively to pupils' overall musical experience. In the two lessons observed during the inspection, both taken by a music specialist, pupils achieved well because the teacher had high expectations and activities were stimulating, leading to a high level of interest from pupils.
110. In **physical education**, from teachers' planning and discussions with teachers and pupils, it is evident that all strands of the subject are regularly taught. There are a good number of extra-curricular clubs to enhance learning, including gymnastics, netball, athletics and rounders, and the school has enjoyed some success through its participation in local tournaments. Visiting experts are used very well to give specialist training to pupils, frequently inspiring them to improve their own performance. This year, pupils in the Foundation Stage, Year 1 and Year 5 have been given the opportunity for swimming lessons. By the time they leave the school, approximately half the pupils can swim the nationally-recommended 25 metres. No overall judgement on the quality of teaching and learning can be made, but in the one lesson observed, pupils in Years 5 and 6 achieved well in their athletic skills because teaching and learning were good. The teacher had good subject knowledge and her direct teaching of strategies improved the pupils' performance. Good discussion at the end of the lesson effectively developed pupils' understanding of their individual skills.
111. The leadership and management of these subjects are good. The co-ordinators are enthusiastic and committed and have succeeded in maintaining a high profile for the arts and physical education within the school. They have a firm understanding of strengths and weaknesses in their subjects and have formulated action plans for their future development. Curriculum planning and tracking procedures are satisfactory. There is good use made of specialist teaching to enhance pupils' learning. The subjects make a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision for personal, social, and health education is **satisfactory**.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- The caring school ethos supports pupils' personal development.
- The school works hard to widen pupils' experiences.
- Insufficient attention is given to drugs and alcohol awareness.
- Appropriate sex and relationships education is underdeveloped.

Commentary

112. The good care and welfare of pupils, described elsewhere in this report, is the basis for promoting pupils' personal, social, and health education, as is the constant effort to widen and enrich their experiences and knowledge of the world around them.
113. There are special times on the timetable when teachers discuss developmental issues with their pupils, and a programme of work helps to promote progression in pupils' skills and knowledge. Aspects of health education are covered in science and physical education. Pupils' awareness of the school council and its activities gives them an early experience of the processes of democracy and citizenship.
114. Extra funding is sought to provide learning opportunities in personal, social and health education by paying for the '*Life Education Unit*' to visit the school annually. However, the school does not have its own programme of work to educate pupils about drugs and alcohol awareness. Pupils in Year 6 have lessons from the visiting school nurse about sex and relationships, but there are no programmes of work to deal with these issues at the appropriate level with younger pupils.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4

Overall standards achieved	6
Pupils' achievement	4

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	4
Attendance	4
Attitudes	4
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	4
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4

The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	4
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).