

INSPECTION REPORT

ASHILL PRIMARY SCHOOL

Ashill nr Ilminster

LEA area: Somerset

Unique reference number: 123639

Headteacher: Mr D Scotney

Lead inspector: Ms S Billington

Dates of inspection: 8th – 9th December 2003

Inspection number: 262826

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	32
School address:	School Road Ashill Ilminster Somerset
Postcode:	TA19 9ND
Telephone number:	01823 480637
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Y Tomlinson
Date of previous inspection:	9 th November 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a small primary school in which the size of the year groups varies considerably. Year 1 is the biggest year group with 10 pupils. There are currently no pupils in year 6. Children's attainment on entry is wide ranging but the majority has broadly average skills in all areas. There are very few pupils from minority ethnic groups and all pupils speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is below average; most of these have learning difficulties. There are no pupils with statements of special needs.

The school has recently gained a Healthy Schools award and is working towards an Artsmark award. It has also gained an achievement award for good results in national tests at the end of year 6. It holds the Investors in People standard and has a schools extra award for the range of activities provided outside the taught curriculum.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
4343	Ms S Billington	Lead inspector	Mathematics Science Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology Physical education Special educational needs English as an additional language
13911	Ms J Gallichan	Lay inspector	
15175	Mrs M Cooper	Team inspector	Foundation stage English Geography History Music Religious education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Overall this is a **good** school with some very good features. Pupils achieve well as a result of good teaching. The school has a very positive ethos and pupils benefit from an excellent range of opportunities for learning outside the classroom. Leadership is very good. Running costs of the school are very high, but overall it provides **good** value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils achieve well
- Provision for pupils' personal development is very good and as a result they have very good attitudes to learning and behaviour is very good
- There are excellent links with parents and the local community
- Leadership by the head and governors is very good
- The curriculum is enriched by an excellent range of visits, visitors, clubs and opportunities to participate in musical and sporting activities
- Pupils are very well known and their progress is carefully tracked
- Provision for pupils with learning difficulties is very good
- There is not enough use of information and communication technology (ICT) in subjects across the curriculum
- Opportunities are missed to promote pupils' skills in extended writing across the curriculum

Since the last inspection, improvement has been good. Pupils are making better progress in their learning and overall standards have risen. Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress and this is an improvement. A permanent team of teaching staff has brought more consistency to the quality of teaching.

There have been improvements in provision for teaching ICT. Standards are now broadly in line with expectations, but there are still some gaps in pupils' experiences and ICT is not yet used enough in subjects across the curriculum.

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	A*	A
mathematics	D	D	A*	A
science	A*	A	A	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.

A indicates that the school's results were in the top 5% of schools nationally*

Overall, pupils achieve **well**. Results have to be interpreted with great caution because the numbers of pupils taking national tests each year is so small. What is clear is that pupils do well in tests at the end of year 6 in relation to the levels that they achieved at the end of year 2. Last year, all pupils made at least expected gains in English and mathematics and the majority did better than this*.

* There are no national tests in science at the end of year 2.

At the time of the inspection, there were no pupils in year 6. Pupils in year 5 have made good gains from year 2 and most are on course to reach at least average levels in tests at the end of year 6. The number of pupils in year 2 is very small but these are working at broadly average levels.

Pupils with learning difficulties are quickly identified and given extra help – often for a short period. This support is very effective in enabling them to catch up with their peers. These pupils usually reach average levels in English and mathematics at the end of year 6.

The youngest children in the reception year get a good start and most reach expected levels in all areas of learning at the start of year 1. They often exceed expectations, particularly in literacy and numeracy.

Pupils' personal development is **very good**. They have very good attitudes to learning and their behaviour is very good. Attendance levels are very good and pupils arrive promptly at school.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The overall quality of education is **good**. Teaching is **good**. A strong feature is the quality of the work of teaching assistants who make a very positive contribution to lessons.

Children have excellent opportunities for learning outside the school day provided by staff, parents and members of the community. There is a very good range of clubs and all pupils have the opportunity to learn to play an instrument and to participate in performance. A number of teams participate enthusiastically in competitive sports. A wide range of visits and visitors enhances opportunities for learning, for example, in geography and art.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership is **very good** and management is **good**. The headteacher has a very clear sense of direction and is well supported by a strong team of teachers and support staff. The governing body provides strong support for the school and governors have a very good understanding of key areas for development. The school makes very good use of information about pupils' achievements to identify areas for improvement but the planning to address these needs to be sharper.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very positive about all aspects of the school. They provide a strong level of support for their children's learning. Pupils are also very positive about the school. They appreciate the variety of activities in which they get involved and feel that they are well known and well cared for.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Make greater use of ICT to support learning across the curriculum
- Extend the range of opportunities for pupils to write in subjects across the curriculum

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Ensure that the documentation that relates to pupils with special educational needs accurately records the outcomes of reviews.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Overall pupils achieve **well**. Children in the reception year reach and often exceed the expected levels in all areas of learning at the start of year 1. These standards are maintained so that almost all pupils attain at least expected levels in national tests at the end of year 2. For any that do not, additional support in years 3 to 6 is effective in enabling them to catch up with their peers so that at the end of year 6 they are working at average levels. In national tests at the end of year 6, almost all pupils attain at least average levels and many reach the higher levels.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Overall standards in English and mathematics are above average
- Pupils with learning difficulties benefit from well targeted support and do well
- Pupils have good knowledge of science but their investigative skills are weaker
- Pupils' skills in ICT have improved but they do not make enough use of these to help their learning across the curriculum

Commentary

1. Standards in English are above average, but pupils' skills in speaking and listening and in reading are generally better than those in writing. Pupils benefit from regular opportunities to work in small groups with an adult and they learn to talk and listen with assurance in a range of situations. They listen carefully to the ideas of others and respond appropriately; older pupils show an awareness of how speech is adapted to formal situations. Reading is taught systematically and by the end of year 2 pupils are competent and often confident readers. Older pupils learn about the characteristics of different types of books and begin to use their skills for research. Pupils are competent writers but test results and scrutiny of their work show that standards in this area are broadly average. The written work of pupils in year 5 is often lively and ideas are extended logically but the standard of presentation varies and handwriting is not always joined.
2. In mathematics, pupils acquire a secure base of skills in numeracy by the end of year 2. They are beginning to recognise patterns and relationships in number and to apply what they know to solve simple problems, for example, in calculating change. As they move through the school, the skills of older pupils are extended so that they become competent in the four operations and the use of fractions and decimals. They begin to use what they know to interpret information and to check that their answers are reasonable. Pupils are aware of the properties of shapes and learn to use standard units of measure to calculate perimeter and area.
3. Good assessment arrangements means that pupils with any learning difficulties are quickly identified and given extra support. This support is carefully planned to address specific gaps in pupils' experiences or knowledge, for example, recognition of sounds and skills in word building. Individual and small group work is very successful in addressing areas of difficulty and some children make remarkable progress in a relatively short time. For instance, one pupil who had specific handwriting practice for ten minutes twice a week showed very good improvement within a term.
4. In science, pupils' have a good range of knowledge of all aspects of science and good observational skills. Their skills in other aspects of scientific enquiry are weaker; for example, although they learn to make predictions they do not link these to scientific knowledge. The older pupils struggle to explain the conditions for a fair test. Pupils' skills in ICT are broadly average and this is an improvement since the last inspection. However, they do not make enough use of

these skills in subjects across the curriculum. It was not possible to judge standards or achievement in other subjects.

Pupils’ attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Main strengths and weaknesses

Pupils have very good attitudes to learning and behave very well and this has a positive impact on their learning and achievement. Pupils enjoy school so they arrive punctually and attend regularly. Pupils’ personal development is very good.

- Pupils participate enthusiastically in all available activities
- Pupils behave very well as a result of high expectations set by adults
- Pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted very well
- Attendance is well above the national average

Commentary

5. Pupils are well-motivated because they experience an interesting and stimulating curriculum. They listen carefully to teachers’ explanations, are keen to answer questions and are eager to attempt the tasks they are given. They know that teachers value their ideas and efforts. Pupils concentrate well and work productively. The youngest children follow instructions cheerfully and tidy up quickly at the end of a session.
6. The school’s code of conduct is well known by pupils and forms the basis of high expectations of behaviour. Fair rewards and lots of praise encourage pupils to behave well. They show respect for each other, their learning environment and resources. Boys and girls and pupils from across the two classes get on well together – playtimes and lunchtimes are happy, sociable times. Pupils and parents are not worried about any bullying in the school but are confident that pupils would know what to do if it occurred. There have been no exclusions.
7. Pupils’ personal development is fostered very well. Pupils take responsibility willingly for small jobs around the school and show their care and concern for others by supporting a number of charities. The annual residential visit promotes older pupils’ social development as well as their confidence as they embark on a good range of adventurous activities. Pupils are taught about different faiths and festivals but opportunities are limited for them to explore the multicultural nature of British society. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on their own actions and feelings as well as the beauty of the world around them. This is evident in some lovely landscape pictures of the local area and poems written about the autumn that show their appreciation of the natural world. The ‘theme’ of the week challenges pupils to think about what is right and wrong. Collective worship makes a good contribution to pupils’ spiritual, moral and social development and fully meets requirements.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	2.8	School data	0.0
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

Teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching is good. Although teaching seen during the inspection was satisfactory to good, pupils' work and assessment information show that overall lessons are effective in making sure that pupils make good progress.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching assistants give good support to teachers and pupils
- Good assessment arrangements means that there is good tracking of pupils' progress
- Good practical activities help pupils to learn
- Resources are used well but occasionally time is not used in the most effective way
- Homework is used well to support reading, spelling and maths work

Commentary

8. Teaching is good throughout the school. For the youngest children, the curriculum is carefully planned to cover all areas of learning and they have access to an appropriate range of practical experiences. The teacher and teaching assistant work regularly with these children in a small group and this provides them with good opportunities for discussion and explanation of new ideas. However, limited space in the classroom restricts some aspects of their learning, in particular their opportunities to make choices and freely explore the learning environment.
9. Teachers know their children well. There are regular checks on how well they are doing and the information is used well to provide reinforcement of ideas that pupils may not have grasped or to plan specific support where it is needed. Teaching assistants play a key role in providing this extra support and are skilled in assessing pupils' progress in their individual programmes.
10. In some subjects, good resources and practical activities support learning. This is often the case in mathematics. In a lesson with years 3 and 4 on data-handling, pupils quickly learned the value of tallying through quick practice tasks on the computer before they applied the system to quickly check the score in a series of games. Practical tasks are also a feature of work in science, although the recording that accompanies these does not always extend pupils' scientific thinking as much as it might. In ICT, focused teaching in one lesson each week by the subject co-ordinator is helping pupils to learn new skills that they then practise and consolidate at other times.
11. A good ratio of staff to pupils means that they can often be taught in small groups and this is beneficial to their learning. Just occasionally, work could move on at a faster rate and more could be achieved in the time available. Sometimes time is lost when the adult asks too many questions rather than giving clear explanations of a key idea.
12. Homework is set and marked regularly. Parents give good support with the tasks set and most children complete these conscientiously. This has a particularly beneficial effect on progress in reading and numeracy.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 11 lessons

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

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

The curriculum

The overall quality of the curriculum is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils benefit from the excellent provision of visits, visitors, special events and extra-curricular clubs that enrich the curriculum
- There is very good involvement of the local community and the locality to extend pupils' learning
- There is very good provision for personal, social and health education
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good
- ICT is not used well enough across the curriculum
- Accommodation is unsatisfactory

Commentary

13. The curriculum includes all national curriculum subjects and provision for religious education. There is a strong emphasis on promoting pupils' personal, social and health education through a structured programme and curriculum enrichment activities. There is very good provision for tuition and participation in music and in games and sports. The curriculum is enriched by a good number of clubs, particularly for sports and music, for children from year 1 and above. Visits to places of educational interest, such as a farm and a Victorian mill, also enhance pupils' learning and include a residential trip for pupils in years 3 to 6. Pupils also benefit from special events such as an Archaeology Day and opportunities to work with visitors including a local sculptor. The school is currently working towards an Artsmark award.
14. Planning for reception children is linked to the topics studied by pupils in year 1 and 2, but carefully adapted to ensure that learning experiences are appropriate for children of their age. Planning is based on two and four year cycles of topics for years 1 and 2 and years 3 to 6 to meet the needs of pupils in mixed age classes. There is useful work going on to give a stronger focus to planning for the skills pupils need to learn in subjects such as history. However, there are limited opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their skills in ICT through their work in other subjects. There are some examples of good use, for example by researching using the Internet, but as yet ICT is not used enough across the curriculum. The school has rightly identified writing as an area requiring some improvement but subjects other than English are not used well enough to extend writing skills, particularly for the older pupils who are competent writers.
15. The school provides very well for pupils with special educational needs. Individual programmes to address pupils' specific difficulties are well organised and effective.
16. Pupils benefit from the good number of suitably experienced teachers and support assistants that enables them to be taught directly in small groups for much of the time. Resources are good, apart from a lack of large play equipment for reception children. The school works hard to overcome shortcomings in the accommodation, particularly the lack of a hall and limited outdoor space for reception. As a result, pupils' learning is not affected unduly.

Care, guidance and support

Very good attention is paid to ensuring pupils' health and safety, care and welfare. Pupils receive very good support, advice and guidance based on very good assessment and teachers' detailed knowledge of each pupil's individual needs. Very good account is taken of pupils' views and opinions.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy very close relationships with the adults who teach and care for them
- Induction procedures are very good
- Pupils' progress is tracked carefully and targets set to help them improve their work
- Pupils have a real voice in decisions which effect them

Commentary

17. Staff have created an inviting and encouraging atmosphere where pupils feel secure and valued. Child protection procedures meet requirements. Good care is taken of pupils' individual welfare needs. Procedures to deal with first aid, administering of medicines and emergency evacuation are well organised. The premises are checked regularly to ensure a safe and healthy environment. Parents are very positive about this aspect of the school's work and are confident that their children are well cared for whilst at school.
18. Thoughtful and sensitive induction procedures ensure pupils make a smooth transition from playgroup, which is on-site, to school. Parents and the child are invited to a series of meetings and visits and this is where the first steps are made in developing a very good partnership between parents and the school.
19. All adults strive to meet the individual needs of pupils and help them to achieve their best. Careful assessments are made to track pupils' progress and targets set to help them improve their work. Junior pupils are very aware of their targets and these are shared with parents so they can support their children at home. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is carefully tracked, but not always recorded systematically on their individual education plans when reviews take place.
20. The school constantly seeks pupils' views. For example, the home/school agreement was discussed with pupils and as a result the pupils' part in the agreement was amended. When activities were being considered for wet playtimes, pupils were given the responsibility to select toys and games that would be most suitable to use at such times. Most recently their views have been sought about the design and redevelopment of the environmental area. A competition for the whole family was used to come up with the final design.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The excellent partnership with parents and the local community greatly enhances learning experiences for pupils. Links with other schools are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Formal and informal contact and communication with parents is excellent
- Parents are provided with very good information, which keeps them well informed
- The school enjoys the whole-hearted support of parents and the local community
- Good opportunities are provided for pupils to work with pupils of other local schools

Commentary

21. The size of the school means every parent and child is well known to all adults working in the school. Parents really appreciate teachers making themselves available at the beginning and the end of the school day. There are regular formal opportunities for parents to come into school and discuss their child's progress. Information evenings, for example on drugs education, are organised as appropriate. The school consults parents regularly. As a result of parents' requests, an induction/information evening is now organised when year 2 pupils move into the year 3 to 6 class.

22. The prospectus and governors' annual report to parents contain well beyond what is required statutorily and provide prospective parents with a real insight into the life of the school. The entrance and library area are a full of useful and interesting information which parents might need. Annual reports are detailed and give lots of information about what pupils can do and how they have improved over the year. However, the reports could give clearer information about how well pupils are doing in relation to national expectations.
23. Parents are extremely supportive of the school and happy with the education provided. They help with extra-curricular activities and provide transport to sports matches. They offer to share any expertise they have, for example, a sculptor, potter and archaeologist have made valuable contributions to pupils' learning. The parents, teachers and friends' association (PTFA) is very active, meeting frequently and arranging a number of events which raise considerable funds to provide additional resources or activities for pupils. The local community supports events and activities and is very much involved in the redevelopment of the environmental area. Useful business links give pupils first-hand experiences related to traditional crafts, building and construction. The school's very successful partnership with its parents and the community has been recognised by the gaining of the 'school's extra' community award. Links with local schools extend opportunities for pupils to participate in competitive sports and special curriculum events.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The headteacher and governors provide very good leadership. Management is good but there is a need for sharper planning to address key areas for improvement.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher sets high standards for school improvement
- Leadership of English, mathematics and ICT is good
- Governors are very well organised and informed and help to set the direction for school improvement
- Assessment information is used well to analyse areas for improvement, but planning to address these is not specific enough
- Support staff are generally used well and have a positive impact on progress of pupils with learning difficulties
- There are some weaknesses in the records kept on pupils with special educational needs

Commentary

24. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and has built a strong team that is strongly focused on extending learning opportunities for all pupils. Leadership of key areas is good and the relatively new co-ordinator for ICT has a clear view of what needs to be done to further improve the subject. Analysis of pupils' performance in national tests in English and mathematics is used well to identify what needs to be done to improve standards. The school has rightly identified that pupils' skills in writing are weaker than in other aspects of English and raising standards in this area is currently a key priority. However, there is no specific action plan that outlines the tasks to be undertaken and ways of checking on the effectiveness of what is done to tackle the weaknesses.
25. Governors are active in their support for the school and have a good view of its strengths and areas for improvement. Individual governors' links with specific subject areas are helpful in giving them insight into the effectiveness of the work of the school.
26. There is a very good level of well-targeted support for pupils with learning difficulties. Classroom assistants are deployed very efficiently to provide individual and small group support for these pupils and have a very positive impact on the quality of their learning. All pupils with special educational needs have individual education plans (IEPs). These outline the strategies for

supporting pupils in work towards specific targets. However, the outcome of the reviews of pupils' progress in meeting these targets is not always recorded. Neither is it clear how the views of pupils themselves and their parents are taken into account when progress is reviewed and new targets are formulated.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	142566
Total expenditure	134510
Expenditure per pupil	3843

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	11975
Balance carried forward to the next	8056

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Children in the reception year join an established class of year 1 and 2 pupils. Teaching is good and ensures that children achieve well, particularly in their personal, social and emotional development. The class teacher and teaching assistant work well together to provide a safe and caring environment in which children flourish. By the end of the reception year, children achieve at least the expected standards in all areas of learning and they often exceed these. They are well prepared for their work in year 1.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in this area is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children work confidently when working individually and in groups
- They form very good relationships with adults and other children

Commentary

27. Children settle quickly into classroom routines. They are interested in their activities and approach them with confidence. They sit quietly when appropriate and concentrate on their tasks for substantial periods of time. The very good relationships they form with staff and with each other are seen in the extent to which they co-operate well with others, taking turns and treating others with respect. They try hard to carry out their tasks correctly and treat resources with care.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision in this area is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have well-developed speaking and listening skills
- Good teaching ensures that children have a good base of early literacy skills

Commentary

28. Children progress well in this area of learning through a well-planned curriculum that includes gradual involvement in daily literacy lessons as well as a variety of practical and purposeful activities including, for example, role play in the class 'post office'. They are very attentive when listening to others and to stories, and show a well-developed vocabulary when conveying their ideas to others. Children enjoy stories, handle books carefully and are beginning to recognise familiar words. They make good progress in identifying and forming letters and using writing as a means of communicating meaning.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in this area is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching ensures that children make a good start in developing their numeracy skills

Commentary

29. A well-planned programme of counting and ordering experiences, together with a variety of practical activities, promotes the good progress children make. All children can count at least to 10 and higher attainers count considerably higher. They get to grips with counting back from 10, begin to use mathematical terms to compare size and quantity, and explore capacity with sand and water. Practical activities and games are used well to extend children's mathematical vocabulary, for example, by using the term 'one more' as they increase the number of objects in a particular group.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD, PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT AND CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

30. No judgements are made about the quality of provision or teaching in these areas of learning because of limited evidence. However, planning and incidental observations show that the school provides an appropriate range of learning opportunities. Children learn about the different parts of a plant and show knowledge about post offices, Christmas cards, envelopes and stamps. They use the mouse confidently whilst drawing spiders on computer, and make their own spiders from play dough, pipe cleaners and paper. Children demonstrate well-developed manipulative skills when working with tools and materials. They practise body control and hopping whilst playing a game of hopscotch, which also reinforces their counting skills. Designing their own Christmas cards, listening to stories and playing in the class 'post office' provide opportunities for creative development.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision for this area is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve good standards in speaking and listening
- Progress in reading is good
- Better use could be made of work in other subjects to develop writing skills

Commentary

31. Good teaching ensures children of all ages achieve well overall in English, although there is some variation in the standards achieved in reading and writing. Pupils in all years listen effectively and communicate their ideas clearly to others. Pupils in years 3 to 5 have a good grasp of standard English. Progress in acquiring reading skills and improving levels of understanding is also good at all stages. Year 2 pupils read well with good levels of accuracy and understanding. Year 5 pupils read fluently and independently and are developing good strategies for locating and using information from a variety of sources to help with research. Pupils make satisfactory gains in their writing skills but these could be further extended. Year 2 pupils write clearly using a structured sequence of sentences but do not use a joined style of writing. Year 5 pupils show in their English written work that they are capable of using well chosen vocabulary and of making their writing lively and interesting, but their use of punctuation is not always

accurate. Teachers' expectations of older pupils' abilities to make decisions about the form and organisation of their written work in subjects other than English are not always high enough. Younger and lower attaining pupils in each class, including those with special educational needs, are very well supported by teachers and support assistants and this enables them to make good – and often very good – progress.

32. The subject is managed well. The co-ordinator uses assessment and other information well to review and develop provision to meet pupils' needs more closely. Standards are higher than at the last inspection and there has been good improvement in developing pupils' research skills. The school has rightly identified the need to improve standards achieved in writing by higher attaining pupils.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

33. There are some good examples of pupils' writing in subjects other than English. Junior children, for example, wrote a letter to apply for work in a Victorian mill in a history lesson. However, overall, writing skills in other subjects are not extended well enough, particularly for older and higher attaining pupils. In a geography lesson in which pupils used maps to identify changes in an area over time, the teacher's expectations of pupils' capacity to organise and communicate their own ideas independently were too low. This limited the extent to which they could practise and develop their skills.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well, particularly in years 3 to 6
- Extra support for those pupils with any difficulties helps them to catch up with their peers
- Marking of work is generally superficial and is not linked to pupils' targets

Commentary

34. By the end of year 2, pupils are generally working at average and sometimes higher levels in all aspects of mathematics. They have a secure understanding of addition and subtraction and know common multiplication facts. They understand tens and units, can order three digit numbers and recognise odd and even numbers. They know the properties of three dimensional shapes and measure using standard units. Pupils generally make progress at a steady rate, but just occasionally spend too long on an idea that they have understood well.
35. The work of most pupils currently in year 5 shows a good understanding of the four operations. They are beginning to make good use of strategies such as rounding up large numbers to calculate approximate answers. They calculate fractions of whole numbers and are beginning to understand the relationship between percentages, fractions and decimals. Results of national tests taken by year 6 in 2003 shows good progress overall, with all pupils making at least the expected gains from year 2 and a good proportion doing better than this.
36. Regular assessment of pupils' progress ensures that those who are experiencing difficulties are picked up at an early stage and given extra help. In years 3 to 6 in particular, well planned support by the teaching assistant, using a structured programme to boost pupils' skills, is very effective. Pupils who get this support gain confidence and generally go on to attain at least average standards in national tests at the end of year 6.
37. Pupils are set individual targets for improvement based on assessment of their knowledge of particular aspects of mathematics. Their work is regularly marked, but there are rarely any

comments on how well they have done or on what they need to do to improve. Progress towards their targets is not indicated; nor is it evident when they have had extra support or perhaps taken a long time to complete a task.

Mathematics across the curriculum

38. This is satisfactory. Pupils use their skills to record results in science and to plan and measure materials in design and technology.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils cover a wide range of work in all aspects of the subject
- Pupils' observational skills are good, but there are weaknesses in their skills in experimentation
- Much of the recorded work is at a similar level for pupils in different year groups

Commentary

39. Well structured planning ensures that all areas of science are taught. In years 1 and 2, pupils have some good practical experiences, for example, exploring sounds on a 'sound walk' round the school. They learn about sources of light, the type and use of different materials and the types of food that keep us healthy. This is built on in years 3 to 6 where pupils' knowledge becomes more sophisticated. They study life cycles of animals and plants; more able pupils give a detailed explanation of different ways that seeds are dispersed. Pupils are aware of the properties of different types of material; as part of their local study work, they showed good understanding of what materials are used in particular buildings and why.

40. Pupils' observational skills are promoted well. Work in years 1 and 2 encourages close attention to different parts of a plant as pupils record the growth of a bean. Older pupils also showed good attention to detail in drawing sections of different types of fruit. Pupils have opportunities to observe and sometimes set up a range of experiments. Whilst diagrams to illustrate these experiments often show good attention to detail, written accounts of tests rarely draw conclusions or explain and evaluate predictions. The work of pupils in the same class is often at a similar level using a worksheet or pro-forma for recording. These have their uses, particularly for younger children or those having literacy difficulties. However, the oldest pupils are rarely asked to plan and record independently and thus an opportunity is missed to extend and consolidate their skills in writing.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There has been good improvement in pupils' skills since the last inspection
- The co-ordinator is giving good support for planning and teaching
- Use of ICT across the curriculum is limited

Commentary

41. Provision for ICT has improved and pupils are generally achieving expected standards. In years 1 and 2, pupils learn about the everyday use of technology and acquire basic computer skills. They learn how to classify and represent information in different ways and how to give instructions to

make things happen. Many are slow to find their way around the keyboard and this, together with limited equipment in their classroom, restricts their achievement to some extent. The classroom for pupils in years 3 to 5 is well equipped with a good number of computers. These pupils are learning to combine text and graphics, have done some work on analysing data and use the Internet for research. Their experience of modelling and control is limited and the school lacks equipment for teaching these areas, but there are plans to address this during this year.

42. A relatively new co-ordinator is giving a good lead in improving provision for the subject. She teaches all pupils in the school, introducing new skills that are followed up during the week. She is advising colleagues on planning and provision and has recently introduced a good system for tracking pupils' experiences and acquisition of skills. Staff are making good use of ICT for preparing teaching materials and in classroom displays; the digital camera is used to good effect to record pupils' experiences, for example, on a 'Victorian' school day.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

43. This is limited, particularly for pupils in years 3 to 5. Pupils in years 1 and 2 make some use of word processing in English. They devise block graphs and pictograms in mathematics, for example, to show how pupils travel to school. Older pupils have used the Internet for research in history and religious education, word processed and illustrated poems and used the digital camera to record images for their landscape pictures in art. However, use of ICT is not embedded in subjects across the curriculum. It rarely features in teachers' plans and opportunities are missed in subjects such as science and mathematics to use ICT, for example, to extend pupils' skills in presenting and interpreting data.

HUMANITIES

44. Only one lesson was seen in **geography** and none in **history**. As a result, no judgement is made on the overall quality of provision or teaching. Infant children compare their own area with the fictional island of Struay, and learn how to find out about famous people such as Florence Nightingale. Junior children study maps to identify changes in an area over time, and learn about working conditions of people in Victorian times. Scrutiny of documentation and pupils' work, as well as discussion with pupils, suggests that provision for these subjects meets requirements. Pupils' learning is enhanced by opportunities to go on field trips in the locality, including a recent farm visit, special events, such as an Archaeology Day, and a residential trip for junior children. There has been recent improvement in planning for skills in history and plans are in hand for similar development in geography.
45. No lessons were seen in **religious education** so it is not possible to make a judgement about the quality of provision. Scrutiny of documentation and pupils' work indicates that requirements of the local agreed syllabus are met. Learning in this subject is linked closely to pupils' personal, social and health education as well as citizenship. Due attention is given to knowledge and understanding about Christianity as well as some aspects of Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish and Sikh beliefs and practices.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

46. No lessons were seen in art and design, design and technology or physical education. One lesson was seen in music. It is therefore not possible to make a secure judgement about the quality of provision in these subjects.
47. In **art and design**, work on display indicates that pupils have a good range of experiences in the subject. Pupils in years 3 to 6 made effective use of colour and tone in landscape studies. All pupils had the opportunity to work with a visiting artist using charcoal and working on line and

texture in portraits and studies of the construction of willow baskets. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development; they have been involved in some collaborative projects such as creating 'mysterious monsters' using 'modroc' and papier mache for the finishing details. Pupils in years 3 to 6 made a striking wall hanging with individual panels depicting symbolic elements of Aztec life.

48. In the **music** lesson seen, infant pupils confidently sang a familiar song. They worked successfully with symbols for representing sounds and played untuned percussion instruments in response to these. Individual pupils enjoyed taking on the roles of *composer* and *conductor*. Singing skills in assembly were appropriate for pupils' ages. No examples of pupils' work were available. However, scrutiny of planning indicates that the curriculum meets requirements. A significant strength is the opportunities provided for pupils to learn to play an instrument, including violin, clarinet and recorder, to perform in the school ensemble and to sing at a local music festival.
49. A limited range of work in **design and technology** shows that pupils engage in all aspects of the designing, making and evaluating process. They have designed and made puppets and, following a visit from a paper engineer who showed them how to make pop-up books, they tried out the techniques and made their own books. Some work has gone on in food technology, for example, younger pupils made and evaluated fruit salad, but lack of suitable space limits opportunities for this aspect of the subject.
50. Lack of space also inhibits provision for **physical education**. However, the school makes every effort to overcome the difficulties. The village playing field is used for games, the village hall for dance and all pupils swim at a local pool during one term in each year. Visiting coaches have taught skills in athletics and tag rugby. The range of extra-curricular activities and opportunities for competitive sport are outstanding for such a small school. Clubs at various times of the year include football, netball, athletics, rounders, hockey and dance. Teams have participated in local competitions in kwik cricket, football and uni-hoc. Last year the 'high fives' netball team won a local tournament and, on another occasion, a trophy for fair play.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

No lessons were seen and it is therefore not possible to judge the overall quality of provision. However, there is a good range of initiatives to extend pupils' skills in this area. The work towards the healthy schools award has involved pupils in suggesting and negotiating improvements to various aspects of the school's provision. Pupils are regularly consulted about aspects of the school's work and they understand that their suggestions are taken seriously, although it is not always possible to implement these. The school prepares children well for their next stage of learning, including joint units of work with the main receiving secondary school.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	2
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	1
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	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	1
The quality of the school's links with the community	1
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	2
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).

