

INSPECTION REPORT

ASHTON GATE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Bristol

LEA area: Bristol

Unique reference number: 108912

Headteacher: Mrs A Johannson

Lead inspector: Mr M Burghart

Dates of inspection: 6th – 8th December 2004

Inspection number: 266330

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:	3 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	377
School address:	Ashton Gate Road Bristol
Postcode:	BS3 1SZ
Telephone number:	0117 903 0236
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr P Gibby
Date of previous inspection:	April 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a large community primary school which draws pupils from a wide range of backgrounds in Ashton Gate near the centre of the city of Bristol. The school is comprised of two Victorian board schools originally one for infants and the other for juniors on either side of a walled play ground. There are 377 pupils on roll including 54 children who attend the maintained nursery part time. There are 13 classes in the main school all containing pupils from single age groups. The school has an above average proportion of pupils with special educational needs including six pupils with statements as defined by the DfES Code of Practice. A very small number of pupils requires extra help for having English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils joining or leaving at times other than in reception or from Year 6 is average, but in the last two years over half the teaching staff has changed. There are plausible reasons for such a high turnover which include pregnancy, promotion and as a result of issues of competence. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is broadly average. The attainment of children on entry to education varies widely year on year but overall in the last five years has been below average. The school holds the 'Investor in People' award and received a DfES Achievement Award in 2002.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
20865	Mr M S Burghart	Lead inspector	Art, Information and communication technology, Physical education, Personal, social and health education, English as an additional language.
9487	Dr F Hurd	Lay inspector	
24342	Mrs D Franklin	Team inspector	Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage, Music.
22578	Mr D G Jones	Team inspector	Mathematics, Special educational needs, Design and technology.
30438	Mr R Guest	Team inspector	English, Religious education.
20977	Mr R W Thelwell	Team inspector	Science, Geography, History.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school which gives pupils a good quality of education, balancing a commitment to raising academic standards with good provision to encourage personal development. Strengths far outweigh weaknesses and as the result of very good leadership and management the school gives sound value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Provision for special educational needs is very good and all children, regardless of background or ability, are fully included.
- Standards as measured by national tests are too low, especially for seven year olds.
- The school takes good care of pupils who in return enjoy school and respond well.
- Provision in the nursery gives children a good start to education.
- The leadership and management of the head are very good, with excellent features.
- There are very good links with parents and the community.
- Teaching is more often than not good. Staff make a good team.
- Some aspects of assessment are in need of improvement.
- Provision in design and technology is unsatisfactory.

The school has made good improvement since the last inspection in 1999, most notably in terms of the achievement of pupils, and in a gradual upward trend in standards, although they could still be higher. There are significantly enhanced resources for information and communication technology (ICT) and much better planning and assessment for English and maths. These features are having positive effects on learning. Following a period of considerable teacher turnover, recent stability in staffing is underpinning the school's good intentions. Provision for the nursery and a commitment to planning for more able pupils are areas where obviously good progress has been made. Staff are now given monitoring time and very good management systems are in place to ensure that opportunities are used effectively.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
English	D	E*	C	C
Mathematics	D	E	E	E
Science	C	E*	E	D

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2. E* performance indicates the school was in the bottom 5 per cent of all primary schools.*

Although the table shows the school's performance to be well below average in maths and science there has been a gradual improvement since the last inspection in 1999. Higher attainers are reaching above average levels, but high proportions of special needs have negative effects on average point scores. Inspectors do not find that pupils are underachieving by the time they leave the school. Improvements in English are

commendable. Whilst most children reach all expected goals by the end of reception standards in Year 2 tests in 2004 were well below average in reading, writing and maths. This is due mainly to unsettled staffing whilst pupils were in Year 1. Results do not show the good progress noted by inspectors in Year 2. Currently throughout the school pupils are working on appropriate levels for their ages and although standards are still likely to be below average in national tests improvements are evident in work in books and lessons, and pupils are seen as achieving well including those with special educational needs (SEN) and English as an additional language. The school can prove that it adds value to pupils' education. Standards in other subjects are broadly in line with national expectations throughout the school except in design and technology where they are below. Pupils' personal development is good as are attitudes and standards of behaviour. Attendance is improved to just below the national average.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The overall standard of education provided is much improved and is now good. The curriculum is broad and enriched, but provision for design and technology needs improving. Teaching is more often than not good and has positive effects on pupils' learning. As a result pupils' achievement, which in some cases has suffered because of high staff turnover, is improving and is usually good. Most teachers were seen to deliver good lessons with noted strengths in planning, clear learning objectives and good questioning. Eight staff had very good lessons. However, the pace of a minority of lessons is too slow. Aspects of assessment are still in need of improvement, but assessment is very good in English and good in maths, and is used well to set targets. Special needs provision is very good with learning support assistants making a good contribution. The school does very well to include all pupils in all activities and gives good support to those with English as an additional language. The school is well resourced and although the site has a lack of outdoor space, accommodation is used effectively to promote learning with some weaknesses in library provision. Links with parents and the community are very good and those with other schools are good. The school takes good care of pupils.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The head is a very good leader and manager. She is well supported by senior managers and governors and leads the whole school as a good team. Her leadership of the curriculum and teaching is excellent. Governance is satisfactory overall but the work of the chair and vice chair of governors is a notable strength. Subject leaders especially in English and maths make a good contribution to management. Staff manage behaviour consistently well with positive effects. The school has now established very good educational direction. Strategic management is very good and funds are used very well to ensure sound value for money.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Most parents are happy with the school and clearly value its commitment to learning through creativity. They especially like the school's approachability, the quality of leadership and that their children are treated fairly. A minority would like to see more homework, higher standards and receive more information about their child's progress. Inspectors find homework is satisfactory and are convinced that the school is actively seeking to raise standards and further develop communications about pupils' achievements

across the curriculum. Pupils like the school, particularly extracurricular activities. They have trust in the staff and feel that they are listened to.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The school is good at identifying areas for further development and is already aware that the most important things it should do to improve are to:

- Raise standards as measured in national tests, especially for seven year olds.
- Improve provision in design and technology.
- Develop the use of assessment in subjects in addition to English, mathematics and science.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Results in national tests as measured by average point scores are frequently below average, especially for seven year olds. However, in terms of the proportion of pupils attaining levels expected nationally for their age, standards in English, mathematics and science are average for pupils now in Year 6. This represents good achievement when considering the much above average proportion of pupils in the year group with SEN. Pupils currently in Year 2 achieve well to meet expected levels in speaking and listening, reading and mathematics. However, in this year group levels of attainment in writing and science are below average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards as assessed at Year 6 are improving steadily in English, mathematics and science.
- Attainment in speaking and listening for pupils currently in Year 6 is above average.
- Despite ongoing improvement, attainment for pupils at present in Year 2 is below average in writing and science.
- Children now in nursery and reception achieve well in all required areas of learning.
- Pupils, including those with SEN and those who are more able, usually make good progress and achieve well.
- Across the school, pupils make good gains in their personal development.

Commentary

1. In recent years nearly all children have reached the officially expected levels in each area of learning by the end of reception. This represents good achievement when considering overall attainment on entry to education was at best towards the lower end of that considered average for children of this age. Children currently in nursery and reception make good progress and achieve well. Inspection evidence indicates that nearly all children now in reception are on course to reach the required levels of performance in each area of learning by the end of their reception year.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	13.9 (14.5)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	12.5 (12.1)	14.6 (14.6)
Mathematics	14.0 (13.9)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 48 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. The table above shows that despite modest gains being made in writing and mathematics, standards for 2004 in each subject were well below national averages. Teacher assessment in science showed pupils' attainment to be well below nationally

expected levels¹. When compared with similar schools - based on 8 to 20 per cent eligibility for free school meals - results were well below the norm in reading and writing. In mathematics, results were consistent with the bottom five per cent of schools in the category. Despite making good gains in learning in Year 2, pupils were subject to a high turnover of teaching staff whilst in Year 1. This had a significant, negative impact on pupils' progress and performance.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.0 (24.2)	26.9 (26.8)
Mathematics	25.6 (24.4)	27.0 (26.8)
Science	27.7 (25.9)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 35 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. Results of eleven year olds for 2004 showed significant gains made in each subject over those of the previous year, and reflect a rate of improvement (in terms of average points scored) that was above the national trend. As such, whether compared with either national results or those of similar schools, standards were average in English, below average in science, and well below average in mathematics. When taking into account that the proportion of pupils with SEN was much above average, overall achievement was good.

4. Following a review of statutory assessments of pupils in Years 2 and 6 in 2004, it was decided that in order to raise standards further, in addition to the school's ongoing focus on the quality of pupils' ability to express their views and ideas orally, emphasis would be given to the quality of pupils' writing and to investigational work in mathematics and science. Inspection evidence confirms these foci have been successful in terms of pupil performance.

5. The proportion of pupils now in Years 2 and 6 who have special educational needs is above the norm. As such, current seven year olds achieve well to attain average standards in speaking, listening, reading and mathematics in terms of the proportion of pupils working at levels expected for their age. In writing and science, despite sound progress, overall attainment is below average. Pupils currently in Year 6 achieve very well to gain levels of performance in speaking and listening that exceed national expectations. In other elements of English, together with mathematics and science, pupils achieve well to attain standards in keeping with those expected for their age. Standards in information and communication technology meet nationally expected levels for pupils in Years 2 and 6. Attainment in religious education for both age groups meets the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Whilst work sampled in other National Curriculum subjects between Years 1 and 6 indicated work to be at an appropriate standard for the age groups concerned, insufficient evidence was available to make detailed judgements about attainment in design and technology and in music. However, there were indications of weaknesses in design and technology.

¹ The national expectation is that, when assessed at the end of Year 2, pupils should gain Level 2; the higher level being Level 3. When assessed at Year 6, the expected level is Level 4 with the higher level being Level 5.

6. In contrast to the findings of the previous inspection, higher attaining pupils, together with those who are potentially gifted and talented, are well provided for. As such, they make good progress in learning. Pupils with SEN attain standards appropriate for their abilities and personal circumstances. They achieve well and make good progress in terms of prior attainment and targets in their individual education plans. The small number of pupils for whom English is not their first language make good gains in their acquisition of the English language. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is good across the whole school. In Year 6, for example, several pupils achieved standards in line with those expected nationally in English, mathematics and science. For some of these pupils achievement is very good.

7. The school fell short of the targets set for the proportion of pupils in Year 6 to reach the expected levels or above in English and mathematics in 2004. However, it exceeded the target set for the proportion of pupils to reach the higher level in English. In so doing it surpassed the national average for pupils gaining the higher grade. The school met its target for pupils to attain the higher level in mathematics. Whilst the targets set for 2005 are challenging, they are attainable, and reflect the school's very positive attitude to raising standards and its commitment to giving pupils every opportunity to achieve their full potential.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Attendance is satisfactory. Punctuality is good. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils develop a very good level of confidence and self esteem.
- The school's provision for pupils' cultural development, including their knowledge and understanding of other faiths and cultures, is very good.
- The school promotes relationships, including racial harmony, very well.

Commentary

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.0	School data	0.3
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

8. Attendance is satisfactory as at the time of the last inspection, despite a dip in the figures last year caused by the particular circumstances of one family. The school has good procedures to monitor and promote attendance, and unexplained absences are followed up on the first day. Parents and carers are conscientious in informing the school of reasons for absence. The figures could be further improved if fewer holidays were taken during term time.

9. No unsatisfactory behaviour was observed during the inspection, although pupils' attention wandered in lessons which lacked pace or relied on teachers talking rather than pupils doing. Despite the small size of the playground and its awkward dimensions, as well as the lack of anything to play with, pupils are boisterous rather than aggressive, which is confirmed by the low accident rate. They are relaxed and chatty with visitors, confident that adults will listen to them courteously and value their opinions. The school does much to make its pupils world citizens through its growing range of international contacts. The school has established a link with a district in Nicaragua with visits in both directions. Visitors from Bordeaux, Bristol's twin city, taught pupils boules. An extensive range of local links ensures that pupils feel part of their wider community. More could be done to harness pupils' enthusiasm and willingness to take responsibility, so that all year groups may contribute more fully to school management. The newly elected school councillors demonstrated clearly that they take their role very seriously, and the older pupils who spontaneously care for younger ones at playtime would be more than capable of further involvement.

10. The school's ethos is very clearly inclusive. Pupils play and work together regardless of disability or skin colour, and differences are celebrated and used to enrich the curriculum. Assemblies make a satisfactory contribution to pupils' social and moral development. There are opportunities in the school's busy life for pupils to take the time to pause and reflect, but these tend to occur during circle time discussions, or the very successful 'peer massage' programme currently being piloted in Years 2 and 3, rather than during assemblies.

11. Pupils with special educational needs show good attitudes to their work. This in itself supports well the progress they make in learning. The vast majority have very good working relationships with the support staff who take them either individually, in small groups, or within their normal classroom lessons.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	333	0	0
White – any other White background	11	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	10	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	3	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	7	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	1	0	0
Black or Black British – African	1	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	2	0	0
Chinese	3	0	0

Any other ethnic group	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	4	0	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides an improved and now good quality of education.

Teaching and learning

Teaching is at least satisfactory, at best very good, and more often than not good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' good use of open ended questioning is effective in getting pupils to reason and respond.
- Staff manage pupils' behaviour well.
- Learning support assistants make a good contribution to teaching and learning.
- Teachers work well as a team to create good planning.
- Assessment, although used very well in English and well in maths, is insufficiently developed in other subjects.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 57 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	12 (21%)	22 (39%)	23 (40%)	0	0	0

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

12. All teachers were observed unannounced on several occasions by a variety of inspectors and in a range of subjects. Nearly all had good lessons and eight had very good sessions. The satisfactory lessons were spread between eleven different teachers. Strengths are in how teachers get pupils to think before answering and make good use of their speaking and listening skills, good relationships which mean pupils need not be afraid of making mistakes, and good planning which is underpinning improvements (some of which have yet to have full effects on standards). Throughout the school staff make a good team and support each other well in planning and evaluating the curriculum and its effect on pupils' learning. Despite standards having been lower than the national average over a period of years the work of current staff now ensures that pupils achieve well.

13. Assessment is used very effectively in English, and well in maths, to identify what pupils need to do next and how the curriculum will be improved by modification. An area for further development already known to the school is in terms of making more use of assessment to gauge progress, measure standards and report pupils' performance accurately to parents in all subjects.

14. Teaching of pupils with special needs is good and often very good when support staff are working alongside individual pupils or small groups. Here they use assessment well, planning is very good and ensures pupils make good progress in their learning and achieve

well. Learning support staff make a strong contribution to the quality of teaching through very good relationships, good understanding of pupils' special needs, and good partnerships with teachers.

15. Notably good examples of very successful teaching were seen in Year 6 where, despite high levels of special needs, most pupils will reach (or very nearly reach) nationally expected levels by the time they leave; and in Year 2 where much good progress helps pupils to overcome most of the effects which resulted from pupils being disadvantaged by frequent staff changes when they were in Year 1. The school is committed to raising standards. Teachers now have high expectations and pupils are responding well: improvements to pupils' writing are good examples of how this is making a difference. There were good examples of both literacy and numeracy being taught effectively with national strategies used well to support staff and ensure that pupils get a good diet of different activities and experiences which can be used to support the curriculum as a whole.

16. Good teaching and support in the nursery followed up in reception ensure that children make a good start to their education.

17. Some parents were concerned over how well teachers utilise homework to extend and reinforce the curriculum. Inspectors find that staff make appropriate use of it. Another area of concern for a small minority of parents was in how frequent changes in staffing over the last two years in particular have affected the management of behaviour. School procedures and the way teachers follow them are good. This is a characteristic of good teaching which has positive effects on how well pupils behave.

18. Aspects of teaching still in need of improvement are associated with the use of time with some activities going on too long, and more commonly, lessons which lack pace and leave pupils waiting too long before being actively involved. This was the case in a minority of lessons and in each case inspectors discussed the situation with individual staff.

The curriculum

The curriculum is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- An extensive range of activities, including visits, enriches the curriculum.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- The restrictive nature of the site and buildings does not permit the fullest development of physical education.
- Library provision is inadequate and not well sited.
- The school works very effectively to ensure all pupils are included in what is provided.

Commentary

19. The curriculum meets statutory requirements and is inclusive. The concerns regarding information and communication technology observed in the last report have been overcome and standards have been raised in geography and history. This represents good

improvement in curriculum provision. These improvements have not been as apparent in design and technology.

20. The school now has effective schemes of work in place to ensure pupils progress through the school. Literacy and numeracy are being well taught and there are consistent approaches to teaching both subjects throughout the school.

21. The school is providing appropriately for pupils' personal, social and health education. Teaching seen exhibits good use of literacy in many subjects and effective links between subjects. There are many innovative ideas in delivering the curriculum notably: reading partners between Years 4 and 1; the way ICT is used to support religious education; and the use of Bristol City football club's education department, which this year has been teaching pupils the importance of teamwork.

22. A wide range of visits pupils make in relation to their work enriches the curriculum, as do visits from many specialists to the school. This participation in a wide range of activities within the school day is very effective in broadening pupils' knowledge and understanding. In addition a range of clubs provide good support for pupils' learning outside of school hours, notably in sporting, musical and dramatic activities. The school is particularly good at ensuring all pupils have access to, and the opportunity to benefit from, all curricular activities.

23. The school complies fully with the requirements of the Code of Practice for pupils with special educational needs. Overall provision for pupils with SEN is very good. Pupils have full access to the broad curriculum. A good range and number of support staff support pupils very well. They are well trained and have a very clear understanding of their tasks. Class teachers and the support staff liaise well together. There is very good preparation for the next stage in learning.

24. The school prepares pupils effectively for later stages of education and has appropriate links with the local secondary school. Use of this school's grounds to extend the range of activities older pupils may enjoy in physical education is of particular value.

25. The school has employed a wide range of expertise in its teaching staff. It has sufficient numbers to permit subject leaders to monitor developments in their subjects. Where there has been stability of staffing this match of teachers to the curriculum has been effective in raising standards.

26. Teaching assistants work well to support teachers. Whilst there are a satisfactory number of assistants there are some lessons where the absence of other adult support lessens pupils' opportunities and places heavy demands on class teachers.

27. The buildings and classrooms are appropriate for the delivery of the curriculum and the number of pupils on roll. With the exception of the nursery, which has excellent outdoor facilities, playgrounds seem restrictive and crowded. The nearby small school field site is not available for play and currently is inappropriate for games lessons. Some playground areas have uneven surfaces and are not suitable for physical education lessons.

28. The school is making best use of the facilities it has. However, library provision is currently inadequate. The recent move of the main library to a corridor is not appropriate

and does not provide ready access for all. Many classes have book corners, which are adequately stocked, and a small section in the infant hall provides some additional book resources. Provision of resources in all other areas of the curriculum is satisfactory overall. ICT resources, deemed to be inadequate in the last report, are now good.

Care, guidance and support

Provision for pupils' care, guidance and support is good overall. The provision of support, advice and guidance based on monitoring is good. The involvement of pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Procedures to ensure pupils work in a healthy and safe environment are satisfactory. However, some matters of health and safety have been drawn to governors' attention.
- All pupils have a good and trusting relationship with at least one adult in the school.
- Induction arrangements are good.

Commentary

29. Staff are genuinely committed to ensuring the wellbeing of their pupils. They work hard to help them settle in when they join the school, and support them thereafter. Although some parents felt their children's transition to the reception class had been difficult, any problems seem more the result of the awkward entrance and positioning of the accommodation, rather than of the induction programme. Pupils from minority ethnic groups, and those with identified disabilities, are made as genuinely welcome and settle in as quickly as everyone else. The support and guidance given to pupils with special educational needs is very good. The school is very open minded about introducing therapies and techniques such as 'brain gym' and 'peer massage' intended to improve pupils' concentration and stimulate learning. It places great emphasis on the open discussion of problems. A medically trained counsellor visits weekly for sessions with specific pupils. As assessment procedures are further developed, academic support and guidance will be more precisely targeted than is possible at present.

30. Staff regularly encourage boys and girls to express their ideas and opinions in class, and pupils know their views will be taken seriously. Although the school council is newly established, this tradition of class debate means that councillors are already able to speak with authority on behalf of their classmates, and regularly seek their opinions on the council's behalf. At present councillors are drawn only from the four oldest year groups.

31. The school has good first aid procedures in place. There is a rolling programme of training to ensure appropriate numbers of qualified first aiders are always available. Despite the awkward dimensions of the playground, supervisors do their best to keep an eye on everyone, and the accident rate is low. Equipment is regularly tested for safety, and the site is checked annually for potential hazards using a detailed checklist. The site is secure and the school is not troubled by vandalism or intrusion out of hours. The headteacher is the child protection liaison officer, and the deputy head is fully trained as well. All staff are fully briefed.

32. The calibre of the teaching and support staff is such that all pupils with special needs are well guided and supported through their time at the school.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents and the local community are very good. Links with other schools are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school makes very good efforts to seek, value and act on the views of parents.
- Procedures to ensure satisfaction and deal with any concerns and complaints are very good.
- The school makes good provision to provide information about the school and about pupils' standards and progress.
- The yearbooks issued in place of conventional pupil annual reports do not always contain attendance data which is a statutory requirement.

Commentary

33. Ashton Gate is a community in the process of rapid change and development, and the school is involved in all activities. It has close ties with the Tobacco Factory Theatre, and the Community Development Association, which constantly produces environmental and artistic initiatives. The North Street Traders' Association has long supported the school by providing materials and expertise, visiting the school, and accommodating visits. The school is piloting educational resources produced by the Create Centre and local industry, and providing new labels for the *SS Great Britain*. Pupils fundraise for local charities, and local people attend school events. The school is held in genuine affection by its community, both long term residents and newer arrivals.

34. Responses to the Ofsted pre-inspection questionnaire showed that virtually all parents and carers think children enjoy school, and that staff have high expectations of them. They think teaching is good and there is a good range of activities. In discussion and written comments parents particularly valued the school's emphasis on developing the 'whole child'. Nearly all parents work, but nevertheless most find time to help the school in one way or another, by coming into class, accompanying offsite visits, offering special expertise, or supporting the active parents' association. The school makes considerable efforts to gauge parents' views on various issues through questionnaires and meetings. Parents agree the school is very approachable and appreciate the way that concerns are taken seriously and feedback always given. They like the fact that all staff, not just those working with their child, try to get to know them and show interest in their child's progress.

35. The school provides information about events and activities through its newsletters. The prospectus is attractively and unconventionally designed and fulfils statutory requirements. The yearbooks produced for each pupil, while providing appealing souvenirs for parents (particularly through their use of photographs) do not (except in the case of the Foundation Stage) include targets for development. Although they give details of the National Curriculum levels attained, this may not be enough information for all parents to understand whether their child is performing at, above, or below, the level expected for the age group. Some of the comments amount to little more than captions for photographs,

rather than reporting on progress in that subject area. Ten per cent of parents did not feel well informed about their children's progress.

36. The school has appropriate arrangements in place for transfer to secondary school. In addition, Ashton Park Secondary School provides sports facilities for the older pupils, and further development of this kind is planned. The school regularly competes in inter-school sporting events and takes part in shared musical and dramatic occasions. It is developing shared training and developmental procedures with its neighbouring primary schools.

37. Meetings for parents, who have pupils with special needs, occur each term at the same time as those for other pupils. Parents can request other meetings at any time. Those parents of pupils with statements of special needs are invited to attend annual review meetings with the special needs co-ordinator and any outside agencies which are involved such as speech therapy.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The quality of leadership and management of the headteacher is very good overall. She is well supported by key staff.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has a very clear vision of the needs of the school and its development.
- She shows excellent leadership of the curriculum and teaching.
- There is very good leadership in several key areas of the curriculum.
- The school monitors its performance very well and takes action to make improvements.
- The school is very committed to being inclusive and promoting the needs of individuals.
- The governing body gives satisfactory and growing support to the headteacher, whilst the chair and vice chair of governors fulfil their roles very well.

Commentary

38. The leadership and vision of the headteacher are very good and these have been major factors in the school's progress over recent years. This is an improvement on the last inspection. This very good leadership is confirmed by the school's successful award of 'Investor in People'. Key senior managers and subject leaders share the headteacher's vision and through very effective teamwork ensure overall good teaching and learning takes place. The very good management inspires a sense of commitment and purposefulness. The detailed monitoring of English and mathematics, for example, ensures that pupils from different backgrounds and with different needs are well provided for.

39. The governing body, which comprises many new governors, has made a very good start to its time in office and has good potential. Several governors already play an active role in the life of the school. The knowledgeable chair and vice chair of governors challenge and support the headteacher and her team very well. Currently the governance of the school is satisfactory.

40. The headteacher has a very clear and inclusive vision of pupils' education. As a means to this end she ensures that all of her subject leaders have opportunities to monitor closely progress made in their subjects in order to take action for improvement. This is matched with a wish to expect high achievement from all pupils, including those with special needs or who are gifted and talented in some way. The headteacher leads by example and inspires confidence in both staff and parents. This is supported by the 95 per cent of parents who responded positively to a question on leadership and management in the Ofsted parents' questionnaire. Staff form an effective team, both teaching and support staff. However, over recent years, the high turnover of staff has adversely affected progress in some areas.

41. All staff have a very reflective approach to their work and follow the headteacher's lead in basing the school teaching and learning on a set of well researched and understood principles. This effective, continuous review ensures that teaching and learning is kept practical, interesting and relevant for all pupils. Through very effective performance management procedures and continuous professional development, the headteacher ensures that standards and a common approach to teaching and learning remain priorities.

42. A temporary part time teacher is currently carrying out the management of special education needs in the school. In spite of only being in school briefly each week, she is managing the area of work very well. She has already supported teacher colleagues in writing statements, has begun to revise policies and strategies in the subject, has provided in-service training for her colleagues and has created effective liaison with the new special needs governor.

43. There is a very effective school development plan which gives in detail the priorities for the school's improvement. It is linked sufficiently to the school budget enabling prioritisation to take place to make best use of the school's resources. Good care is taken when ordering goods and services to ensure that best value is obtained. As a result of a lack of information supplied to them by the local education authority governors believed that the school was running a deficit budget. Consideration of all funds available shows that the school has a small surplus. Overall Ashton Gate Primary gives sound and improved value for money.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	822701
Total expenditure	814900
Expenditure per pupil	2116

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	0
Balance carried forward to the next	7801

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **good**. All children, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, make good progress and are achieving well. Children's attainment on entry into education varies from year to year. Over the last five years it has been below average but this year is considered a 'low average'. Teaching and learning are good and children are on line to achieve the early learning goals by the time they start Year 1. Children have good opportunities to plan their own activities as well as the whole class teaching and focused group work. This supports their learning well. Improvement since the last inspection is good and the school has successfully addressed the issues of an inappropriate curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage and inconsistencies between nursery and reception classes.

A good range of suitable and well planned activities are planned for the children and assessment procedures are good. All adults make detailed observations of individual children and the information is used very well: to track each child's achievement, to set individual targets, and to plan activities to meet the needs and interests of the children. Children's yearbooks provide parents with good knowledge of what their child can do and what they need to do to improve. The outdoor areas are used very well to support all areas of learning and the outdoor area in the nursery is now a particular strength. The Foundation Stage leader monitors effectively and has been instrumental in the development of the Foundation Stage curriculum since the last inspection. Leadership and management are good.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well because of good teaching.
- There are very good opportunities for children to plan their own activities, be responsible for their own learning, and so develop good independent working skills.

Commentary

44. Staff work effectively as teams, provide calm, exciting and secure learning environments and are good role models for the children. This ensures children settle quickly into their learning environment and adapt well to others around them. Consequently, children are happy, enthusiastic learners. Most children understand what is acceptable behaviour and have a good awareness of the consequences of inappropriate behaviour.

45. Children, both in the nursery and in reception, have very good opportunities to plan their own activities. Adults keep a careful record of each child's planning to ensure children have a good range of experiences. Children know what is expected of them and are well

able to work independently and co-operatively with others. Children, in nursery and reception, are confident to review what they have done at the end of the day. The quality of teaching and learning is good and this has a positive impact on personal and social skills development. The majority of children are on course to achieve the expected early learning goals by Year 1.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers provide good opportunities for children to appreciate stories.
- Good focused teaching helps develop writing skills.

Commentary

46. In the nursery children listen attentively to stories. Good use of resources by the teacher provides a good focal point for children and engages them well in learning. The teacher with the morning group is very skilled at questioning and this develops children's communication skills very well. In the afternoon all adults work well to promote communication skills. For example one nursery nurse worked well with a group in the home corner developing the use of appropriate vocabulary well. Children are encouraged to make marks on paper to communicate meaning.

47. In reception children confidently made lists of presents they would like from Father Christmas. The teacher modelled writing effectively and encouraged children to make use of their knowledge of letter sounds to spell unfamiliar words. Children enjoy role play activities and consequently are able to retell stories, such as The Gingerbread Man. They listen carefully to stories and enjoy sharing books with adults. More capable children are beginning to recognise some key words and many enjoy talking about the pictures in books. They confidently asked 'the old man' interesting questions during a 'hot seating' session and others listened attentively to both the questions and answers. Good teaching throughout the Foundation Stage enables the majority of children to achieve the expected early learning goals by Year 1.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Lots of practical activities act as a basis for learning about numbers and how they work.

Commentary

48. There is a wide range of activities provided to develop children's mathematical skills in the nursery and reception classes, although only one focused mathematical development session was observed during the inspection. Children in nursery are encouraged to count objects and are beginning to make patterns with shapes. They make simple repeated patterns satisfactorily.

49. In reception children use numbers in the post office role play area and name numbers correctly when dialling on the telephone. They are beginning to count accurately to ten and the more capable children can count to twenty. By the end of reception many children can add two numbers within ten correctly and are expected to achieve the learning goals in all areas of mathematical development.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers provide a wide range of interesting activities that children enjoy.

Commentary

50. Children in the nursery discuss the variety of food provided for them during snack time. They discuss unfamiliar foods, tastes and textures appropriately. They make jam sandwiches, discussing their favourite fillings and explain how they made the sandwiches. They show curiosity, observe and manipulate objects.

51. In reception children design a house for The Gingerbread Man and explain what materials they will use. Children confidently select their materials and decide the best method to fix these together. Good teaching enabled children to develop their design and making skills well. Those children observed using the computer were confident enough to complete a simple program. Children are beginning to understand the significance of Christmas to Christians. Most are expected to achieve the early learning goals by Year 1.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Outdoor provision in the nursery is excellent.
- Good use is made of the limited outdoor facility for reception.

Commentary

52. Children in the nursery make very good use of the outdoor area to develop their physical skills. The wide range of interesting and stimulating equipment enables children to ride bikes, push prams, climb and balance with increasing skill. The use of the area is very well planned by the teachers to ensure maximum use is made of the facility.

53. In reception children continue to develop their physical skills well and are expected to achieve the early learning goals by Year 1. The outside area is used well and children can climb, ride bikes and use small apparatus to develop ball skills. Children use paintbrushes and handle other tools such as pencils, pens, scissors and large construction kits appropriately both indoors and outdoors. Adults work effectively to overcome the difficulties of having to take equipment in and out several times each day because there is no separate area outdoors for reception children.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well because of the good range of opportunities provided for them.

Commentary

54. There is a wide range of creative activities in the nursery and reception and consequently children are achieving well. In nursery children select their own materials to decorate their Christmas hats and enjoy playing imaginatively in the role play areas, both indoors and outside.

55. Children in reception used materials provided for them to create Santa's Grotto. They mixed colours to paint the background for a collage of a Christmas scene and worked effectively as a group with good supervision. In role play areas children are encouraged to develop their imaginative skills well and to be responsible for their own learning. They use a range of media effectively to produce pictures of a good standard. The majority of children are expected to achieve the learning goals by Year 1 because of good quality teaching.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are now reaching average standards by the end of Year 6 and achievement overall is good throughout the school.
- English is being led and managed in a very effective manner.
- Teaching in English is good throughout the school with some very good features.
- Library provision is currently inadequate.
- Recent implementation of good planning and assessment procedures is beginning to impact positively on raising standards.

Commentary

56. Results in recent national tests reveal standards in English in Year 6 are now meeting national averages. By the end of Year 2 standards remain below national averages overall. This matches the findings of the last inspection. However, a difference in the way results are compiled, currently giving more weight to higher achievers rather than numbers meeting national expectations as previously, means this comparison has less validity. Improvements in standards which the school has made are masked. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, are generally achieving well in English.

57. By the end of Year 2 standards in reading witnessed during the inspection are near national expectations. Some pupils are reluctant readers but all benefit from a range of reading activities. Pupils' reading is carefully assessed during guided reading sessions and, where pupils remain on a reading scheme, books used are generally matched to their ability. Phonics skills are being well developed with younger pupils. Older pupils have good awareness of authors, genre and the differences between fiction and non fiction. The lack of adequate library facilities has a negative impact on the development of research skills. In a good Year 3 lesson, developing use of index and glossary to locate information, pupils would have benefited from being able to visit a well apportioned school library to add relevance to the task. Many pupils are members of a local library and the school is making good use of library book boxes to supplement its own resources.

58. The standard of writing by the end of Year 6 is average, but remains well below expectations by the end of Year 2. The older pupils have a good range of tasks in writing and achieve well. Younger pupils often have writing tasks involving single words and insufficient opportunities to develop writing are given. Throughout the school there are good displays, but pupils' written work of good quality, as an integral part of these is rare. Handwriting, which was an issue at time of last report, has been improved, as has general presentation in books. In Years 5 and 6 many pupils write neatly and in a good cursive style of an appropriate standard. Style and presentation does show some inconsistency nonetheless and continuing development of this aspect of pupils' work is needed.

59. The previous report judged speaking and listening to be below average. This is no longer the case. The school's focus on developing these skills and keeping careful analyses of pupil progress has impacted positively on raising standards. Pupils listen well in a variety of situations both to adults and to each other. Whilst some are more reluctant to speak in larger gatherings, pupils do speak well in class lessons. A particular feature of many lessons is the technique of discussing opinions, ideas, and perspectives in pairs or small groups. This the pupils undertake very well and it is instrumental in ensuring all pupils have the opportunity to express themselves. Older pupils articulated that they valued this. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. There is evidence that a significant group of Year 6 pupils are achieving above average standards in speaking and listening skills.

60. Teaching in English is good overall with some very good features:

- Planning of lessons is consistently very good with all pupils' needs being identified and focused on to ensure good achievement.
- Targeted marking of work is effective in raising standards. Pupils respond well to teachers' questions in marking which furthers learning.
- A variety of activities are usually provided during lessons which sustain pupils' interest and engagement.

- Where teaching is very good, teachers themselves have a very good knowledge of the subject which they skilfully impart to pupils.
- Good relationships exist in classes which motivate pupils to want to succeed.
- Pupils' knowledge of what they have to do to improve is well exemplified by very good use of group and individual targets which have been carefully assessed.

61. The subject leaders lead and manage the subject very effectively. Assessment procedures are very good and lead to challenging targets, effective planning, and focused targets for improvement for individual pupils. Recent innovations to raise standards are having a positive effect but have yet to be fully developed and reflected in national test results, especially those of younger pupils.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

62. There is evidence that literacy skills are well used in many other areas of the curriculum. This is less noticeable with writing techniques where the focus of development of ICT skills has lessened opportunities for pupils to consolidate writing skills both in other lessons and for display.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory** with some good features.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good overall, with examples of very good teaching.
- The leadership and management of the subject are good.
- The challenges set for higher attaining pupils have improved since the last inspection.
- Nearly all pupils achieve well in mathematics, this includes pupils with special educational needs.
- Not enough use is made of ICT in regular daily mathematics lessons.
- Pupils do not perform as well in tests as they do in their regular mathematics lessons. This is particularly the case where the use and application of skills and knowledge are concerned.

Commentary

63. During the inspection standards in the vast majority of lessons observed showed that most pupils were working at levels which were in line with those suggested nationally for their age groups. However, the results of tests would suggest that this was not the case. Whilst the percentage of pupils in Year 6 who reached the expected level in tests last year was well below the national average, there was an above average percentage of pupils who reached the higher level. This suggests that the school has tackled well the issue from the last inspection of challenging higher attaining pupils. Equally, this year group had high levels of special needs and the pupils had not benefited from a number of staff changes.

64. More important, however, is that in the lessons seen, the vast majority of pupils were achieving well and making good progress in their learning due to good teaching and the good attitudes shown by the pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are showing similar good achievement. The small number of these pupils who are currently working at

the expected level, shows that they are achieving very well, bearing in mind the low starting point they had previously in the school.

65. The overall standard of teaching is good and has a very positive effect on raising standards and on pupils' achievement. Of the ten lessons seen, five were very good, three were good and two were satisfactory. This is an improvement on the situation at the last inspection. Much of this improvement can be attributed to improved planning, good monitoring of classroom work by senior managers and the subject leader, and better focused questioning of pupils. There are still some inherent problems in that many pupils do not retain information well and as a result teachers have to spend considerable time revising and consolidating previous work.

66. In very good lessons seen in Years 1, 2, 5 and 6, key features were that planning was of very good quality. The delivery of lessons was systematic, building step by step on previous knowledge. Questioning was of a high quality and very good use was made of a range of teaching strategies in order to motivate and stimulate learning. As a result, pupils showed good, and often very good attitudes to the work, were keen to respond, and made good progress, showing good achievement.

67. A point for further improvement is the use made of ICT in mathematics. Pupils' individual yearbooks do show that pupils have had opportunities to use computer programs to illustrate data collection and graph work. However, this is not a regular occurrence. At the same time, the development of pupils' abilities to use skills and understanding in investigations and problem solving is not yet well enough developed. This in itself puts some pupils at a disadvantage when faced with national tests.

68. The leadership and management of the subject are both good with some very good features. The leader has very good subject knowledge and has provided the subject with a new policy and more streamlined and helpful planning formats. Assessment is now a very important part of the subject, with class teachers being able to track progress of individual pupils more clearly and provide better for them.

Mathematics across the curriculum

69. Pupils make satisfactory use of their knowledge, understanding and skills of mathematics across other curriculum areas. For example, in the design and technology lesson seen in a Year 6 class, pupils were measuring ingredients accurately for bread making. Again, in some science lessons, pupils were noted measuring results and creating tables to show the results of their investigations.

SCIENCE

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attainment for pupils currently in Year 6 matches what is expected for their age. This represents good achievement when considering high SEN levels.
- Despite pupils' satisfactory achievement, attainment for pupils now in Year 2 is below average. However, performance reflects an improvement over that of recent years.

- There is a strong emphasis on scientific enquiry.
- Older pupils do not make enough use of ICT to report or illustrate findings of investigative work.
- The effective quality of teaching results in pupils' positive attitudes to science.

Commentary

70. Attainment for pupils currently in Years 2 and 6 shows a marked improvement over results of end of year assessments in 2004. At that time standards at the end of Year 2 were well below the national average and below average for pupils in Year 6. Inspection evidence indicates attainment of current seven year olds has 'risen' to below average. When taking into account that the proportion of pupils with SEN is above average, achievement is satisfactory. In the present Year 6, where the proportion of pupils with SEN is high, attainment of average standards can be viewed as good achievement.

71. Lesson observations, together with a review of pupils' work, confirm a strong emphasis on scientific enquiry. As such, pupils learn well through setting up and conducting a good range of interesting investigations requiring them to predict, experiment and observe. In so doing, pupils gain a clear understanding of the need to ensure their activities are carried out in a 'fair' manner. Such was the case during the inspection, when, as part of their work on 'forces', pupils in Year 2 investigated the performance of model cars over different surfaces. In so doing, they had to consider what should be done to make their investigations fair.

72. The subject provides good opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively, to discuss how to solve tasks, and discuss what they observe. This was seen in a successful lesson in which Year 6 pupils were required to investigate whether it is possible to make muddy water clear using a combination of decanting, sieving and filtering. Whilst pupils' developing writing skills are used to good advantage within science, older pupils have too few opportunities to use ICT skills to report, record and illustrate their investigations. The school has already identified this as an aspect for further development and is taking steps to improve this element of provision.

73. The effective teaching observed in science was due largely to teachers' secure subject knowledge and thorough planning. As a result, pupils receive a programme of interesting and challenging activities that are matched to their stages of learning. In nearly all lessons pupils are given clear explanations of lesson objectives and of what is expected of them as lessons unfold. Teachers encourage pupils to observe carefully, predict what might happen, carry out the investigation, then try to explain their findings using the correct vocabulary. Pupils enjoy the practical nature of science lessons and respond well to adults' praise and encouragement.

74. Science is soundly led and managed. In order to improve provision further plans are in hand to:

- Increase opportunities for managers to observe lessons in order to monitor further the quality of teaching and learning.
- Develop the school's already satisfactory procedures to assess what pupils know and can do.

Such developments will help the school secure pupils' opportunities to perform to the levels of which they are capable.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is much improved and is now **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are consistent with national expectations at ages seven and eleven.
- The school is well resourced.
- The subject is effectively led and managed.
- Assessment to confirm what pupils know and can do needs further development.

Commentary

75. The last report raised a key issue for improvement in ICT with weaknesses in standards, planning, resources, and teaching. Because of much better facilities and resources (now judged as good) and successful in-service training for teachers, pupils are achieving well. Standards have been raised to nationally expected levels at the end of Years 2 and 6 and continue to follow an upward trend.

76. As a result of good leadership and management the school now has:

- A good ICT suite with sufficient computers for whole class work and a 'smart' whiteboard;
- An excellent mobile ICT lab supporting twenty laptop computers which can be used in any classroom;
- Excellent Internet access via a wireless system, used for example very well in a very good geography Year 6 lesson by pupils researching characteristics of mountainous regions;
- A good range of software to support subjects across the curriculum;
- Good resources in terms of programmable robots, digital cameras, computer microscopes and listening stations, used effectively to show pupils the benefits of ICT in everyday life;
- Digital projectors to link to laptops and display information in lessons and extend pupils' learning.

77. Good use is made of advice from the local education authority and of links with other schools to improve provision. Visits to ICT facilities at Bristol City football club add to already good opportunities to support pupils' learning.

78. Little direct teaching of ICT could be observed but evidence from talking to pupils and the subject leader would suggest that teaching is at least satisfactory and in some cases: for example in Years 4 and 6, good.

79. Staff and pupils are growing in confidence. This is strongly supported by good planning, training and improved resources. There are plans to develop planning further to guarantee that pupils learn skills sequentially. The school is aware that assessment is not yet well enough used to identify how well pupils are doing and report to parents. However, a new system is being trialled in some year groups to overcome this.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

80. As stated above ICT is well used and developed in most areas of the curriculum: for example word processing in literacy and research in geography and history. However, the lack of suitable sensors means that opportunities are missed to carry out recommended work in science and there is room to further develop ICT use in mathematics.

HUMANITIES

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

81. Only two lessons could be observed in both geography and history. As such, insufficient evidence is available to make overall judgements on standards or the quality of teaching. However, a review of planning together with pupils' past work, shows the programmes of study for geography and history meet the requirements of the National Curriculum.

82. Pupils' previous work, together with displays, confirms that in **geography**, pupils in Years 1 and 2 have satisfactory opportunities to learn about the features of their own environment, and compare and contrast it with life in other countries. Through the travels of Barnaby the school bear, pupils gain an appropriate understanding for their age of places and countries further afield.

83. Work in Years 3 to 6 involves pupils in learning about mountainous regions and how rivers are formed. In a soundly taught lesson on Nicaragua, pupils in Year 5 displayed a satisfactory level of understanding of how the lifestyle, climate and geographical features of the country differ from those of Great Britain, and Bristol in particular. Pupils in Year 4 displayed a sound appreciation of conservation issues as they considered ways to improve the environment through recycling waste products. The standard of work reviewed in pupils' books, together with that noted in both lessons, was at a level in keeping with that expected for pupils' ages. As such, it marks an improvement since the last inspection when standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 were judged to be unsatisfactory.

84. In **history**, pupils in Years 1 and 2 gain a satisfactory understanding of chronology through studying the life and times of famous people such as Isambard Kingdom Brunel, of how homes and their contents have changed over time, and in what ways present day holidays by the seaside differ from those a century ago. In a satisfactory lesson observed, pupils in Year 1 developed their awareness of how toys have changed over time in terms of design and materials from which they are made.

85. Between Years 3 and 6, work sampled shows pupils perform at appropriate levels for their age on a range of topics including the Victorians, the Tudors, and World War II. Good emphasis is placed on pupils' understanding of primary and secondary sources of evidence and how they are used to gain information about the past. A notable example of this was

observed during an effective lesson in which Year 3 pupils traced the growth and development of the school and its immediate locality. In their work, pupils showed much interest and enthusiasm as they used facsimiles of census documents and maps to aid their investigation. Attainment in both lessons observed, together with that of work reviewed in books, was at a level in keeping with that expected for the ages of pupils concerned. This represents an improvement on the findings of the last inspection when attainment at the end of Year 2 was judged unsatisfactory.

86. A common strength in provision for both subjects is the effective use of visits to support learning. Each subject provides good opportunities to develop pupils' skills of speaking, listening and writing, and makes a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

87. The leadership and management of geography and history are both satisfactory.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

88. Only one lesson was seen and the regular religious education teacher did not take this. Insufficient evidence is available to make a full judgement on the subject.

89. The school has an idiosyncratic approach to the provision of religious education. The subject leader provides the vast majority of the teaching. The subject is taught for a full day on six occasions during the year sometimes supplemented by extra time by the class teacher if all plans are not covered during this time. A potential flaw in this system is that if pupils are absent on days when religious education is covered it is difficult for them to catch up and they might have to wait at least half a term before working on the subject again.

90. The subject leader has good long term plans and lesson plans for each year group, which were shared with inspectors. Pupils' work over a long period of time has been collected in floor books and now in exercise books as well. The continuing use of floor books remains a difficulty in assessing individual pupils' achievement as mentioned at the time of the last inspection. The subject leader has, however, started assessing levels of pupils' work and is keeping records.

91. Work in evidence demonstrates coverage of festivals especially Easter, Beliefs of Islam, Arts in Religion, Beliefs and Practices of Judaism (of which there are displays currently in school), Divali, Symbolism, Life at Christmas (pupils are currently investigating Christingles), and Places of Worship. The religious education lessons have been supplemented by a visit from Bristol Old Vic to help with the nativity, and there is further evidence that information and communication technology is being well used to support teaching and planning. Overall the time allocation meets the requirements of the agreed syllabus.

92. Pupils interviewed were very positive about the approach. They viewed their religious education day as a special and interesting time. They were able to remember much learnt about Feelings, Life of Jesus, Judaism, Stories from the Bible, Hinduism and Christian Festivals.

93. Consideration of the above evidence indicates requirements of the agreed syllabus are being met and that the majority of pupils will receive their curriculum entitlement.

94. Within acts of worship pupils have some opportunity for reflection but spiritual awareness was underdeveloped at the time of the inspection. One assembly with older pupils demonstrated good singing of hymns with quiet calming thoughts at the conclusion; whilst an assembly with younger pupils showed greater evidence of spirituality in understanding the effect of humanity on natural beauty around us. Reflection again was used rather than prayer.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

ART

Provision in art is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Art is used effectively to support other subjects.

Commentary

95. Only two art lessons were observed and the subject was only sampled by inspectors so no judgements are made on the quality of teaching or learning in lessons. However, examples of work on display throughout the school and evidence of art used to support other subjects show that standards are at least satisfactory with good features: for example in observational drawing in Years 4 and 5, and collage work in Year 2. Reception children are encouraged to explore texture and mix colours and this work is extended in Years 1 and 2, as seen in some good fish pictures in the style of Paul Klee. Illustrations in Year 6 work in geography and history show that skills learnt early are capitalised upon in drawing.

96. No judgements are made on standards in three dimensional art, but planning shows that making skills are taught and that pupils work with a range of materials such as clay and paper, and experiment with techniques and designs such as printing and Batik, and in Years 3 to 6 different forms of sculpture.

97. Consideration of art from different parts of the world makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development and personal development is further supported by opportunities to work together, and with visiting local artists. The school is committed to developing creativity and staff make a point of displaying pupils' work well: for example in Year 3.

98. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. The subject is well resourced and is soundly led and managed by a new subject leader who has carried out a good audit to establish what needs doing next: for example in developing the use of ICT and more cross curricular theme weeks. An area for improvement is in assessing and recording individual pupils' skills and understanding in order to evaluate the success of provision and show pupils how to improve.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Provision in design and technology is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Overall the provision in design and technology is unsatisfactory and does not allow pupils to gain skills, knowledge and understanding in a systematic way.
- There is no clear plan for the development of skills.
- Some individual topics are taught well.
- Standards of work are not consistently assessed against the levels of the National Curriculum.
- Resources to support design and technology are very limited.

Commentary

99. One complete lesson and an observation of a class visit linked to design and technology were the only elements of the subject seen during the inspection. Although standards in the one lesson seen were satisfactory, the status of the subject is too low across the school. Little evidence of past work was available and there was little evidence of current work across the school. It was a similar situation at the last inspection, at which time weaknesses were noted in the subject.

100. Since that time there have been changes in the management of the subject, with a new subject leader only very recently appointed. Over time, the subject has not been in focus in the school and little has changed since the last inspection. However, design and technology is to be a priority in 2005 – 6.

101. There is no clear plan for the development of designing or making skills in order that pupils might be better prepared for topics. The system of assessment for teachers to check on strengths and weaknesses in both teaching and learning is currently underused.

102. In the single lesson seen, a bread making lesson in Year 6, the teaching was good. The lesson was well planned and good links were made to previous learning. Pupils thoroughly enjoyed their work, understanding the need for hygiene in a cooking situation. They had opportunities to use a small range of kitchen tools and links to both literacy and numeracy were observed.

103. In another lesson, on a visit to the main street, pupils looked at a selection of shops, collecting data for work in geography. There was an opportunity to visit a sandwich shop, at which pupils were able to ask a range of questions on health and safety issues, sandwich design and selling.

104. The subject leader, who has only held this post for a few weeks, reports that resources are very limited. As a result one of the main foci for design and technology is cookery or food technology. This is due to the proximity of shops and the generosity of teachers and parents in supporting the subject. The policy for the subject is not fully in

place, although the school is making use of the nationally recommended scheme of work. However, this is not sufficiently customised or adapted, in order to meet the specific needs of the school and its pupils within the local community.

MUSIC

105. One music lesson was observed during the inspection so it is not possible to make a judgement on provision, standards or teaching and learning. However, in assembly the quality of singing was good. Pupils are provided with plenty of opportunities to develop listening skills during assemblies because there is a well planned programme of music and pupils have a focus question to consider whilst listening to the music.

106. The school has adopted a new scheme of work and the subject leader has been given positive feedback from teachers about its effectiveness, particularly for the non specialist teachers. There are good cross-curricular links between music and ICT. In the lesson observed pupils in Year 5 were able to add an accompaniment to a song, which they sang in two parts. They use specific vocabulary such as 'ostinato' and 'cyclic patterns' satisfactorily when explaining rhythms. There are good opportunities for pupils to learn musical instruments such as guitars, drums, piano, keyboards and violins from peripatetic teachers. A music specialist is currently working with groups of pupils in Year 5 on a music and film project. These extracurricular activities support the music curriculum well.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION (PE)

107. Physical education was not a main focus of the inspection. Consequently few lessons were observed. However, school planning and comments from staff, pupils and parents indicate that despite the limitations of outside space, provision is satisfactory.

108. A very enthusiastic subject leader continues to promote physical education well. The subject is well planned to make the most of the difficult site and ensure that pupils have all the opportunities required by the National Curriculum and spend at least as much time as recommended on the subject. Very good links with a secondary school, which has sports college status, mean that pupils not only have the chance as part of lesson time to use specialist facilities and coaching, but gain valuable insight into what to expect after transfer to the next phase of education.

109. There are good links with local primary schools in sharing facilities and staff expertise, and in presenting opportunities for pupils to compete: for example in football, netball and hockey as well as learn new skills such as tag rugby. Good initiatives have introduced games such as kwik cricket and, in an exciting new development, making use of a grant to resource and set up a structured playground play programme to be run in part by pupils as trained play leaders. Good use is made of expertise from outside the school: for example for African dance lessons that not only enhance physical education well but pupils' cultural development.

110. Because only two lessons were seen, both in dance, no overall judgements are made on standards, the quality of teaching or learning. However, in as far as it is possible to tell in the absence of assessment in PE, school records indicate standards are at least as good as they should be at the end of Years 2 and 6. Teaching in the lessons observed was satisfactory with good features in how pupils are being encouraged to learn from

evaluating their own and others' work. A weakness was in keeping to the school's own policy for health and safety with regard to not wearing jewellery and watches and tying back long hair.

111. All elements of the subject are covered: dance, gymnastics, games and swimming. Nearly all pupils leave Year 6 able to swim at least the required 25 metres. Provision is considerably enriched by the good range of very popular extracurricular activities. These are well run by staff and volunteers.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL, HEALTH AND CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

112. The subject leader for personal, social, health and citizenship education was on secondment last year, and during his absence, whilst the school continued to follow the well planned curriculum he had provided, the subject was effectively without leadership. He has purchased a number of new resources and is conducting an audit of those already in-house, and will then be reviewing and revising the planned provision which he drew up two years ago. All statutory requirements are met: the school provides education on sex, relationships and drugs, in a manner appropriate to pupils' ages. All classes hold regular circle times, and provision is extended by visiting speakers when appropriate.

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	4
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	4
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	2

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