

# INSPECTION REPORT

## WINCANTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Wincanton

LEA area: Somerset

Unique reference number: 123667

Headteacher: Miss C Glen

Lead inspector: Dr C Lee

Dates of inspection: 2<sup>nd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> February 2004

Inspection number: 258448

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 to 11 years                         |
| Gender of pupils:            | Mixed                                 |
| Number on roll:              | 338                                   |
| School address:              | South Street<br>Wincanton<br>Somerset |
| Postcode:                    | BA9 9DZ                               |
| Telephone number:            | 01963 32132                           |
| Fax number:                  | 01963 31900                           |
| Appropriate authority:       | The governing body                    |
| Name of chair of governors:  | Canon Alan Watson                     |
| Date of previous inspection: | March 1998                            |

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Wincanton is bigger than the average primary school. There are 338 pupils on roll. There has been a slight drop in numbers since the last inspection. Pupils in reception and Years 1 and 2 are taught in single-age classes. Those in Years 3 and 4 are taught together in three classes and a similar arrangement exists for Years 5 and 6. Pupils are from a wide range of backgrounds and, while the majority live in the area immediately surrounding the school, a significant number travel from villages outside Wincanton. Almost all the pupils are from a white, British background. The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school during the course of a school year is average. The percentage of pupils claiming free school meals is below average but this does not reflect the truer, lower picture of socio-economic deprivation in the area. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is about average but there is a wide variation between year groups. These needs cover a wide range of specific requirements including learning, speech and communication difficulties. There are five pupils with a statement of special educational needs. This is an average proportion for primary schools. A few pupils have English as an additional language and the school provides the support necessary to meet the specific needs relating to their English language acquisition. When starting at the school, children's overall attainment is below average.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Members of the inspection team |             |                | Subject responsibilities  |
|--------------------------------|-------------|----------------|---|
| 21854                          | Dr C Lee    | Lead inspector | Science<br>Music<br>Physical education  |
| 19338                          | Mr G Ellis  | Lay inspector  |   |
| 21090                          | Mr D Manuel | Team inspector | Special educational needs<br>Mathematics<br>Information and communication technology    |
| 20645                          | Ms R Webber | Team inspector | Foundation Stage<br>Geography<br>History<br>Religious education                         |
| 20846                          | Mr A Wilson | Team inspector | English as an additional language<br>English<br>Art and design<br>Design and technology |

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**Wincanton Primary School is a good school that provides good value for money.** Good teaching helps pupils to attain standards that match national averages overall and this is good achievement in relation to their past attainment. The new headteacher's very good leadership and management are major strengths. Staff are highly committed to ensuring that all pupils receive a high quality of education that fully meets their needs. The very good care and support that pupils receive are important aspects of the school's overall effectiveness.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher provides very good leadership and management.
- Very good assessment is a significant feature of the good quality of teaching that is helping most pupils to achieve well.
- The good provision for pupils' personal development results in pupils behaving well and having good attitudes and values.
- By the end of Year 2, standards in the fluency and range of vocabulary used in speaking are below average.
- The very good provision for pupils with special educational needs owes much to very good co-ordination and the high quality of the work of teaching assistants.
- The school provides very good care, support and guidance for all pupils.
- There is insufficient monitoring of pupils' standards in subjects other than English, mathematics and science.

The school was previously inspected in March 1998. The weaknesses identified at that time have now been fully rectified. The good influence and support of the governing body and the whole-school determination to succeed have had significant impact on improvement. The quality of teaching has risen, with improved subject knowledge, better planning and the development of very effective procedures for assessment. There has been considerable improvement in provision for the Foundation Stage. Results in national tests in English and mathematics at the end of Year 2 have risen at a faster rate than has occurred nationally.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Across the school as a whole, **pupils achieve well**. The standards of the Year 6 pupils who took the national tests in 2003 had been consistently below average during their time in the school, due to the high proportion with special educational needs. This resulted in them failing to achieve the challenging targets that had been set for them in the tests. Results also dropped in 2003 because of poor performance by girls. The targets for current Year 6 pupils are also challenging. However, such is the effect of the very good quality of teaching that they have experienced and continue to receive, that they are not only achieving well but are on track to attain average standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of the year. Their standards in both information and communication technology and history are above what is typically seen. By the end of Year 2, the pupils' achievement is similarly good. Standards are above average in science and average in

reading, writing and mathematics. However, speaking and listening are below average by the end of Year 2. Throughout the school, the pupils' standards are average in art and design, geography, history, music, physical education and religious education. There is insufficient evidence to judge standards in design and technology. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language achieve well. The high quality of the support for these pupils from a very good group of teaching assistants is a major reason for the pupils' good progress. Children in the Foundation Stage are also making good progress from a below average starting point. They are on track to achieve all the goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception apart from in communication, language and literacy, in which a significant minority have weaknesses.

The quality of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good**. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **good**, as are their attendance and punctuality. By the time they leave the school, pupils are mature and responsible.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The quality of education provided by the school is **good**, reflecting **good** teaching by teachers and teaching assistants, and a good breadth and balance of learning opportunities in the curriculum. Teaching has improved since the last inspection. It now results in good quality learning by pupils.

The school shows very good concern for the care, health and safety of pupils. There is a high level of quality support for pupils with special educational needs. The school works well with parents, providing very good information about their children's education and how they can help. Links with the community, and with other schools and colleges, are good.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The overall leadership and management of key staff is good.** The headteacher provides very good leadership and management and she receives excellent support from two highly effective assistant headteachers. There is a strong focus on raising standards through improved quality of teaching and, most of all, through a commitment to teamwork involving all members of teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils, parents and governors. The co-ordination of several subjects has only recently been delegated and monitoring of pupils' standards across the whole curriculum is not fully in place. A good governing body maintains a rigorous overview of school developments. The governors ensure that all statutory requirements are being met. Administrative staff make an excellent contribution to day-to-day management of the school.

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

Parents particularly appreciate the high expectations that the school has of its pupils. They are pleased with levels of progress and the good teaching but a minority feels that parents' views could be sought more often. Pupils are very positive about the school and enjoy their learning and the opportunities that they have to contribute to the running of the school.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Raise the standard of pupils' speaking skills by the end of Year 2 by increasing opportunities for them to organise what they say and extend the vocabulary used in all subjects.
- As finance permits, develop the outdoor facilities that can be used for children's physical development in the Foundation Stage.
- Ensure that there is regular monitoring and evaluation of pupils' standards in all subjects in order to identify the action needed to raise standards still further.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

Most pupils achieve well in relation to their past attainment. Standards overall are at least in line with what is typical in other schools.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results in national tests at the end of Year 2 are rising faster than in other schools.
- By the end of Year 2, standards are above average in science.
- Standards in speaking and listening are below average in reception and Years 1 and 2.
- By the end of Year 6, standards are above average in reading, information and communication technology and history.

#### Commentary

1. Recent years have seen a downward trend in the general ability level of children starting at the school in the Foundation Stage. The attainment on entry of the current reception children, like those in the previous two years, is below average overall, with particular weaknesses in communication, language and literacy skills. However, they are making good progress due to the significant improvement in provision for the Foundation Stage, which was unsatisfactory at the last inspection. Children are on track to meet the early learning goals that are set for the end of the reception year in their personal, social and emotional development, mathematical, creative and physical development as well as in their knowledge and understanding of the world. Although slightly below expected levels in communication, language and literacy as a whole, this is mainly due to insufficient progress in speaking and writing, while, in contrast, progress in early reading skills is good. Such progress is a sign of good achievement. Similarly, pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well, having progressed to average standards overall for their ages from a below average starting point. In Years 3 to 6, there is variation in achievement between groups of different ability. In general, pupils with special educational needs and those who are more able achieve well while the pupils of average ability achieve satisfactorily.
2. In recent years, the school's results in the national tests at the end of Year 2 have shown good improvement. In the tests overall, there has been an upward trend for several years. Results over the last five years have improved more than the national trend. The 2003 results were above average in reading, below average in writing and average in mathematics. The picture is similar when the results are compared with those achieved in schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. In 2003, the teachers' assessments of science matched the national average and the average for similar schools. The school is also successfully increasing the percentages of pupils gaining the higher-than-expected Level 3. In comparison with schools nationally in 2003, these percentages were well above average in reading and average in writing, mathematics and science. Overall, the results were a good achievement by a year group of whom nearly a third has special educational needs.

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

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| reading       | 16.5 (15.8)    | 15.7 (15.8)      |
| writing       | 14.1 (14.1)    | 14.6 (14.4)      |
| mathematics   | 16.4 (14.9)    | 16.3 (16.5)      |



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*There were 44 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

3. The pupils now in Year 2 are maintaining overall standards at the level of the 2003 national tests but they are doing better in science, in which standards are above average. Standards in reading, writing, mathematics, art and design, geography, history, information and communication technology, music, physical education and religious education are typical of the age group. There is insufficient evidence to judge standards in design and technology. However, pupils' skills at speaking and listening are a weakness in Years 1 and 2. Although most pupils listen satisfactorily in lessons, responses to questions and contributions to discussions are usually limited and do not use the range of vocabulary that is expected at these ages. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from the good support of teaching assistants, and those who are particularly able are having their specific needs met very well by the good teaching that they are receiving. The few pupils with English as an additional language are matching the good achievement of their classmates.
4. The school's results in the national tests at the end of Year 6 have reflected pupils' past attainment very accurately. The groups of pupils taking the tests in 2001 and, to a slightly lesser extent, in 2002 had high proportions of more able pupils and the above average test results reflected this. Results were well below the national average overall in 2003 and below average compared with similar schools. A particularly significant factor leading to these results was the poor performance by girls. This was well below the boys' results and far lower than girls in the past. Additionally in 2003, the year group had a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. However, the school has been rigorous in its analysis of pupils' performance and identified several measures that would contribute to the raising of standards, by both girls and boys, in the future. The success of these initiatives is seen in the standards of pupils now in Year 6, which match national averages in English, mathematics and science. This is a year group who were average when they took national tests in Year 2 but a significant number of pupils with special educational needs has joined since then. The good progress of pupils with special educational needs reflects the very good teaching the pupils have received. Another consequence of the high quality of teaching, and the very effective use of information from assessment, is the accuracy of target setting for the older pupils. Targets are constantly being revised, and this is generally upwards. For example, the predicted results of Year 6 pupils in the forthcoming 2004 national tests now place nearly a third of the year group in line to achieve the higher Level 5. This reflects the high level of well-matched challenge that teachers provide for the more able pupils. Year 5 pupils also benefit from very good teaching. These pupils had very low results in national tests when they were in Year 2 yet their performance now is consistently above the average levels for their age.
5. By the end of Year 6, standards are above those typically found in information and communication technology and history. Pupils' standards are typical of their age in art and design, geography, history, music, physical education and religious education. There is insufficient evidence to judge standards in design and technology.

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

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| English       | 25.7 (27.1)    | 26.8 (27.0)      |
| mathematics   | 25.9 (27.7)    | 26.8 (26.7)      |
| science       | 28.7 (29.3)    | 28.6 (28.3)      |

*There were 45 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

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

The school successfully promotes the pupils' behaviour and attitudes to work.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' behaviour is good because the school sets high expectations for their conduct.
- Pupils have good attitudes to their work and are interested in their activities.
- Relationships are good.
- Pupils are confident and have good self-esteem.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- Attendance is good.
- There are no significant weaknesses.

### **Commentary**

6. The school sets high standards for conduct, which are conscientiously and consistently reinforced by all staff, resulting in the creation and maintenance of a positive learning environment. Behaviour by the overwhelming majority of pupils is good in lessons. On most occasions, they also move around the school in an orderly fashion, for example in assemblies, although there is some running in corridors. The occasional less than satisfactory behaviour by a small minority of pupils is handled well by staff. This is understood and appreciated by both pupils and parents. A minority of parents responding to the questionnaire had concerns with bullying. Whilst behaviour in the playground is frequently boisterous, no oppressive behaviour was observed and any incidents are quickly resolved well by the school.
7. Pupils enjoy school and speak well of it with pride and enthusiasm. The staff's clear expectations and their enthusiastic teaching successfully motivate learning well. Pupils have a strong sense of commitment and are willing to undertake responsibilities both within their class and for the whole school, for example the older children acting as 'hosts' on parents' evenings, assisting with assemblies and the organisation of milk.
8. In lessons, pupils are focused on their work, pay attention to their teachers and enthusiastically join in activities and discussions. The school successfully promotes their self-esteem and celebrates their successes in personal as well as academic achievement. As a result, they are keen to talk about their work and achievements, are self-aware and express themselves openly and confidently. They are engaged in their learning and maintain good levels of concentration, working well in groups and assisting each other's learning.
9. The good relationships are a major strength and form a continuously strong and positive underpinning to pupils' learning. Pupils are encouraged to explore their own and others' feelings and concerns in an atmosphere that appreciates their opinions. Pupils feel valued by teachers and other adults and they reciprocate accordingly. Pupils work and play well together. All staff work hard to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs enjoy the same very good relationships with adults as all other pupils. As a result, they have positive attitudes to their work and are keen to do well. Pupils respect and care for each other and this encourages those who are less confident and raises their self-esteem. A very small minority of these pupils also has behaviour problems. However, skilful and sensitive handling by teachers and assistants reduces the impact on their own learning and that of others in their classes.
10. Pupils enter school with varied social skills. However, personal development permeates all the school's activities and pupils' independence and maturity are well developed during their school life. The school's ethos is inclusive and caring. Members of staff are good role models and their reinforcement of moral standards is reflected in pupils' good understanding and respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others. In the previous inspection report, pupils' cultural development was deemed to be unsatisfactory because there were limited

opportunities for them to experience cultural diversity. This has since been rectified and there is now a designated programme including links with other schools in Africa. This contributes well to the pupils' good appreciation of the cultural diversity in modern British society.

11. Attendance is above average. The school successfully promotes attendance by its wide range of good quality activities so that pupils are keen to attend school and most have good attendance records.

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

| Authorised absence |     |
|--------------------|-----|
| School data        | 4.9 |
| National data      | 5.4 |

| Unauthorised absence |     |
|----------------------|-----|
| School data          | 0.3 |
| National data        | 0.4 |

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

**Exclusions**

There have been no exclusions in the year leading up to inspection.

**QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The school provides a good quality of education through good teaching and a broad, balanced and well-planned curriculum. Care, guidance and support for pupils are very good. There are good links with parents, the community and other schools.

**Teaching and learning**

The quality of teaching and learning is **good** overall.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good teaching is raising the pupils' levels of attainment by helping them to achieve well compared with past performance.
- Information from assessment is used very well in the planning of the next stage in pupils' learning.
- Teaching assistants make a very positive contribution to pupils' learning through good teaching and thorough knowledge of the pupils' with whom they work.

**Commentary**

12. The quality of teaching shows improvement compared with the last inspection, with a higher proportion that is now good or better and none that is unsatisfactory. Good, supportive monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning by the headteacher and senior managers have contributed to the improvement. The teaching in this school is always at least satisfactory and often better. This is due to the consistency between teachers in thoroughness of planning and assessment, insistence on high standards of behaviour and good matching of tasks to pupils' interests and abilities.
13. The good co-operation between teachers is central to their success. This is seen in the very good liaison between part-time teachers who share the teaching of the class. In the school as a whole, the joint planning by teachers of classes of the same age group ensures consistency in what is planned for different ability groups, and thoroughness of use of the information arising from assessment of pupils' learning. Such assessment is very good, both in the procedures used and the application of the information. Additionally, good emphasis is placed

on self-assessment by pupils. This is introduced at an early age, with pupils indicating the degree of success they feel they are having with their learning. The strategies are more sophisticated as pupils get older. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have a weekly opportunity to consider the comments made in teachers' marking of their work and discuss this and other aspects of their progress with their teachers. This is helping pupils to gain a very good understanding of the extent of their own learning, while the good quality of marking, evident throughout the school, gives pupils clear guidance on how they can improve.

14. Teamwork impacts on the quality of teaching in a variety of ways. While teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage are satisfactory overall, provision shows marked improvement on that at the time of the last inspection, when it was unsatisfactory. The teaching team is constantly improving its overall quality; a teacher new to the age range rapidly develops understanding of the children's needs under the good guidance of her colleague, the experienced Foundation Stage co-ordinator. She in turn incorporates much of the good guidance arising from recent training and provides a good role model for teacher and teaching assistant colleagues. There is, therefore, a very good capacity for further improvement in teaching at this stage. The teamwork approach is particularly successful with the teachers of the classes of Years 5 and 6 pupils. The thoroughness of all aspects of their work, the many challenges that they set themselves and the pupils and the very good relationships with pupils result in teaching and learning of a consistently high quality. All the excellent and nearly all the very good teaching occurred in these classes.
  
15. An impressive feature of the teaching is the use and contribution of teaching assistants who provide good guidance to the pupils with whom they work. This is a result of the thorough briefing they receive from the class teachers. In particular, such teaching assistants are vital to the progress of pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support in classes and, in addition, very good extra support from the special educational needs co-ordinator. This support helps them to improve their understanding, to complete the tasks set and to make good progress. Teachers and teaching assistants focus clearly on the particular needs of these pupils, helping them to meet their individual targets. They are calm and patient and are clearly aware of pupils' emotional and physical needs while supporting them academically. The good support provided by teaching assistants contributes significantly to the good progress made by these pupils. The support given by the special educational needs co-ordinator in withdrawal sessions is very good and her excellent knowledge of each pupil helps her to provide very sensitive challenge to help pupils improve and gain in confidence.

**Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 52 lessons**

| Excellent | Very good | Good    | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very poor |
|-----------|-----------|---------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| 2 (4%)    | 7 (13%)   | 28(54%) | 15(29%)      | 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.*

**The curriculum**

The breadth of the curriculum is **satisfactory**. Planning has been improved in the past year to provide a varied range of learning opportunities. Equality of access and opportunity for all pupils is promoted well.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The curriculum enables pupils of all capabilities to achieve well.
- Planning identifies good links to extend literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in other subjects.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.

- Support for learning outside the school day is good.
- Resources are used well to support pupils' development.
- The accommodation provides limited space for practical and outdoor activities.

## Commentary

16. The school's provision is securely based on the National Curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. The curriculum has been successfully reviewed and amended in the past year to bring enrichment and relevance to pupils' learning. Provision successfully prepares pupils for the next stages in their education and all statutory requirements are met. These strengths have brought about good improvement since the previous inspection, when provision for children under five was unsatisfactory and there was insufficient challenge for higher attaining pupils in Years 1 to 6.
17. The headteacher and staff work hard to ensure that the curriculum is entirely relevant to the needs of pupils. This has led to new strategies being implemented to meet the needs of all pupils whatever their capabilities. For example, in mathematics in the mixed-age classes in Years 5 and 6, pupils have been placed in sets according to their prior attainment. This strategy enables teachers to plan lessons that challenge all pupils at a good level and results in their good achievement. Units of learning are planned in a two-year rolling programme to support the organisation within the three mixed Years 3 and 4 classes and the three mixed Years 5 and 6 classes. Provision for personal, social, health education and citizenship, including sex education and drugs awareness, is good.
18. Teachers' planning makes good use of national guidance to ensure that pupils' learning develops systematically as they move through the school. Planning identifies good links between subjects to make learning more meaningful for pupils. Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are reinforced well through planned links with other subjects. Particularly good examples of planning were seen in Years 5 and 6 which used literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology to support and extend learning in other subjects. All staff contribute effectively to the good quality of learning opportunities through shared planning in teams. Individual subject expertise contributes to the all-round strengths. The monitoring and evaluation of achievement and standards in English, mathematics and science are good. However, in other subjects, such monitoring and evaluation are insufficient and this is limiting the drive towards raising standards.
19. Provision and planning for supporting pupils with special educational needs are very good and fully comply with the Code of Practice. Teachers and teaching assistants carefully adapt work to meet the specific needs of individuals, including their academic, personal, social and physical needs. Very good liaison is planned by the special educational needs co-ordinator who works very closely with staff and pupils and provides very sensitive and very effective support. This support follows the pupils' learning in their respective classes, improves their attitudes and responses to learning and enables them to achieve well in relation to their set targets. Such is the level of success that a small minority of pupils attains the same expected levels as average attaining pupils.
20. The school provides a wide range of after-school activities that are well attended by both boys and girls. Educational visits are planned carefully to support and extend learning and include a residential visit for pupils in Years 5 and 6. The curriculum is considerably enriched through these creative and physical activities, particularly sport, which contribute strongly to pupils' personal development.
21. The quantity and quality of resources are good and are used well to support the pupils' learning, particularly in information and communication technology where the effective use of a wide range of technology contributes to pupils' good achievement and above average standards. Resources in the Foundation Stage are good and have improved since the previous inspection when they were judged to be unsatisfactory.

22. The accommodation is satisfactory overall. There is good use made of the computer suite and small areas for learning support groups but there is limited space for practical activities in some classrooms and in the Foundation Stage outside area. In Years 1 to 6, outdoor activities are restricted by the small playgrounds and the lack of a suitable grassed area. Some activities take place at the nearby leisure centre.

### Care, guidance and support

The school ensures pupils' care, health and safety well. It provides **very good** support, advice and guidance for their personal development. Induction is very good and the involvement of pupils in the school's work and development is good.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Members of staff have very good knowledge of pupils and their individual needs.
- Pupils are provided with very good support, advice and guidance for their personal development.
- Arrangements for seeking, valuing and acting on pupils' views are good.
- There are good procedures for care, welfare, health and safety.
- There are no significant weaknesses.

### Commentary

23. Pupils are happy in school. They feel part of a caring community, in which they are confident, trust the staff and are aware of how they can obtain help. Teachers and other staff know them very well. Their personal development is well monitored, so that staff can quickly recognise their needs and thereby provide good standards of pastoral support and care. Staff act quickly to assist any pupil who is concerned or in need of support. There is close liaison with all the pre-schools and sharing of information about children who are to join the school. As a result, children settle in quickly to their new school and the overall induction arrangements are very good.
24. The headteacher and staff are very aware of the special needs of individuals. Pupils with special educational needs are identified early in their school lives. This is reflected in the very good provision made for them in reception and ensures that they continue to receive very good levels of support throughout the school. Individual learning plans are of very good quality and are very detailed. They are reviewed and updated regularly and teachers and support staff keep a close eye on progress. Very good liaison takes place between teachers and the special educational needs co-ordinator. As a result, they know these pupils well and have a clear awareness of their strengths and weaknesses.
25. There are very good policies and procedures relating to health and welfare, first aid and child protection. There is good co-ordination with outside agencies so that further support may be provided in appropriate cases. There are regular and systematic risk assessments by staff with outside professional support from the local education authority. The supervision of pupils is very good. These positive arrangements reflect the school's strong commitment to care and welfare.
26. The school's overall arrangements for involving pupils in the work and development of the school are good. There is an openness in which pupils' views are valued and they are encouraged to fully express themselves in lessons and contribute to the running of the school. The long-standing pupil council is an important part of this process with representatives from Years 2 to 6. For those elected, frequent meetings provide valuable experience, while all pupils are also involved through the council folder available in each class for them to raise issues and receive regular feedback. The council members have organised fund-raising activities for the

Bam earthquake appeal and put forward suggestions for the location of equipment, tidying up and behaviour in the playground.

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

The school has **good** links with parents, the community and other schools.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents consider that they are well informed about the school and they are appreciative of its achievements.
- The good relationships between parents and the school ensure strong parental support.
- The provision of information to parents is very good.
- The school has good links with the community and other schools.
- There are no significant weaknesses.

### **Commentary**

27. Parents hold the school in high regard and provide good general and financial support. They feel the school is accessible, that they are welcomed and that members of staff are approachable. There are a number of parents who regularly provide direct assistance in school with class activities such as reading. The school works hard to encourage parents to take a more active part in their children's education, for example the weekly parent and child sessions in the Foundation Stage. Parents have been consulted on the school improvement plan and there was recently a well-attended meeting on 'super learning' for parents of Years 5 and 6 pupils.
28. The school communicates frequently with parents and, as a result, the overwhelming majority is very well informed and better able to support their children. There are frequent, well-produced, attractive and informative newsletters. Each class provides a curriculum overview for the year supplemented with information on how parents can contribute to their children's learning. Both the prospectus and the annual governors' report are well produced and informative. The school has also arranged curriculum-related meetings for parents, for example on literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology. These meetings are valued by parents and are now well supported.
29. Parents are kept fully informed of their children's progress through the consultation meetings with staff and informal contact throughout the year. The pupils' annual reports are of a very good standard. Comments in subject areas concentrate on individual pupils' knowledge and abilities. They are not directly related to National Curriculum levels, but provide useful statements of attainment in relation to national expectations. Reports include full information on English and mathematics and, although not including specific individual targets, they frequently provide guidance on areas for development. As well as information on individual subjects, they provide overall development summaries covering effort, homework and behaviour. The general comments are detailed and show very good knowledge of pupils. Space is provided for comments by both parents and pupils. Useful interim reports are also issued in the Autumn term
30. The school has established good links with the community. There is an effective range of visits to the community and local visitors to the school. There are useful commercial contacts, for example the local supermarket and Chinese restaurant, and the school received valuable financial support from local businesses for the library. There are good links with the local churches. There is good liaison with all the pre schools, one of which is located on the school site. There are very good links with the secondary school. The transfer arrangements commence in Year 5 and in Year 6 some of the pupils' work in mathematics and literacy is co-ordinated with the secondary school. There is valuable use of resources and projects in

science, mathematics, French and physical education. There are also good links with other primary schools, through shared professional development, and a good partnership with a special school for educational support programmes.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The headteacher provides very good leadership and management of the school. She is well supported by a recently formed and capable senior management team. There is a strong governing body which is keenly interested and involved in the life of the school.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- In her short time at the school, the headteacher has had a significant and positive impact on the educational direction of the school through her very good leadership and management.
- The members of the senior management team, comprising the special educational needs and assessment co-ordinators, are providing strong leadership both in their specialist areas and through their key roles in shaping the future direction of the school.
- Good governance of the school ensures that the school's educational direction is clear and is guiding school improvement.
- The role of co-ordinators in the monitoring of teaching, learning and standards across the whole curriculum is in need of development.

### **Commentary**

31. Since her arrival at the school in September 2003, the headteacher has shown a very good capacity for analysing the issues and priorities for school improvement and taking successful and decisive action. For example, she has remodelled the management structure, redefined the requirements for teachers holding key positions and implemented a very successful strategy for improving standards. This is already having a very positive impact on the overall quality of teaching and learning throughout the school. Of particular note is the establishment of a very strong team of teachers in Years 5 and 6 classes which has led to rapidly improving achievement for pupils in those year groups. There has been good improvement in the overall effectiveness of the school since the last inspection.
32. The creation of a more senior role for the assessment co-ordinator has led to excellent leadership in this area and has made a significant contribution to overall improvement. Her skilled and thorough analysis of data and its use for guiding the planning of work for groups of different abilities is having a positive impact on standards and achievement. Similarly, the creation of administration time for the special educational needs co-ordinator has led to very good leadership in this area and good achievement for pupils on the register of special educational needs. This high quality provision for pupils with special educational needs has been maintained since the previous inspection. The co-ordinator is a very experienced teacher who has a very good view of the whole-school picture and is committed to further improvement of the school's provision. Her excellent knowledge and understanding of each pupil's needs help her to provide very sensitive support and include continuing to refine teachers' and teaching assistants' expertise. This very good support is extended to a very small number of pupils from a nearby special school, who attend Wincanton Primary School part time as part of their development and support provided by the local education authority. Other key staff are also providing good leadership, for example in the Foundation Stage, information and communication technology, English, mathematics and physical education. However, the school fully recognises that there is a need to develop the role of all subject co-ordinators in monitoring teaching, learning and standards in their subjects and has embarked on a leadership project to address this issue. In particular, co-ordinators of subjects other than English, mathematics and science have insufficient opportunities to evaluate pupils' standards in their subjects. Consequently, the co-ordinators are not having enough impact on the raising of standards.



33. Since her appointment, the headteacher has encouraged members of the governing body to become more closely involved in the day-to-day life of the school, with positive results. The governor with responsibility for the Foundation Stage, for example, has shown herself to be particularly knowledgeable and supportive and has made a significant contribution to improvement. Most governors are attached to a curriculum area and observe lessons to improve their understanding of how the school works. Moreover, under the strong leadership of the chairperson, they have shown themselves willing to become increasingly capable of making challenging decisions in relation to spending priorities or holding the school to account with regard to its performance in national tests. The governors ensure that all statutory requirements are met.
34. The relatively low expenditure per pupil, the good levels of achievement throughout the school, the good quality of teaching and of the leadership and management of the school indicate that, as at the time of the last inspection, the school gives good value for money.

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

| Income and expenditure (£) |         |
|----------------------------|---------|
| Total income               | 842,305 |
| Total expenditure          | 864,106 |
| Expenditure per pupil      | 2,541   |

| Balances (£)                        |        |
|-------------------------------------|--------|
| Balance from previous year          | 62,344 |
| Balance carried forward to the next | 45,134 |

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

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

There has been good improvement in curriculum planning and provision for children in the Foundation Stage since the last inspection when it was found that the curriculum did not fully meet the needs of children of this age. Provision is now satisfactory with some good features.

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

- Children's achievement is good.
- The curriculum is now well structured to provide children of this age with an appropriate range of relevant experiences.
- There are very good induction arrangements for children about to start reception.
- The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are good and have contributed significantly to the good improvement in provision since the last inspection.
- Sometimes group work is not sufficiently structured or challenging in order to promote basic literacy skills.
- Outdoor facilities for the physical development of children in the Foundation Stage are limited.

#### **Commentary**

35. The good leadership and management by the co-ordinator and the effective support and input by the Foundation Stage link governor have ensured good developments in the curricular provision for children of this age since the last inspection. This has been further aided by a good programme of training for staff. An appropriate curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is now securely in place. Both teachers and support staff work closely together and an effective team has been established in order to facilitate ongoing developments. The assessment arrangements are very good and teachers use them well to know the learning needs of their children and plan future work. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory and often it is good. This is an improvement since the last inspection when one lesson in five was unsatisfactory. The overall attainment of children when they start in the two reception classes is below average, particularly in speaking and language development. While in reception, the achievement of children is good, and by the time they leave the Foundation Stage most children, including those who have special educational needs, reach standards in line with expected levels in nearly all areas of learning. However, although they reach expected levels of attainment in listening and reading, their overall attainment in communication, language and literacy by the end of reception is slightly below average.

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

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

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

- Teaching is good in this area of learning and children's achievement is good.
- Very good relationships ensure that children settle quickly and happily into school.
- Children's behaviour and attitudes to learning are good.

#### **Commentary**

36. Standards are in line with age-related expectations by the end of the reception year. The children achieve well because of good teaching. The very good induction arrangements the school has established and the positive role models and relationships that exist ensure that

children settle happily and quickly into school routines and activities the school offers them. A positive code of behaviour is well promoted and all adults encourage early independence and effectively promote personal skills such as children putting on and fastening their own clothes when changing for physical activity. Because teachers understand the needs of young children well, this ensures that children soon gain confidence and show they are able to take part in activities with interest and good levels of concentration for their age.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children's achievement in acquiring listening and early reading skills is good.
- Sometimes group work, in order to teach basic literacy skills such as writing, is not sufficiently structured or challenging.

### **Commentary**

37. Although children achieve standards in listening and reading in line with expected levels, standards overall are slightly below average by the end of reception in communication, language and literacy. The quality of teaching in this area of learning is satisfactory. Teachers promote early reading skills well and by the age of five most children know their initial letter sounds and read some simple words and sentences. Teachers organise theme corners, such as the 'supermarket', and role-play activities well to develop children's speaking skills and support staff are deployed effectively to interact with children in order to develop their speaking skills. This is an improvement since the last inspection when structured play was considered a weakness. Children listen well to adults in many situations and they respond quickly to instructions, which supports their learning well. In writing, teachers do not always plan sufficiently challenging writing tasks or structure group work sufficiently well in order to develop children's writing skills and as a result children do not acquire early writing skills at the same rate as they do in reading.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children's achievement is good.
- Teaching is good.

### **Commentary**

38. Children's achievement is good and they reach standards in line with age-related expectations by the end of reception. Teaching in mathematics is well structured and teachers use resources very well in order to support children's learning. For example, toys were used very effectively to demonstrate counting on in order to develop children's understanding of simple subtraction. By the end of the reception year, children count and order to ten, understand simple addition and subtraction and, in space, shape and measure, identify and name several two-dimensional shapes and follow simple repeated patterns.

## KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Support staff are deployed very effectively to support children's learning, particularly in information and communication technology.
- Teachers use the school environment effectively in order to develop children's understanding of the world around them.

### Commentary

39. Children reach standards that are in line with age-related expectations by the end of reception. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teachers use the expertise of other adults skilfully to support children's learning and children make particularly good progress in acquiring early computer skills through well-organised group work in the school's computer suite, skilfully led by a member of the support staff. Teachers use the school environment and local places of interest well to develop children's learning about the world around them. For example, children begin to appreciate the direction and force of the wind as they run in the playground with streamed ribbons in order to explore the effects of the wind on things around them, and they effectively develop a sense of things around them, such as traffic, birds and other people, as they go on a listening walk around the school.

## PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a good range of resources which teachers use well to support learning in physical development.
- There is no specific suitably enclosed outdoor area for children in the Foundation Stage.

### Commentary

40. Children's achievement is good in physical development and by the end of the reception year they reach standards in line with expected levels. Although teachers use a good range of large outdoor playground equipment such as climbing blocks very effectively to develop children's gross motor skills, there is no specific suitably enclosed outdoor area for children in the Foundation Stage to work in throughout the day. When engaged in physical activity, such as climbing onto and stepping across raised wooden blocks and walking across a suspended moving wooden bridge, children show they have a good sense of balance and co-ordination for their age. When riding three-wheeled bikes and running, they move with confidence and have a sound sense of spatial awareness. Their fine motor skills are well developed and they can use scissors, glue sticks, pencils and paintbrushes well to cut, stick, draw, write and paint.

## CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers use aspects of music well to support learning in other areas of development.

## Commentary

41. By the end of reception, children reach standards in line with expected levels in creative development. Teachers provide children with plenty of opportunities for them to build imaginative structures from both construction kits and junk materials and effectively encourage them to investigate different ways of joining materials together while in the making process. Children are able to apply paint well in order to produce large and small pictures and teachers effectively enable children to experience a range of different media, such as chalks and pastels, in order to support their learning. In music, children experience a sound range of activities that develop their sense of rhythm and singing skills and teachers use a range of familiar rhymes and songs very well in order to support other areas of learning. For example, children sing a song well that requires them to remember and count on one each time in order to develop their mathematical skills.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is good and pupils achieve well overall.
- The school makes very good use of assessment data to set clear targets for improvement for all pupils.
- By Year 6, standards in reading are above average.
- By Year 2, standards in speaking and listening are below average.
- There is good leadership for the subject.
- Parents, particularly those of pupils in the Years 1 and 2 classes, could be encouraged to become more involved in helping their children to learn to read well.

## Commentary

42. Standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are average for pupils in those age groups. Results in the national tests for pupils in Year 2 have been rising at a slightly faster rate than the national average in recent years. Inspection findings are that this is still the case and, given that the pupils in the current Year 2 classes came into school with below average literacy skills for their age, this reflects good achievement, resulting from good teaching in Years 1 and 2. The rate of progress has not been as marked in speaking and listening, in which standards are below average by Year 2 and the school recognises that this is an area for future development. There has been a different pattern in results in the tests for Year 6 pupils, which were above average at the time of the last inspection and in the two following years, but fell sharply in 2002 and again in 2003, when they were below average. However, there is very clear evidence that the school has successfully addressed this trend and that standards are quickly beginning to rise again. This is due in part to the excellent work of the assessment co-ordinator, who has successfully established strategies for identifying individual pupils' strengths and weaknesses and setting achievable targets for improvement. This has been supported by good teaching in Years 3 to 6, with a consistently high quality of teaching in the Years 5 and 6 classes. The progress of the current Year 6 pupils is satisfactory over time, since this group of pupils came into school with average literacy skills. However, they are now often achieving very well in individual lessons as the impact of the high quality of teaching and assessment takes effect. For example, roughly one third of Year 6 pupils are on track to achieve the higher Level 5 in the 2004 national tests. In addition, pupils with special educational needs also make good progress and many from this group are on track to achieve the expected Level 4 in 2004. Most significantly, the quality of the work being produced by Year 5 pupils in the Years 5 and 6

classes is already securely at the standards normally expected for Year 6 pupils, suggesting that they are on track to achieve above average results in 2005, similar to those achieved at the time of the last inspection.

43. Standards in speaking and listening are below average by the end of Year 2 and average by Year 6. Teachers in many lessons provide good opportunities for developing these skills, either through sharply focused question and answer techniques or by encouraging pupils to take a lead in speaking or to listen and respond to others in a variety of situations during the school day. This is more common practice, on the whole, in Years 3 to 6 and accounts to some extent for the difference in standards. As a result, by Year 2, the capacity of many pupils to listen closely to what others are saying and to express their own ideas clearly and confidently meets the expectation for their age. A small minority of more confident speakers answer fluently and at greater length when asked questions, reflecting standards above expectations for their age, while a significant minority at this stage use single word answers and need regular support, which is below expectations. By Year 6, some develop mature and articulate speech which is securely above average. Most pupils at this stage listen with understanding and are confident about talking to adults and the rest of their class. This is due to regular opportunities provided by teachers to talk about their work, particularly in pairs.
44. Standards of reading are similar to those seen in most schools by Year 2 and above average by Year 6. The school establishes secure reading skills in Years 1 and 2 by carefully structured teaching of the various letter sounds and blends. This is supported by regular guided reading sessions with additional help ensured for pupils with special educational needs. Most pupils in Year 2 confidently read familiar stories without help. A minority of more capable pupils achieves above the average level because they read with expression, although fewer than might be expected at this age show an interest in a favourite author. Some need regular help from adults because they do not have the skills to tackle new words and do not read at the required standard. The majority of pupils in Year 6 achieve very well for their age and pupils have developed healthy attitudes towards reading. This is because they are expected to be responsible for taking reading books home and keeping their diaries up to date. They also write regular reviews of books they have read and the majority is familiar with books by at least two authors. Many higher attaining pupils make clear and sophisticated comparisons between the styles of writing employed by, for instance, Jacqueline Wilson and JR Tolkien, which is clearly above expectations for their age group. Research skills are well developed at this stage and pupils are used to finding information on the Internet or from reference books.
45. Standards in writing in Years 2 and 6 are typical for pupils in those age groups. Many pupils in Year 2 place events in their correct sequence and write them as clear, recognisable sentences with capital letters and full stops, as in, 'Winter is cold and it is freezing outside and you have to put warm clothes on'. Higher attaining pupils write clear consecutive sentences for a range of audiences on subjects such as the diaries of Florence Nightingale. Some, on the other hand, need regular help from teaching assistants or their teachers to space words correctly and build sentences in order to achieve the expected standards of writing. By Year 6, many pupils write stories independently, organising their work into paragraphs and are familiar with writing for different audiences through book reviews, play scripts or clearly balanced arguments. Less able pupils, though achieving standards below the expected level for their age group, need only limited support from adults, whilst some higher attainers exceed the standards seen in most schools, writing accurately, at length and introducing tension and atmosphere to their work. A good example of this was seen in one pupil's news item, which reads, 'A mysterious tightrope appeared stretched across the gorge as this incredible woman took the risk of plunging to her death'. The majority of teachers have high expectations of pupils' presentation of their writing. As a result, pupils always try their best and the overall standard of handwriting is above average by the end of Year 6.
46. The quality of teaching is good overall throughout the school, ranging from satisfactory to excellent and is of a consistently high quality in the Years 5 and 6 classes. This reflects good improvement since the last inspection. The most significant strength of teaching is the quality

of assessment and target setting. Teachers work very closely with teaching assistants to provide work at precisely the right level of difficulty to meet the different needs of individuals and groups within the class. Careful analysis of results in various tests enables them to build a clear picture of individual strengths and weaknesses and set targets for improvement. Additionally, teachers mark work conscientiously and constructively and fully involve pupils in the evaluation of their own work. The best features of teaching were exemplified in an excellent lesson seen in a Years 5 and 6 class, where the teacher had already established extremely good relationships with his class, a feature of many classrooms throughout the school. He successfully overcame the challenge of managing a mixed-age class through a variety of strategies, including the use of information and communication technology, regular evaluation of pupils' progress by discussion and through highly competent support from the teaching assistant. Consequently, all pupils were totally engaged in the teaching and learning process and their response to the issue of 'Should children be allowed mobile phones?' was mature and academic. Teachers throughout the school use the behaviour code positively, sometimes in the face of challenging behaviour on the part of a minority of boys, although there is a tendency in some instances to allow boys to dominate question and answer sessions. Teaching is only occasionally less successful when the teacher's strategies for ensuring that pupils are paying full attention are inconsistent and this slows the pace of teaching and learning.

47. Leadership and management in the subject are good. A capable new co-ordinator is well supported by senior colleagues while she is guided through a leadership training programme. This collegiate approach to the management of the subject has been instrumental in successfully addressing the downward trends in 2002 and 2003 and improving the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school. The action plan for the development of English in Wincanton Primary School fully acknowledges a need to address standards in speaking and listening, particularly in Years 1 and 2. In order to achieve this, there is a need to ensure that opportunities for developing these skills are securely embedded in the planning for English and other subjects. In order to raise reading standards in Years 1 and 2, there is a need to involve parents more fully in helping their children with reading, both through the existing home reading scheme and by providing voluntary support in school. Given the higher quality of teaching achieved since the last inspection and the strong potential for raising standards further, there has been good improvement overall.

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

48. Opportunities to produce good quality writing are provided in many subjects. In religious education, for example, teachers in many classes have high expectations of the amount and quality of writing which is completed. The school could further improve standards in writing by ensuring that expectations are consistent from subject to subject and year to year.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is consistently good and results in pupils achieving well.
- Good planning of learning activities challenges pupils of different capabilities and stimulates their interest in the subject.
- Good subject co-ordination effectively monitors the improvement in the quality of teaching and pupils' standards.
- Good links are made with other subjects in the curriculum to reinforce numeracy skills.

## Commentary

49. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, standards are at expected levels. This is a similar judgement to that made during the previous inspection. Following the test results in 2003, which dropped to below national levels, the school created setting, or groups of similar capability, including a booster group for lower average attainers in Years 5 and 6. As a result, planning is more focused on the next steps in learning, achievement is good and standards are rising. The school's targets confirm these judgements. Teachers' methods and strategies are very effective in stimulating pupils and inspiring them to enjoy their lessons. Boys and girls respond with good levels of interest and achieve equally well.
50. Pupils in Year 2 have a sound knowledge and understanding of number, shape, measurement and methods of calculation. They are gaining confidence at problem solving, using addition and subtraction in different ways. This is an identified area for improvement and good progress is being made. Pupils use a range of measures accurately in different standard and non-standard units. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well and work hard to overcome any learning difficulties as a result of the good support they receive.
51. Achievement in Years 3 to 6 is good overall, and particularly good in Years 5 and 6. Very good assessment procedures contribute effectively to teachers' tracking of progress in relation to set targets and detailed information is shared with pupils, who are involved regularly in self-assessment. All pupils in Years 5 and 6 flourish as a result of good, and sometimes very good, teaching. In work on fractions, most pupils confidently and accurately calculate different types of equivalent fractions and use their knowledge well to solve challenging problems. They work together well, trying different strategies to overcome difficulties and at least a quarter of pupils achieve above expected levels. The standards achieved by the average and lower attaining pupils are within the normal range of expected and below expected levels.
52. The National Numeracy Strategy is implemented well throughout the school. The quality of teaching and learning is good and occasionally very good. The main strengths shared by all teachers include the good quality of their planning. This takes careful account of the different capabilities of pupils and has a beneficial influence on the rate of pupils' learning. As pupils develop a wider range of skills, teachers introduce ever-increasing challenges to extend their learning. Other strengths include high expectations of work and behaviour and the establishing of very good relationships, which together challenge and encourage pupils to achieve well. Homework is set regularly to reinforce the learning of established and new skills.
53. Co-ordination of the subject is good in both its leadership and its management. The co-ordinator has only been in post for one year but has already successfully analysed pupils' performances, highlighted specific areas for development in each year group and is preparing an action plan committed to the raising of standards. Resources are good in quantity and quality, and are used effectively to support pupils' learning.

## Mathematics across the curriculum

54. Pupils have good, regular opportunities to use their mathematical knowledge in other subjects. Particular strengths include the use of data handling in information and communication technology lessons to present the results of investigations in preferred forms of graphs and charts and to investigate the benefits of using spreadsheets to help them solve problems. Various measurements are practised regularly in science and design and technology, for example, and due emphasis is placed on accuracy. Good use is also made of interactive whiteboards and projectors to involve pupils in increasingly challenging learning activities.



## SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' standards are above average by the end of Year 2.
- Pupils generally achieve well in relation to their previous attainment.
- While there is good emphasis on practical investigations that is improving pupils' understanding of science, pupils do not have enough opportunities to plan investigations for themselves.
- Teaching is good overall and assessment is a significant strength.

### Commentary

55. The above average standards being achieved by pupils in Year 2 are an improvement on both the standards at the time of the last inspection and the teacher assessments carried out at the end of Year 2 in recent years. The good quality of teaching is a major reason for this improvement. Pupils demonstrate a good knowledge and understanding of the science topics covered since they started in Year 1. The overall standards of pupils in Year 6 are in line with the national average, a good achievement by a year group with nearly a quarter of pupils having special educational needs.
56. Teaching and learning are good overall. Teachers pay very good attention to the differing needs of different ability groups and plan learning activities with just the right amount of challenge to move learning forward. This helps pupils to achieve well, both in lessons and over time. The needs of pupils with special educational needs are fully met as a result of the very good support that they receive from skilled teaching assistants. This was typified by the excellent support provided in a Years 5 and 6 lesson on how pupils could improve the quality of their scientific explanations. The teaching assistant working with pupils with special educational needs ensured their full involvement in all aspects of the lesson, particularly by encouraging them to volunteer answers to the teacher's questioning of the class as a whole. Pupils with English as an additional language, like all pupils, benefit from the displays of the technical vocabulary that teachers place prominently in classrooms. Another reason for the accurate matching of learning activities to pupils' needs is the very thorough assessment of pupils' learning. This gives rise to detailed information about individual pupils' strengths and weaknesses that is fully utilised in planning for the next stage in their learning. Teachers use marking of pupils' work successfully as a means of indicating how they can improve. This marking is particularly effective in Year 2. Older pupils are encouraged to evaluate their progress for themselves through well-structured opportunities for self-assessment. All teachers make good use of homework tasks to support classroom learning. For example, a Year 2 class had kept an exercise diary to record their various forms of physical activity prior to their lesson on the effects of exercise on the body. From this information, the teacher developed all pupils' understanding very successfully and the more able pupils were explaining these effects in terms of changes in the circulatory system, displaying above average levels of knowledge and understanding for their age.
57. The good quality of pupils' learning is evident in the generally neat presentation of their work. Teachers make frequent and very good use of encouraging pupils to have short, focused discussions in pairs and pupils do this very conscientiously. This ensures involvement of all pupils, a feature that is sometimes lacking in whole-class discussions with older pupils, where boys tend to dominate if the teacher is not consciously seeking equal contributions from both boys and girls.
58. In all classes, there is good emphasis on practical investigation, although pupils do not generally have sufficient opportunities to plan investigations for themselves. Nevertheless,

pupils learn successfully how to ensure that a test is fair. This is well established by the end of Year 2. They understand the need to hypothesise about what might happen in an investigation and explain this well in terms of their existing knowledge. They record results clearly and, by Year 6, are using scientific vocabulary confidently and correctly in their writing about what has been proved. Teachers are using pupils' written work well as an opportunity to apply and extend literacy and numeracy skills. Similarly, there is good use of information and communication technology as a tool to extend pupils' learning. The detailed plan of the computer programs that can be used with each science topic is a valuable planning tool. It ensures that regular opportunities are provided for pupils to create tables for results of their investigations, to represent results in computer-generated charts and graphs and, when appropriate, to use sophisticated equipment such as sensors and microscopes.

59. Since September 2003 the subject has been jointly co-ordinated by two part-time teachers. They have quickly built on the helpful action plan provided by the previous co-ordinator by their initial monitoring and evaluation of teachers' planning and pupils' books. This has identified relevant priorities for subject development that have been confirmed by inspection findings. Leadership and management are satisfactory at this early stage in the co-ordinators' assumption of responsibility. There is a good capacity for improving provision still further.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The quality of teaching and learning of information and communication technology skills throughout the school is good.
- All pupils achieve well and by Year 6 standards are above expected levels.
- The very good resources are used well and good links are made with other subjects.
- The co-ordinator provides very good leadership and management of the subject.

### **Commentary**

60. All pupils achieve well and by the end of Year 6, standards are above expected levels. This is a similar judgement to that made at the time of the previous inspection.
61. The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school. Teachers have successfully developed their own technical skills and confidence. They plan lessons well and make very good use of technology, such as interactive whiteboards and projectors, to demonstrate and reinforce skills. As a result, the activities are imaginative and exciting and are set at the right level of challenge for pupils of different capabilities. Pupils enjoy using computers and this is clearly reflected in their enthusiasm, their very good relationships and their willingness to share ideas and to support their partners when working together. Teachers and teaching assistants challenge higher attaining pupils to explore new techniques, whilst supporting those who are less skilled or have special educational needs or other learning difficulties.
62. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are keen and confident when working at a computer. They carefully follow instructions from their teachers to access selected programs and enjoy making things happen together. They develop control skills effectively when designing their own preferences for a special playground and play equipment. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 build effectively on their skills, responding to challenging tasks. In all year groups, pupils carry out research into a range of school sources and on the Internet. They prepare and present good examples of work, using text and graphics which enhance their own work and displays around the school. Multimedia presentations are also created and presented. Good examples of these were seen in Years 3 and 4 when pupils created information for the school website. By Year 6, pupils are really

enthusiastic and attain above expected levels in a range of technological skills. They learn how technology can help them investigate more complex areas of learning, including linking pages in their multimedia presentations, using digital cameras to enhance their science investigations. Assessment procedures are very good and pupils' progress is tracked very closely. Pupils are also keen to record their own self-assessment and 'top tips' referred to by teachers to help them improve further.

63. The subject co-ordinator has continued the very positive learning atmosphere within the subject which supports and enhances learning very well. This positive approach has enabled computers and other forms of technology to become an integral part of day-to-day learning. The quantity and quality of resources are very good. National funding has been used effectively to improve resources and increase the competence and confidence of staff to the benefit of all pupils. The co-ordinator has also developed a very good resource in the school website which is accessed regularly by pupils. Lunchtime clubs are very popular and well attended. Parents are also invited into school to experience and use the latest software programs to help them with their children's learning.

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

64. Information and communication technology is used to very good effect to support learning in all subjects. This was an identified area for improvement in the previous inspection. This support is demonstrated most effectively in literacy and numeracy, when pupils create text and graphics and use data-handling skills to enhance their presentations in a wide range of subjects. Regular, good links are also made through the use of art programs and information sources linked to history and geography. Pupils also make good use of digital cameras, sensors and tape recorders to enhance their work in subjects such as science and art and design.

### **HUMANITIES**

65. Because geography and history are taught in blocks of time throughout the year and geography was not the focus during the inspection, it was not possible to observe any lessons and therefore it is not possible to make a secure judgement about the provision in geography. However, the scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning and discussion with both teachers and pupils show that standards in geography are in line with age-related expectations by the ages of seven and eleven.
66. The leadership and management of geography are satisfactory. Curriculum planning has been well developed since the last inspection and there are now secure subject guidelines in place that ensure key skills and concepts are appropriately covered. However, although pupils' achievement in the subject is satisfactory, how the subject is timetabled in blocks of time means that there is too long a gap in pupils' learning overall and this restricts the rate of progress pupils could make in the subject overall. Although there has been sound developments in the subject since the last inspection, there is insufficient opportunity for the co-ordinator to monitor standards in the subject across the school, which is preventing the raising of standards even further.

### **History**

Provision in history is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' achievement across the school is good.
- Standards are above average by the end of Year 6.
- The quality of teaching is good.

- There is insufficient opportunity for the co-ordinator to monitor standards across the school.

## Commentary

67. Pupils' achievement in history is good because of good teaching. Throughout the school, pupils gain a good knowledge and understanding of the areas of history studied, particularly in the juniors. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and they promote historical knowledge, skills and understanding very effectively through well-planned activities and this enables pupils to follow historical lines of enquiry about different periods in history very effectively. For example, in Years 3 and 4, pupils begin to understand that history can be interpreted in different ways as they work in groups in order to sort statements about the life of Henry VIII that could be either fact or opinion.
68. Teachers use a good range of resources in order to support pupils' learning in the subject and, consequently, pupils across the school soon learn how to use secondary sources well, such as books, artefacts and photographs, in order to find out about the past. Teachers also use information and communication technology and the Internet as a research tool very effectively to develop further pupils' knowledge and understanding in the subject. For example, in Year 6, pupils successfully access the Internet to search for information about features of Victorian school life in order to make a comparison with education today. Visits to historical places of interest, such as Glastonbury museum, and visitors to the school, support well pupils' learning in the subject. For example, in Year 2, pupils gain a good understanding of how household equipment has changed over time as they listen to a visiting speaker from a local museum and are given the opportunity to handle and experience a range of Victorian household items in order to develop their understanding.
69. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. Curriculum planning has been effectively developed since the last inspection and the subject guidelines which teachers use to inform their planning ensure appropriate coverage of subject. There are insufficient opportunities for the co-ordinator to monitor teaching, learning and standards in the subject. This is limiting the identification of how standards can be raised. However, the school is aware of this and has identified it as an area of priority on the subject action plan for future improvement in the subject.

## Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievement is good.
- The quality of teaching is good.
- Resources are very good and teachers use them effectively to support pupils' learning.
- There is a good balance between all aspects of the subject.
- There is insufficient opportunity for the co-ordinator to monitor standards.

## Commentary

70. Standards are in line with age-related expectations of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education by the ages of seven and eleven.
71. The school effectively follows the locally agreed syllabus for religious education and this ensures that pupils not only learn about the main beliefs and values of Christianity but also those of other world faiths such as Judaism, Hinduism and Islam.
72. Pupils' achievement across the school is good because of good teaching. The school has a very good range of good quality artefacts and resources and teachers use them very effectively to support pupils' learning. In classes across the school, artefacts from different

religions are displayed well and are used in lessons by teachers to support pupils' knowledge and understanding in the subject. For example, in a Years 3 and 4 lesson about Hindu traditions and beliefs, the teacher very skilfully showed and talked about the significance of each item placed on a Paja tray as a way of preparing for an act of worship within the Hindu faith. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and this enables them to give clear explanations about themes being studied in order to support pupils' understanding.

73. Religious education contributes very effectively to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, across the school, pupils are encouraged to explore and think about their own personal feelings, emotions and view points about themes being studied. For example, Year 6 pupils consider the qualities of a leader as they study the life of Jesus and Year 1 pupils consider the moral behind the story of the Hare and the Tortoise. In the juniors particularly, good links with English are made as pupils are given plenty of opportunity to write in different ways in order to record their learning in the subject. However, although role play is used effectively by teachers in the infants to develop pupils' understanding, too few opportunities overall are given to pupils to record in writing what they have learnt in order to consolidate their learning, and across the school the use of information and communication technology in the subject is not fully utilised as a means of supporting learning.
74. The leadership and management are satisfactory. Curriculum planning is securely in place to enable appropriate coverage of the subject. However, there is insufficient opportunity for the co-ordinator to monitor standards and the quality of teaching and learning in order to raise standards even further.

## **CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS**

75. In **design and technology**, no lessons were planned for the week of the inspection because design and technology and art and design are covered in alternate half terms. Consequently, no judgement can be made about overall provision. The work seen on display and the designs in pupils' books indicate that the school is providing a suitable range of interesting activities year on year, throughout the school, and teachers are adopting the right approach to the subject by providing opportunities for pupils to thoroughly plan and evaluate their models. This was clearly reflected, for example, in the quality of the glove puppets seen in Year 2 and the camshaft-driven toys produced in Year 6. A portfolio of work has been started but is in the very early stages of development and does not yet provide enough guidance for teachers as to the standards of work which can be achieved in each year group.

### **Art and design**

Provision in art and design is **satisfactory**.

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

- The subject provides a good curriculum and a wide range of activities to develop pupils' skills and understanding.
- There are insufficient opportunities for the co-ordinator to monitor teaching, learning and standards in the subject.

#### **Commentary**

76. Standards in art and design by Year 2 and Year 6 are typical for pupils in those age groups. Teaching, learning and pupils' achievement are satisfactory overall. Throughout the school, standards achieved and the rate at which pupils make progress and develop artistic skills are often in direct proportion to teachers' subject knowledge and confidence. All teachers draw upon the good scheme of work available to plan stimulating activities for their classes. Teaching is often good and no unsatisfactory lessons were observed. Consequently, pupils

throughout the school sometimes achieve better than expected standards in the use of some media but not in others. Most pupils by Year 2 use a pencil correctly for a variety of drawing activities. They mix two paint colours together without adult help and make simple sculptures from a range of materials. By Year 6, they have continued to build on these skills to the extent that they successfully make and use printing blocks, selecting from a range of materials and skilfully mixing pastel colours to create landscape pictures.

77. The main strength of teaching throughout the school is that all teachers provide a good range of examples of work from which pupils can draw inspiration. In a good Year 1 lesson seen, pupils had looked at numerous photographs of portrait work before they started their own self-portraits, using a mirror to help them. The teacher gave good individual support and encouragement and the results were clearly above average. Lessons are not quite as successful where less confident teachers are unsure about what standards can be achieved and do not allow pupils sufficient time to practise and improve their technique.
78. Leadership and management in the subject are satisfactory. There are many strengths which provide a strong platform for further improvement. For example, the co-ordinator organises visits from sculptors, trips to a Bristol art gallery and art weeks, all of which stimulate interest and make a very positive contribution to pupils' personal development. The main area for improvement is to support teachers who are less confident and to develop their appreciation of what can be achieved by the pupils in their class. This could be partly managed by developing a comprehensive portfolio of examples of pupils' work, properly categorised and moderated against nationally agreed standards. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

## Music

Provision in music is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- A very good programme of tuition on brass instruments is provided for pupils in Year 6.
- The enthusiastic co-ordinator provides good leadership and management.
- Music making does not feature sufficiently in assemblies.

### Commentary

79. At the end of Year 2 and Year 6, pupils' standards are typical for these age groups. This contrasts with the above average standards in Year 2 at the time of the last inspection. All pupils achieve satisfactorily; those with special educational needs or with English as an additional language are fully involved in all lessons and require little additional support to assist their learning. The provision combines a well-structured, long-term plan of learning activities, opportunities for extra-curricular musical activities and the chance to be taught one of several instruments by visiting specialist teachers.
80. The lack of opportunities for learning composition found at the previous inspection has been addressed successfully. By Year 2, pupils are using their own symbols to represent sounds, producing accurately written and drawn scores of their compositions. Such graphic scores are regularly produced in older classes and, by Year 6, many pupils have progressed to a satisfactory understanding of basic standard notation. All Year 6 pupils have just started a twenty-lesson programme of brass tuition, learning to play either the trumpet, trombone or euphonium. This exciting initiative by the Somerset Music Service is provision of the highest quality that owes much to the very good teaching of the visiting teacher. Lessons are stimulating a very good quality of learning by the pupils involved and the learning activities are sufficiently varied to ensure that many aspects of the National Curriculum are covered in addition to the basic technique of playing the instrument.

81. Overall, teaching and learning are good. Teachers plan lessons thoroughly to include a good variety of learning activities, make very good use of resources and use effective strategies to ensure that all pupils are fully involved. Pupils respond with good attention and enthusiasm, as when Year 2 pupils enjoyed identifying the percussion instruments being played out of their sight. The correctness of their answers and their knowledge of the names of a very wide range of instruments confirmed the effectiveness of past and present teaching.
82. The co-ordinator leads and manages the subject well. She places priority on broadening the range of opportunities for pupils to perform, whether singing or on instruments. While several staff run extra-curricular activities, such as choir, recorder and ocarina, only small numbers of pupils are involved. Similarly, visiting specialists teach violin, clarinet or guitar. There is thus a breadth of opportunities but the developing skills of the pupils involved are not sufficiently celebrated in the school, for example by involving them in assemblies or other large group gatherings. There is a notable lack of singing in assemblies and there are no times during the week, as there are in many schools, for classes to combine for a designated singing practice.

## **Physical education**

Provision in physical education is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The co-ordinator provides very good leadership and management, maintaining the high quality set by his predecessor.
- A very good range of learning opportunities is planned.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- There are no significant weaknesses other than restrictions in physical space on site.

### **Commentary**

83. Pupils' standards in dance at the end of Year 2 and in gymnastics and games at the end of Year 6 are typical of the age groups, and achievement is satisfactory overall. Records show that an above average proportion of pupils reached expected standards in swimming by the end of Year 6. Present and past co-ordinators have developed the subject well, taking advantage of every opportunity to broaden the range of learning activities that is provided. This has resulted in a very good curriculum that is taught well overall.
84. The present co-ordinator is an enthusiastic, knowledgeable and well-organised senior manager who has several other significant areas of responsibility. He has co-ordinated the subject in the past and re-assumed responsibility in January 2004. His predecessor has provided a very thorough action plan for subject development that places priority on increased monitoring and evaluation of pupils' standards and the quality of teaching, alongside further curriculum development. All provision for pupils in Years 1 and 2 is based on the school site but older pupils increasingly use the swimming and sports hall facilities at the local comprehensive school. This arrangement has several benefits. Firstly, it overcomes the problems for games, in particular of the restricted facilities at the school. Secondly, it reinforces the good links with other schools that are generally present. Year 11 pupils are involved in coaching games such as badminton; the expertise of specialist secondary staff is also available and made good use of. Additionally, opportunities are extended successfully by good liaison with local sports clubs and organisations, enabling pupils in Years 3 to 6 to experience a far wider range of activities than is provided in many primary schools. These activities include hockey, cricket, basketball, tennis and golf.
85. Teaching and learning are good overall. Well-planned lessons provide a good variety of activities in which pupils' learning builds successfully on past experiences. Pupils work well



together in collaborative activities such as dance sequences in Year 2 and games skill practices in Years 5 and 6. Pupils evaluate one another's performances constructively, identifying good features and aspects that can be improved. This is a strong feature of learning, as is the sustained physical activity that all pupils maintain. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language need little additional support. Pupils with emotional or behavioural difficulties participate as fully and enthusiastically as all others. This is because of the consistency of teachers' high expectations of pupils' behaviour and also because teachers use ongoing assessment well to ensure that pupils progress to the next activity when they are ready, as indicated by them achieving success.

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

Provision in personal, social and health education is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Provision makes a strong contribution to pupils' personal development.
- All adults provide very good role models.
- Pupils have great interest in school life, are receptive to ideas and enjoy taking responsibility.

### **Commentary**

86. The school attaches great importance to pupils' personal development. Teachers deal very effectively and sensitively with issues such as feelings and emotions, diet, health, sex, drugs and personal safety. Many of these are dealt with effectively in specific sessions set aside for this purpose and also in subjects such as science and religious education. Well-planned sessions have a significant impact on pupils' moral and social development as well as their learning. Many issues that affect all pupils are also dealt with sensitively in assemblies. All adults consistently implement the school's policy and approach which include the establishing of Golden Rules and Class Rules.
87. All of these qualities help to promote the very caring and supportive atmosphere and mutual respect throughout the school. A whole-school programme provides teachers with clear guidance and builds on pupils' learning as they move through the school. From an early stage, young pupils are given good opportunities to gain self-confidence in discussions that help them develop socially and morally responsible behaviour both in the classroom and beyond it. They listen politely to each other and share ideas and opinions.
88. Each class from Year 2 onwards elects two pupils to represent them on the pupil council. Year 1 pupils are to be included during the summer term. This council meets regularly and is keen to consider and discuss aspects of the school such as litter and healthy eating in relation to pupils' lunch boxes. Within the good programme for developing citizenship, pupils consider rights and responsibilities, anti-social behaviour and pressure groups. Pupils are encouraged to learn what it means to be helpful, considerate and mature within their school community and teachers provide good support to help pupils become good citizens in the wider and more diverse world.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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

