

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **CHEWTON MENDIP CE (VA) PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Chewton Mendip, Radstock

LEA area: Somerset

Unique reference number: 123827

Headteacher: Mrs Jane Hack

Lead inspector: Mr David Whatson

Dates of inspection: 4<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> October 2004

Inspection number: 266603

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:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	127
School address:	Chewton Mendip Radstock Somerset
Postcode:	BA3 4LL
Telephone number:	01761 241465
Fax number:	01761 241514
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Vicky Whittaker
Date of previous inspection:	21 <sup>st</sup> June 1999

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This school is smaller than other primary schools. The number of pupils on roll has fallen slightly over the last few years even though pupils travel from an increasingly wide area to attend the school. The number on roll includes 15 children of reception age. Most pupils, except those in Year 6, are taught in mixed-age classes. There is broadly the same number of boys and girls, although this varies between year groups. Most pupils are of white British heritage. There are no pupils who use English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is below the national average. The current range of difficulties includes pupils with moderate as well as specific learning difficulties. The number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is often below the national average. Attainment on entry to the school is broadly average, although this does change from year to year. Although only a few pupils are eligible for free school meals, they come from a wide range of backgrounds. Overall, the socio-economic circumstances of many pupils are favourable. In the last few years, the school has undertaken a major building programme to provide more teaching space. Staff turnover has been high, with a number of staff leaving for promotion and family reasons. Religious education and spirituality were inspected by and reported on separately by an inspector from the diocese.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23494	Mr David Whatson	Lead inspector	Mathematics Science Geography History English as an additional language
19664	Mr John Bayliss	Lay inspector	
15334	Mrs Julie Hooper	Team inspector	English Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology Music Physical education Personal, social and health education The Foundation Stage curriculum Special educational needs

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## REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	6-8
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS</b>	
<b>STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS</b>	9-12
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
<b>QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL</b>	12-16
Teaching and learning The curriculum Care, guidance and support Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
<b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	17-18
<b>PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS</b>	19-29
<b>AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE</b>	
<b>SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2</b>	
<b>PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS</b>	30

## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This is a very good school.** The quality of teaching is very good, as is the curriculum. There is a very rich provision of extra-curricular activities. The school provides very good levels of care and support to all its pupils. Links with parents, the community, and other schools are very good. The leadership of the school is very good. The school provides very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards in English, mathematics, and science are well above those expected by the end of Year 6, and all pupils achieve very well.
- Relationships are very good, as is pupils' behaviour, because of the very good provision for their personal development.
- Both the leadership and management are very good in providing very clear direction and an accurate evaluation of the school.
- Teaching is very good overall, and all pupils make better than expected gains in their learning.
- A very well-planned curriculum links subjects together and has a strong focus on the development of pupils' thinking skills.
- Very good levels of care and supervision promote the development of happy and confident pupils who enjoy learning.
- Very good links with parents, and very good use of the community, enrich pupils' experiences and support their achievements very well.

This highly effective school has broadly held its position since the time of the last inspection. Improvement since the last inspection is, therefore, satisfactory.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

**Pupils' achievement is very good.** Attainment on entry to the reception year varies from year to year; it is currently broadly average, although in the past it has been below that. The children currently in the reception year, like those in previous year groups, make good progress in each area of learning. Most of those currently in reception are likely to meet the expected goals for their age, with some exceeding them. However, this has not always been the case over the past few years when many children have not achieved the early learning goals<sup>1</sup>, especially in their language development. In the past few years, pupils have achieved well in Years 1 and 2. The pupils in Year 2, at the end of 2003 academic year, were a very different group from previous years and, because of this, standards in 2003 were below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Results were very high in the teachers' assessments of standards in science; in the top five per cent nationally. Results in 2004 indicate that good achievement has continued. Standards are close to those expected in reading, mathematics, and science, and are above expectations in writing. Standards in Year 2 are currently in line with those expected in mathematics and science, but below expectations in reading and writing, which reflect pupils' levels of achievement, when they started Year 1, and the satisfactory progress they are currently making.

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	A	A	A	B
Mathematics	C	C	A*	A
Science	C	A	A*	A

*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.*

<sup>1</sup> The early learning goals set out what children should achieve by the time they reach the end of the reception year in primary school.

Standards in the national tests at the end of Year 6 have improved at a faster rate than found nationally. The variation between different year groups has not been as dramatic as at the end of Year 2, because, as a result of very good support, all pupils have achieved very well. Standards in 2003 were very high in mathematics and science; they were in the top five per cent nationally. Standards in English were very good. The test results and pupils' achievement in 2004 are similarly impressive. Inspection evidence indicates that both standards and achievement remain broadly the same.

By the end of Year 6, the difference in the performance of boys and girls is broadly similar to that found nationally. Pupils with learning difficulties achieve very well, as do the more able pupils. Gifted and talented pupils are also provided for well, so they also achieve very well.

On the evidence available, pupils in Year 2 achieve satisfactorily in most other subjects, except music where achievement is good. Current standards are in line with those expected in information and communication technology, history, music, and physical education (gymnastics). Achievement is better in Years 3 to 6, and standards in Year 6 in history, geography and music are above those expected; they are in line with expectations in physical education (gymnastics) and information and communication technology. The school's records of pupils' achievement in physical education indicate that standards in swimming and games are higher than expected and pupils achieve well. There was insufficient evidence to make secure judgements in design and technology, or art and design, in either Year 2 or Year 6, or in geography at the end of Year 2. Pupils' literacy skills are good and their numeracy skills very good. These skills are used well to support pupils' learning in other subjects. Pupils' computing skills are adequate and are used appropriately.

**Pupils' personal development, including their moral and social development, is very good.** Pupils' spiritual and cultural development are good. Throughout the school, pupils' attitudes, values, and behaviour are very good. Their relationships with each other are very good. Pupils' attendance is very good and their punctuality is good.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided by the school is very good.**

**Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is very good.** In the past, this has been consistent across the school, although the teaching of pupils at this early stage of the year in Year 2 is currently satisfactory. The teaching of the youngest children is good; often very good. In the rest of the school is very good. Teachers have a very good knowledge of all subjects and areas of learning and a deep understanding of how pupils learn. They use their knowledge and understanding very well to create well-planned, lively, and interesting lessons that motivate all pupils, build on their prior learning, and develop in them a sense of curiosity and independence. Experienced and well-qualified support staff are deployed very well to support pupils in their learning, so that all pupils, including those with learning difficulties, make better than expected gains in their learning. Teamwork between adults is very close and there is a very good ratio of adults to pupils. This ensures that pupils' progress and needs are closely monitored, so that additional support can be provided when necessary. Throughout the school, assessment is very good. A set of very comprehensive procedures provide a wealth of information that most teachers use very well to inform their planning. Pupils are very closely involved in assessment so they know what they need to do to improve.

The quality of the curriculum is very good overall, as is the range of activities that enrich it. Accommodation and resources are very good.

The arrangements for pupils' care, welfare and health and safety are very good. The provision of support, advice, and guidance based on monitoring is very good. The involvement of pupils in the school's work, through seeking, valuing, and acting on their views, is good. The school's partnerships with parents, the community, and other schools are very good.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The quality of leadership and management is very good.** This includes the leadership of the headteacher, governance, and the management of the school. Through very good self-evaluation, the school has a precise view of its strengths and areas of development and takes successful approaches to improve its effectiveness. Governors fulfil all their statutory duties well.

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

Parents are very pleased with all that the school has to offer. They are particularly pleased with the standards that pupils achieve and the quality of education provided. Pupils state they are also very happy with the school, and all say that there is an adult at the school to go to if they are worried.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

There are no significant areas for improvement.



## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

By the end of Year 6, all pupils achieve very well and standards are well above the national average.

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

- By the end of Year 6 overall standards in English, mathematics and science are very high and all pupils achieve very well.
- Standards in many other subjects are above those expected by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils with learning difficulties make very good progress.

#### **Commentary**

1. Pupils achieve very well. They begin school with standards that are broadly in line with those expected, and attain standards in the core subjects<sup>2</sup>, at the end of Year 6, that are very high when compared to the national average. Overall, results are in the top five per cent of school nationally.
2. The number of children entering reception each year is quite small. The number of boys and girls in each year group varies considerably, as does the number of children with learning difficulties. As a consequence, attainment on entry varies from year to year. Currently, it is broadly in line, however, sometimes, as during the last few years, it has been below average. Generally, in recent years, children's language development when they start the reception year has been below that expected for their age. In the current reception class, many children have had some pre-school experiences, so their personal and social development is above that expected when they start the reception year. Inspection evidence indicates that most children are likely to meet all of the early learning goals, with a few exceeding them. Many are likely to exceed them in their personal development. However, this has not always been true in recent years, especially in relation to children's language development. Taken as a whole, children achieve well in the reception class, not only because their learning is so good across all areas of their development, but also because the adults in this class develop very happy and confident children.
3. The trend in pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 has fluctuated over the last few years, due to small numbers in each year group and the great differences in their ability and gender balance. Overall, therefore, the trend in performance has been below that seen nationally. However, in most subjects, each year group has performed better than is normally seen in relation to their prior attainment, and, as such, the good achievement, noted at the time of the last inspection, has been maintained. In the last few years, standards have fallen in writing, but pupils continue to achieve well, as, in part, this reflects their low prior attainment in this area.
4. The year group who sat the national tests at the end of Year 2 in 2003 were not typical of previous year groups. Within this year group there were far more boys than girls and a far higher level of pupils with learning difficulties than the school had experienced before, or would be common in similar schools. In fact, the level of pupils with learning difficulties within this year group was well above the national average. Because of this, standards, when compared to those in 2002, fell dramatically, and standards in reading and mathematics were below average and well below in reading. When compared with similar schools, standards were well below average in writing and mathematics and very low in reading. However, this is not a relevant comparison due to the particular characteristics of this year group. In contrast to these low results, teacher-assessed science results were very high when compared to all schools, due to the practical and oral nature of much of the subject.

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<sup>2</sup> The core subjects are English, mathematics and science.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	13.7 (16.6)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	13.7 (14.1)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	16.1 (17.3)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 17 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

5. The 2004 test results in Year 2 indicate that, due to a more able and more evenly balanced year group in terms of gender, standards have risen in all areas. Standards in reading are now broadly in line with those expected, and in mathematics they are above expectations. In writing, standards are well above average. Teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment in science show that standards have also improved, with most pupils achieving the expected level for their age. In all subjects, pupils made at least good progress, and in writing, due to the school's emphasis on this area, following the results in 2003, pupils' achievement was very good.
6. The pupils currently in Year 2 are achieving standards that are broadly in line with those expected in mathematics and science. These reflect children's attainment on entry to the school, as do the standards in reading and writing, which are below average. Pupils are currently making satisfactory progress.
7. Standards at the end of Year 6 in 2003 were well above the national average in English and very high in mathematics and science. The 2004 national test results indicate that both standards and achievement are similar. The good standards and achievement noted in English at the time of the last inspection have been maintained, but there have been good improvements in both mathematics and science.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	29.3 (28.6)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	30.0 (26.6)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	31.6 (29.8)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 17 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

8. While standards in Year 6 remain very good, they are not as high as the previous two year groups; pupils currently in Year 6 are not as able as those in 2003 and 2004. However, in relation to their lower prior attainment, pupils have achieved very well, and standards in English are above those expected, with those in mathematics and science being well above those expected.
9. Because of the very good support they receive, pupils with learning difficulties achieve very well in all subjects. Not only do they achieve the targets written in their individual education plans, but many of them also gain the expected level for their age in the national tests.
10. Due to very good teaching and very good levels of care and supervision, more able pupils do exceptionally well by the end of Year 6. The proportion of pupils achieving above the national average in English, mathematics and science in 2003 and 2004 was well above the national average. The school identifies those pupils with gifts and talents very well and because of the good support that they get from within school, and through the school's collaboration with other schools, they also achieve very well.
11. Over recent years, there has been a noticeable difference in the attainment of boys and girls at the end of Year 2. In part, this has been due to the significant differences in the number of boys

and girls in each year group and differences in their prior attainment and ability. However, due to the school's efforts to improve achievement of individuals, by the end of Year 6 the difference in attainment between boys and girls is similar to that found nationally and the variation in standards between year groups is lessened.

12. By the end of Year 6, pupils' numeracy skills are very good and their literacy skills are good. They are used well to support their learning in other subjects. Pupils' skills in information and communication technology are satisfactory and are used appropriately to support their learning in other subjects.
13. In many subjects, the good standards and achievement, noted at the time of the last inspection, have been maintained. However, standards in information and communication technology have fallen from being above expectations to being in line with them. This is because, during a prolonged and extensive building programme at the school, pupils did not have access to an effective computer network. However, pupils' achievement is good overall, now that pupils have access to a very good computer suite.
14. In physical education, standards at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6 in the aspects of gymnastics are as expected, and pupils achieve satisfactorily. However, the school's information indicates that standards in swimming and games are much higher and that pupils achieve very well.
15. On the evidence available, pupils in Year 2 achieve satisfactorily in most other subjects, except music, where achievement is good. Current standards are in line with those expected in history and music. Achievement is better in Years 3 to 6 and standards in Year 6 in history, geography, and music are above those expected. The school's records in physical education indicate that standards in swimming and games are higher than expected and pupils achieve well. There was insufficient evidence at this early stage of the academic year to make secure judgements in design and technology, or art and design, in either Year 2 or Year 6, or in geography at the end of Year 2.

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

Pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour are very good. Pupils' personal development is very good, overall, with their moral and social development being very good and spiritual, and cultural development good. Attendance is very good and punctuality is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Relationships are very good.
- Pupils' behaviour is very good, as is their interest in their work and school life.
- Attendance levels are very good.

### **Commentary**

16. The school correctly evaluates this aspect of its work as very good. The overall very high standards noted at the time of the last inspection have been broadly maintained.
17. The importance of caring for each other is central to the school's ethos and is reflected in much that it does. Older pupils often work with younger pupils, reading to them and undertaking activities together, such as during the science week. They respect the values and beliefs of others and this is apparent in the way they relate to each other both in lessons and elsewhere. Everyone is treated equally and harmonious relationships exist throughout the school community.
18. Parents state that pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to school. The pupils, including those with learning difficulties, show a great interest and high levels of confidence during activities. This was also true of children in the reception class, who, on the first day of the inspection, had started to attend school full time for the first time. Because teaching is frequently stimulating,

the pupils are usually very responsive to teachers' requests and instructions, are fully engaged in the lesson, enjoy what they are doing and demonstrate a clear commitment to doing their best. Many pupils are involved in a wide range of out-of-class activities, which they talk about enthusiastically. They are rightly proud of their school, and said that they thought it was 'the best!' Part of the school's ethos is that pupils should take responsibility for themselves and be independent thinkers.

19. Pupils' social and moral development is very good. Arrangements for ensuring that pupils grow up with a clear understanding of what is right and wrong are very good. The school's sensitive, but clear, moral code ensures a very positive ethos in the school and a calm, purposeful atmosphere. All adults at the school provide very good role models and staff have high expectations of good behaviour, to which most pupils respond very well. Pupils do not see bullying as a problem and there have been no exclusions in the last reporting year. The school deals well with the very occasional instances of minor forms of inappropriate behaviour.
20. Pupils' spiritual development is good, but not quite as good as at the time of the last inspection when the school's denominational status was more evident. Assemblies are very well organised and actively encourage pupils to think of the feelings and beliefs of others. The displays around the school, such as those produced by pupils asking questions about, and of, God, encourage pupils to think of the bigger questions of life. A central theme at the school is the development of pupils' confidence and self-esteem. This is done extremely well throughout the school by the gentle praise they receive.
21. Pupils gain a good insight into their own and other cultural traditions. There is an interesting variety of yearly events, visits, visitors (especially theatre groups), and the study of diverse religions, all of which give pupils a clear idea of their own cultural traditions and those of others. The very good links that exist with a Ghanaian school support this development very well. The school has recognised that opportunities for pupils to become aware of the diversity of modern British society are not as well developed.
22. Attendance has maintained its high level since the last inspection. Most parents fully support the school's efforts to ensure good attendance and only a few take holidays in term time. The very good arrangements in the morning to welcome pupils and parents result in the great majority of pupils being in school before the formal start time, enabling a prompt start to the day. However, as many pupils travel some distance a few are occasionally late.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	3.7	School data:	0.2
National data:	5.4	National data:	0.4

*The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest reporting year compared with the latest published national information.*

**QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The quality of education provided by the school is very good. Overall, the quality of teaching is very good, as is the assessment of pupils' progress. The curriculum is very good. The accommodation and resources that support the curriculum are very good, and are used extremely well. The school makes very good provision for pupils' care, welfare, health, and safety. Links with parents are very good.

## Teaching and learning

Teaching is very good, overall, and, as a result, pupils learn very well. Assessment is very good.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have a very good knowledge of the subjects and areas of learning that they teach.
- Teachers are very skilled at providing stimulating and well-structured activities.
- Teaching assistants make a significant contribution to pupils' learning.
- Assessment procedures are very thorough and very often include pupils' own thoughts.

### Commentary

23. Overall, the quality of teaching is very good. This is a view that is broadly similar to that held by parents, pupils and the school itself. All the lessons in Years 3 to 6, and those in the reception class, were either good or very good. In these lessons, pupils achieved either well or very well. The school's records indicate that in the past, teaching in Years 1 and 2 has also been good and sometimes very good. However, currently, the teaching of the pupils in the Years 1 and 2 class is satisfactory, as is their learning. The overall quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection when it was judged to be good.

#### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 26 lessons*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	10	10	6	0	0	0

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

24. Teachers have a very good knowledge of the subjects and areas of learning that they teach and how to teach them. This is particularly true in English, mathematics, and science. Lessons are planned thoroughly, with careful attention paid to ensuring that pupils' needs are very well met. This includes the most able pupils, who are often given additional work to extend them. Pupils, therefore, build well upon their prior learning. A wide variety of teaching strategies and tasks is used which successfully engages and motivates pupils. Good use is made of pupils working in pairs and groups to help cement pupils' personal development, and enhance the caring atmosphere in the school. Due to the teachers' caring attitudes, and the good ratio of teachers to pupils, relationships are very good. A high level of trust gives the pupils confidence and encouragement to learn. The quality of relationships in the reception class is a great strength, providing a very positive social experience for these children.
25. All adults, teachers and teaching assistants, are well organised and prepared. The wide range of purposeful activities ensures that lessons have a good pace and engage pupils very well. This is strongly supported by the very good deployment of the well-qualified and highly experienced teaching assistants. The very good interventions offered by teachers or assistants, either to individuals or to small groups of pupils, are very effective in promoting good learning. This is particularly true of pupils with learning difficulties. Like the teachers, teaching assistants use questions very well. Their calm and deliberate approach encourages pupils very well to think, and provides a high level of challenge, as it gives them an opportunity to be independent and explain their own answers. As a consequence, all pupils are included in every stage of the lesson, and their developing confidence is visible for all to see. Although this level of challenge has been constant throughout the school, it is not currently the case. In Year 2, activities for pupils of different abilities are currently being prepared, but they do not always fully challenge the more able. On these occasions, their learning is satisfactory.
26. The quality of assessment is very good, as it was at the time of the last inspection. Very good procedures are in place, and teachers who have been at the school for a while have a wealth of information that new members of staff can use. Teachers assess pupils' work thoroughly when they mark it. Encouraging written comments are often made, and, in discussion,

guidance is invariably given on how to improve. There are very good systems for assessing pupils' achievement in most subjects, including English, mathematics, and science. Most teachers use the information that their colleagues have of each pupil very well, and monitor pupil progress very well. Because of this, most know the needs of each pupil very well and how best to support them. Pupils continually evaluate how they have achieved, either at the end of a topic or at the end of a lesson. Some of the approaches used to achieve this are innovative and involve pupils very well in assessing their own learning. For example, pupils in one class use an assessment tree. Each branch of this has been given a grade to symbolise effort, difficulty, or achievement. Pupils, therefore, have to think carefully about where they are to place themselves. The teacher uses this information exceptionally well to modify lesson plans as well as providing individual support and challenge. There are very thorough and regular assessments of children in the reception class. At this early stage in the school year, the learning support assistant is continually assessing each child's performance in all areas of learning in order to build on what they already know, understand, and can do. This is used very well to inform future planning and, as a result, the children are already making good progress in their learning.

## **The curriculum**

The curriculum is very good, enriched by a wide range of stimulating extra-curricular activities. The school is staffed very well. The accommodation is very good and the school provides a good range of learning resources.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is a very well planned curriculum for all pupils.
- Extra-curricular activities add breadth and depth to pupils learning.
- The school promotes the pupils' personal development very well.
- Provision for pupils with a diverse range of needs, including those with learning difficulties, is very good.

## **Commentary**

27. The curriculum is very well planned, particularly in Years 1 to 6, where it is done in an imaginative way. The school's philosophy of trying to develop thinking skills, as well as a joy for learning, and good achievement, is fully reflected in how the curriculum is planned. Central to this is the topic. Creative and imaginative links have been made between different subjects, such as the one on habitats. This makes pupils' learning both meaningful and enjoyable. Detailed weekly and termly plans, and good teamwork amongst all adults, ensure that the progressive development of skills has a high priority. This is planned particularly well and successful in those classes that combine pupils from two year groups in Years 3 to 6, or have two part-time teachers. The good curriculum in the first year of a child's education promotes a real joy for learning and very good attitudes. The curriculum in the following years builds very well on this because in line with the school's focus on developing thinking skills, pupils are encouraged to use and apply their knowledge, skills, and understanding.
28. There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities to enrich pupils' learning. There are clubs for sports and music, for example, and pupils take part and do very well in inter-school sporting events. Visitors are frequently welcomed into school to support different subjects, and whole-day workshops are arranged, and specific weeks used to study subjects in depth, such as science.
29. The school develops pupils' personal qualities very well. The whole ethos of the school contributes to this very well. In lessons, teachers encourage pupils to think for themselves. This has a major impact on personal development and in raising standards across the curriculum. There are many opportunities for pupils to take responsibility in school and the wider community.

30. The school is well aware of the need to provide all pupils with equality of access to the full curriculum. The gifts and talents of individual pupils are clearly identified and recorded, and their needs are met through close working relationships with other schools in the area. The provision for pupils with learning difficulties is especially good. Pupils get a great deal of individualised attention and their individual education plans are well written with realistic targets.
31. There is a very good match of teachers for the curriculum, with several specialists on the staff. The ratio of teachers to pupils is good and this supports much of the very good teaching and learning. The good number of very well qualified learning support assistants provides valuable support, both for teachers and for pupils, especially those pupils with learning difficulties. There have been major developments to the accommodation since the last inspection and school accommodation is now very good. For example, there is a newly equipped computer suite and all of the classrooms have state of the art interactive whiteboards. Outdoor facilities are very good. The external areas are spacious, well planned and support pupils' learning well. Resources for learning are good. For example, there is a small but well-stocked library.
32. Since the last inspection the school has maintained its high quality curriculum provision through a thorough programme of review, revision and overall improvement. This has also provided the school with an accurate view of the quality of its curriculum.

### **Care, guidance and support**

The way in which the school provides for pupils' welfare, health and safety is very good. Because of its well-organised assessment strategies, the school is able to offer very good support, advice and guidance to its pupils to help them learn and develop. There is good involvement of pupils in the work of the school.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils trust the teachers and other staff, and know there is always someone to whom they can turn.
- The school is very effective in monitoring and guiding pupils' academic progress and personal development.
- The school has very effective procedures for ensuring a healthy and safe environment.

### **Commentary**

33. The school accurately judges the quality of its care, guidance, and support to be very good, maintaining the high quality of provision reported when the school was last inspected. As then, parents are very appreciative of the care and support provided for their children.
34. The school is very successful in creating and maintaining a pleasant, happy, and safe environment. Staff show a great deal of concern for the needs of all pupils. Parents state that their children are very well supported when they first come into the reception class. This is because of the school's good links with the pre-school providers. Pupils consider that staff support them very well and they know whom to go to if they need help. Pupils have good opportunities to be involved in their work and the life of the school. Pupils are making good use of the recently inaugurated school council and have already successfully overseen the introduction of a 'Friendship Bench' in the playground.
35. Detailed records are kept of pupils' performance in all subjects and areas of learning. Formal arrangements for checking how pupils are getting on are very good. These formal records are complemented by informal arrangements that benefit from adults' very secure knowledge of the pupils and the good adult to pupil ratio. Teachers have a wealth of information about individual pupils, their achievement, and how they learn. This is freely shared during regular and detailed discussions amongst staff about pupils' needs and how to get the best out of them. The meticulous records detailing the achievements of pupils with learning difficulties are monitored very closely. Because of these very good procedures, and the small class sizes, pupils' needs are very well met, including the needs of those who are gifted or talented, through personalised attention and praise from teachers and teaching assistants.

36. Staff and governors rigorously monitor the different areas of the school. Teachers ensure that pupils are made aware of health and safety issues during lessons, such as science, and of other potential dangers, such as the school swimming pool. The school follows closely the local procedures for child protection, and staff have received guidance on how to deal with any concerns that may arise. The arrangements for first aid are very good and well organised; there are several trained staff, careful records kept of treatment, and parents quickly notified if their children bump their heads. The very good emphasis on care and support allows the pupils, whatever their personal situation, to be successful and enjoy their time at school.

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

The school's links with parents, and with the local and wider community, are very good. Its links with other schools are also very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents are very supportive of the school and value highly what it has to offer.
- There is an effective partnership between home and school that makes a positive contribution to pupils' learning.
- Parents are kept very well informed about their children's progress and events in school.
- There are strong links with both the local and wider community, including local schools.

### **Commentary**

37. Parents have very positive views about all aspects of the school, and hold it in very high regard. The school is justified in considering its links with parents to be very good. The standards noted at the time of the last inspection have been broadly maintained.
38. The school works hard, with great success, to promote its partnership with parents. The very active parents' association is highly effective in raising funds. Parents are very closely involved with their child's education. The 'Inspire' initiative provides excellent opportunities for parents to work alongside their children in numeracy or literacy lessons. Parents are also closely involved in supporting children's learning at home, through hearing them read and helping them complete their homework.
39. Parents feel very comfortable about coming into the school at the start of the day, and feel relaxed about talking to staff. Parents' views are canvassed regularly in terms of specific issues, as well as their general views of the school. Their involvement in the school's evaluation of its effectiveness has recently been strengthened with the establishment of a Parents' Forum, which is a meeting that is open to all parents to come and talk freely about any and all aspects of the school. Because of all these arrangements, parents are very happy with the way that the school listens to them, and how quickly and fairly it responds to their questions and concerns.
40. Parents receive a great deal of useful information about the school, what their children are learning, and how they can help them at home. Regular newsletters are of excellent quality, and support the well-organised and very informative school prospectus and governors' annual report. Good quality annual reports provide parents with a clear view of how well their children are doing. However, the reporting in a few subjects is sometimes too brief, as it provides too little information about how pupils' attainment matches that expected.
41. The school is very welcoming and open to visitors. It makes very good use of the expertise available within the community. In an attempt to overcome its small school status, the school has built numerous and constructive links with other schools that help strengthen its provision. Recently, workshops have been set up at different schools to support gifted and talented pupils, and a close working relationship with a local secondary school is supporting developments in science and mathematics.



## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, the quality of leadership and management is very good. This includes the leadership of the headteacher, the governors and the management of the school.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has a very clear vision, a sense of purpose and high aspirations.
- Very good teamwork is a significant strength of the school.
- Many of the management systems are very well planned and appropriate to a small school.
- School systems of self-evaluation are strong and planned actions are always appropriate and effective.
- The governors are highly effective and make significant contributions to the leadership of the school.
- The school uses the resources available to it very well to further its educational aims.

### Commentary

42. The headteacher is central to the success of the school. She, along with her senior teacher, inspires the entire school community. They both have a commitment to the pupils and a vision of how the school can foster responsibility, a sense of curiosity, and pupils' ability to think by providing a rich and successful experience for all, whatever their background, capability or gender. The successful communication of this, and the very good role models that they both provide for all, has heightened the expectations of all concerned, providing a clear direction for the work of the school. The very good leadership of the headteacher has been maintained since the last inspection.
43. Key aspects of the school, such as the Foundation Stage, provision for pupils with learning difficulties, and several subjects, are led and managed very well. There is an embedded commitment to corporate responsibility, and teamwork ensures that there is much consistency in teaching and other aspects of practice. All staff and governors are involved in this by their ability and willingness to question and share ideas and experiences in order to focus on key elements of school improvement and pupils' achievement. There is enthusiasm and an acceptance that everyone has a part to play in school improvement. The headteacher is very adept at developing the commitment and skills of each individual, so that all aspects of practice are undertaken with great professionalism. There is, therefore, a strong culture of reflection, and evaluation of the school and its assessment data, especially on the part of the headteacher. This has helped create a good school improvement plan that gives a strategic view of the school's development, as well as focusing on raising achievement.
44. Staff turnover in recent years has been high. At the pre-inspection meeting, parents said that the change in staffing had not been disruptive. The appointment and induction of new members of staff have been managed very well, due to the quality of relationships and the very tight procedures at the school. The headteacher has also been very quick to identify the individual needs of members of staff. By supporting and nurturing them, she is tackling issues such as the lack of challenge for a few pupils in Year 2.
45. Performance management systems, through which the quality of teaching and learning are monitored, are very secure. There is a well-established system that includes the governing body that monitors and regularly reviews the school improvement plan and how well the school is doing. This has provided the school with an accurate view of how effective it is, including its own judgement of very good leadership and management. This has helped the school maintain the very good provision noted at the time of the last inspection. It has also enabled it to have an accurate view of its strengths and areas for development, such as raising achievement in writing, and developing the use of information and communication technology in all subjects. Overall, this plan is good, but some of the issues, such as raising standards in writing, are not sharply focused. This makes them harder to evaluate than other areas that have more specific timescales and success criteria.

46. The money the school receives is used well to further its educational aims. The potential impact on pupils is at the centre of all financial decisions, and the school seeks best value for money in its spending. The governors' prudent financial decisions have meant that there is a good ratio of adults to pupils. Much of this is due to the teaching assistants, a group of staff that the governors have correctly identified as extremely valuable in providing support for pupils with learning difficulties, as well as maintaining high levels of achievement. Additional grants are secured through the hard work of the headteacher, and this money has been used very well to improve resources, such as those for information and communication technology. Costs are quite low at this small school, so given this, and its effectiveness, the school provides very good value for money.

***Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004***

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	330,682
Total expenditure	337,877
Expenditure per pupil	2,599

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	20,897
Balance carried forward to the next	13,702

47. The governing body is very effective in supporting the school in its work. There are very good relationships between the staff and the governors. The governors have a deep understanding of the school's educational aims. This, together with their detailed approach to monitoring the school, and their open and frank meetings, provide the school with a great deal of support. The understanding and monitoring of financial matters are very good. The governors themselves also have a thorough knowledge of the school's areas for development, and can explain in detail what the school has done, and is doing, to improve. The governing body fulfils all of its statutory duties well.

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

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

The provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **good**, as was found at the last inspection. Children who have recently entered the reception class have done so with a range of abilities that are, overall, broadly average. However, because many have some form of pre-school experience, their social and personal development is above that expected. School data and inspection evidence indicates that all children now and in the past, including those with learning difficulties, achieve well because of the good teaching they receive; it is often very good. Many children currently in reception are likely to meet the expected goals in all areas of learning by the start of Year 1, except in their personal development, where most are likely to exceed them. This has not always been the case and, in recent years, attainment on entry to both reception and Year 1 has been broadly below that expected, particularly in language development. This, however, does vary from year to year depending on the ability and gender balance of each year group. The teacher leads and manages the Foundation Stage very well. She and the experienced learning support assistant work together as a very effective team to make sure the children get a good start to their education. They both have a very good understanding of each area of learning, the needs of these children and how they learn. The curriculum is planned well to cover the recommended areas of learning. Staff provide a wide range of activities for all areas of learning to stimulate and develop the children's joy of learning. Children are given a wide range of opportunities to explore, through structured play activities, both inside and outside the classroom. Lessons are planned to give a good balance between teacher-directed and child-initiated activities. Assessment is very good. Both the teacher and teaching assistant continually assess the learning of each child. Meticulous notes and records are kept and these are used very well to inform the next step in each child's development. Parents are very pleased with the very good start their children make in their education and are very complimentary about the induction arrangements made for their children when they start school. The outside accommodation has improved since the last report, and it is now good. Good use is made of the secure and separate area for outside activities. The best possible use has been made of the school grounds to provide this area, but it is rather small and limits the extent to which the children can develop their physical development when they ride on the wheeled vehicles.

As little direct teaching of children's **physical development** was seen during the inspection, no overall judgement about the provision can be made. However, from general observations and the analysis of teachers' records and plans, the children gain the necessary experiences as they use the apparatus and equipment when they play outside in a secure area, even though this space is limited in size. Many move with good control and co-ordination, as they throw balls at skittles and ride on the wheeled vehicles. The children also use the school hall for indoor physical activities. Children have good access to the very good outside accommodation used by the rest of the school, where they have plenty of space to exercise. The teacher and learning support assistant are successful in providing the children with a range of activities, whereby, they can cut, glue, thread, and complete puzzles. When making 'musical shakers' most were adept at using scissors to cut sticky tape and paper to cover the top of the tube. On the limited evidence it is likely that many children will meet the expected goals for their age by the end of the reception year.

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

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

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

- Children achieve well and make good progress, especially in developing independence and self-confidence.
- Good routines are in place so children know what is expected of them.

## Commentary

48. The very good range of opportunities and activities provided for the children's personal, social and emotional development and the good, and often very good, teaching ensure that the majority of the children achieve well. They make particularly good progress in developing their independence and self confidence, as they make choices, organise themselves for the activities and clear away sensibly. Almost all the children listen and behave well. They quickly learn to take turns and share with others. Most follow instructions and persevere with their tasks for a good length of time. The children know what is expected of them and are already responding very well to the very good classroom organisation. Most children are therefore likely to exceed the expected goals in this area of learning by the end of reception.

## COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's early reading skills are developed well.
- A high priority is placed on developing children's speaking and listening skills.
- Reading is supported well by parents.

## Commentary

49. Because of the good, and sometimes very good teaching, that is based on detailed planning and in-depth knowledge of each child's needs, all children achieve well in this area of learning. In the current year group, most are likely to meet the goals expected by the end of the reception year and a few may exceed them. Children's speaking and listening skills are developed well through regular question and answer sessions and opportunities for children to develop confidence in speaking with each other in chosen activities. Their early reading skills are developed very well through regular story sessions that also help to develop listening skills. Good questioning skills by the teacher and learning support assistant help the children to recall the stories in the correct sequence, and develop their vocabulary, as they are introduced to unfamiliar words. They also begin to understand the joy of reading when they share books with 'reading partners' from a class of older pupils. Parents are actively encouraged to help children from the start to develop their reading skills. The children's phonic skills are developed well as they work with the teacher, naming objects that begin with the same letter. Writing skills are developed well, and, from an early start, children are encouraged to shape their letters correctly. Some recognise their own names. The role play area also stimulates the development of the children's language skills, as they 'discuss problems' and 'take telephone messages' in the well equipped 'Chewton Mendip Children's Hospital'.

## MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- A good range of activities promotes and encourages mathematical thinking.
- Computer programs are used effectively to develop mathematical understanding.

## Commentary

50. The teacher and learning support assistant organise and plan a wide range of activities so that the children gain good experience in learning how to match, count and organise by size. Children usually achieve well because of the good teaching, and most are likely to meet the expected goals by the time they start Year 1; some may surpass them. Teachers plan a wide range of fun activities, such as games, songs, rhymes and stories that engage the children well. For example, in an outside activity the children knocked down skittles and counted

accurately how many remained. The children regularly use computer programs to consolidate their number recognition and counting skills.

## **KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- CHILDREN ARE GIVEN A GOOD RANGE OF EXPERIENCES TO DEVELOP THEIR KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD.
- The good accommodation and good resources support children's learning well.

### **Commentary**

51. Teachers make good use of the school's accommodation and resources. The children gain early information and communication technology skills effectively when they work in the computer suite and also show great delight in using the interactive whiteboard. Through drawing pictures and patterns, they soon learn to understand and use the icons effectively. Due to a good knowledge and understanding of the subject and how children learn, teachers carefully plan many activities in which children make good gains in their scientific knowledge and understanding through observation and experiment. For example, after a 'sound' walk around the school grounds, children came back and named sounds they had heard, what made them and from which direction they came. Teaching is good, as both teachers and teaching assistants use questions well to engage children in their learning and also use a wide range of materials to interest them. At this early stage of the year children showed an elementary understanding of how things work as they build a range of models using construction toys and 'junk'. Because of this good teaching, children achieve well in this area of learning. By the end of the reception year it is likely that most children will meet the expected goals for their age, and a significant number may exceed them.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in creative development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children have access to a wide range of resources to develop their creativity and skills.
52. As teaching is good, children achieve well in this area of learning. Many children are likely to meet the expected goals by the end of the reception year, and a few may exceed them. Numerous activities are well organised so that the children can express themselves through painting, drawing and working with malleable materials such as modelling dough. A display showed that the children had painted colourful portraits of themselves. The children respond well to music and songs. They enjoy singing familiar songs and learning new ones. In one lesson, most were successful in choosing from a good range of instruments to match the sounds in the song they were learning. As there is a strong musical tradition at the school, children learn to appreciate music as they move in and out of the hall for assemblies and when they come back into the classroom after playtimes. The classroom is well organised and there are many different well-resourced areas for children to develop their imagination, for example, through role-play in the 'Chewton Mendip Children's Hospital'.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- By the end of Year 6 standards are above average.
- The quality of teaching is good and many pupils achieve well.
- Assessment is very good.
- The subject is managed well.
- Literacy skills are developing well across other areas of the curriculum.

#### Commentary

53. At the end of Year 6 in 2003, national test results were well above average and, in relation to their prior attainment, all pupils, including those with learning difficulties, achieved well. The 2004 test results indicate that standards and pupils' achievement are broadly similar. Current standards in Year 6 are above those expected. They are not as high as in previous years because this year group is less able. However, achievement remains good. Therefore, even though standards are lower than at the time of the last inspection, pupils' good achievement has been maintained. The difference in performance between boys and girls is similar to that found nationally.
54. In the national tests in Year 2 in 2003, standards in reading were well below average and those in writing below. This small year group was not typical of previous year groups as it had far more boys than girls in it, and a far higher proportion of pupils with learning difficulties. However, the school noted the low results and put additional time and resources into the teaching of reading and writing. As a result of this, and a more able year group, the results of the 2004 national tests in both reading and writing have improved and are likely to be in line with expectations. In relation to their respective prior attainment, pupils in both 2003 and 2004, including those with learning difficulties, achieved well. Standards in the last two years have been lower than at the time of the last inspection because of pupils' prior attainment, but the good achievement noted at the time of the last inspection has been maintained.
55. Standards in the current Year 2 in reading and writing are below those expected because the teaching of some specific skills are not sharp enough and a few pupils are not always being sufficiently challenged.
56. Due to the gender imbalance of the last few years (usually more boys than girls), there has been a noticeable difference in their performance at the end of Year 2; boys have done worse than girls by a greater degree than is normally found.
57. The quality of teaching is good overall as most teachers have a good understanding of how to teach reading and writing. It is often very good in Years 3 to 6. The very good teaching of older pupils builds very well on the firm foundations that have in the past been set lower down the school, so that pupils achieve very well by the end of Year 6. In turn, this has helped to smooth out the fluctuations in performance noted at the end of Year 2. School-based evidence, and pupils' achievement, indicate that in the past the quality of teaching lower down the school has also been good. However, it is now currently satisfactory.
58. Teachers plan their lessons well and prepare many interesting activities that engage pupils well in their learning. For example, in speaking and listening teachers encourage pupils to listen attentively to their explanations by making sure that their instructions are clear and the planned activity interesting. Further up the school pupils experience a good range of activities that encourage their speaking and listening. The most notable of these is the teachers' skill at asking questions. These are often probing, and encourage pupils to describe their thoughts and expand their answers. Pupils are confident and thoroughly enjoy this and the fact that they

are often encouraged to discuss their work in pairs. The very good relationships between the teachers and pupils ensure that pupils feel comfortable when explaining themselves, when answering questions or asking for help.

59. Through the analysis of data, and accurate self-evaluation, the school has a good understanding of its strengths, and areas where pupils may not be performing as well as they are in other subjects, for example, writing. The school takes very good steps to address these issues once they have been identified. Class teachers, particularly in Years 3 to 6, have a very good understanding of the pupils' needs, and plan challenging work for them. Teachers provide an extensive range of writing opportunities and encourage pupils to plan their work carefully. An excellent initiative named 'Inspire' has been introduced whereby parents are invited into class to work alongside their children. Skills, such as character analysis, are well taught, so that pupils write creatively both effectively and with feeling. Pupils are often proud of their work, and teachers build on this by encouraging them to present their work well. As a result, pupils' edited work in Year 6 is completed neatly in ink, and frequently they happily use their word processing skills to publish their work. Teachers regularly assess pupils' progress, and good use is made of this information by most teachers to set targets for individuals or groups of pupils. Marking is generally good. In the best cases, praise is given where appropriate, and points for improvement are made which move pupils on in their learning. However, for pupils in Year 2, insufficient emphasis or encouragement is placed on this aspect of their language development, and the handwriting of a significant number of pupils is weak; they do not join their letters correctly.
60. A team of knowledgeable and experienced learning support assistants supports teachers very well, often enabling a wide range of activities or group work to take place in any one lesson. This often promotes a good pace of learning that keeps pupils interested and engaged. Learning support assistants also give very good support to pupils, particularly those with learning difficulties. Because of this, they frequently make good progress and, as a result, achieve well in both reading and writing. In the last few years, the proportion of pupils reaching levels below the national average at the end of Year 6 has been far lower than average.
61. Resources, are used well, for example, all pupils, including those with learning difficulties, have a wide range of interesting books from which to choose. The range of books challenges the most competent of readers and promotes their good achievement well. The proportion of pupils achieving above the expected level at the end of Year 6 was above the national average in 2003. Through the use of parents and members of the community, there are many opportunities to pupils to read during the school day. Teachers introduce reading diaries at an early age to encourage parent participation and improve the rate at which pupils learn. These diaries are closely monitored and encouragement and guidance given in them to both pupils and parents. Again, this supports parental involvement, but also helps develop pupils into enthusiastic and confident readers. In the past the teaching of reading throughout the school has been very good. However, insufficient time is currently given to the teaching of reading skills to pupils in Year 2. Their skills of blending letter sounds to make words are, therefore, not well developed and they do not always use the context of the text or picture clues to help themselves. Because of this, some pupils often have difficulties when faced with unfamiliar words, and their standards are lower than expected.
62. The co-ordinator provides a very good role model and has a good idea of standards and identifies key areas for improvement that are highlighted in the school development plan. This includes writing, but the criteria to evaluate the school's efforts are not as sharply focused as in other areas. The co-ordinator has already made a good start on monitoring the curriculum, teaching and learning. The curriculum is enriched by many opportunities for pupils to develop their oracy skills, such as school productions and debates.

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

63. Literacy skills are used and developed well in other areas of the curriculum. Pupils use their reading and writing skills appropriately to gather and present information; detailed written accounts were noted in pupils' history, geography and science work.

## MATHEMATICS

The quality of provision is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards at the end of Year 6 are very high and all pupils achieve very well.
- Very good teaching promotes very good learning.
- A very good knowledge of by staff of individual pupils ensures that their needs are carefully met.
- The good use of mathematics in other subjects supports pupils' learning well.

### Commentary

64. Standards in the 2003 national tests for pupils at the end of Year 6 were very high. The results in 2004 were similar, and all pupils in both year groups, including those with learning difficulties and the more able, have achieved very well. At the time of the last inspection, standards were judged to be well above the national average and pupils made good progress; there has, therefore, been a good improvement. The test results in 2004 indicate that both attainment and achievement were similar to those of 2003. However, standards of the pupils currently in Year 6 are lower because of their lower prior attainment and general level of ability. Standards are now above those expected, but pupils are still achieving very well.
65. Standards at the end of Year 2 have fluctuated over time due to the different nature of each small year group. Standards in the national tests in 2003 were below the national average. This reflects the prior attainment of this year group, the ability of pupils, and the very high proportion of boys within it. The 2004 results indicate the proportion of pupils attaining the same levels as in 2003 remain about the same. In relation to their prior attainment, pupils in 2003 and 2004 achieved well. School-based evidence indicates that teaching during these years was at least good. Inspection evidence indicates that standards are in line with those expected, and pupils achieve satisfactorily.
66. Over the last few years there has been a difference in the performance of boys and girls at the end of Year 2. This is explained by the significant difference in the number of boys and girls between year groups. However, due to the school's very good provision, these differences have been largely eliminated by the end of Year 6.
67. Overall, teaching and learning are very good. This has been true in the past and is currently evident in Years 3 to 6. The impact of this consistently very good teaching in Years 3 to 6 is to raise the achievement of all pupils, so that the great differences between year groups, noted in the school's results at the end of Year 2, are diminished. Teachers have a very good knowledge of the subject and how to teach it. Their lessons are well planned, have a clear structure and succinctly build upon pupils' prior learning. Teachers regularly adapt their plans in the light of their very accurate assessments of pupils' learning. This is achieved from by the careful marking of pupils work, that also gives each pupil individual feedback on how to improve, backed up by more formal tests and the regular involvement of pupils in assessing their own work. Pupils are, therefore, involved in their own learning, and know where they have to improve.
68. Teachers use numerous resources and activities to maintain the pace of pupils' learning and their interest. For example, pupils in one class made mathematical games for pupils in an older class to play. Teaching assistants are deployed very effectively at every stage of a lesson and make a significant contribution to pupils' learning. All adults, including the teaching assistants, have a very calm and patient manner when explaining new and sometimes difficult concepts. Due to a good adult-pupil ratio, individual pupils are monitored and supervised very closely.
69. However, despite many of these good practices running throughout the school, the teaching of pupils currently in Year 2, at this early stage of the year, is only satisfactory. This is because insufficient use is made of the wealth of information and assessment data that teachers have



on these pupils. Therefore, a few pupils are not always sufficiently challenged and their learning is satisfactory. For example, the most able pupils continued to use counting apparatus even though their own mental calculations to 100 were accurate.

70. The subject is led and managed very well. The co-ordinator provides a very good role model, and the shared commitment amongst all staff to raise pupils' achievement provides the subject with a high profile. The very close teamwork amongst all adults ensures that practices and performance are always evaluated to look for improvement. The co-ordinator is very aware of areas of development and offers very good guidance and support to overcome them.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

71. Following the school's approach to linking subjects and promoting the use of the basic skills in other subjects, pupils make good use of their mathematical skills in subjects, such as science and geography.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- By the end of Year 6, all pupils achieve very well and standards are well above those expected.
- Teaching in Years 3 to 6 is consistently very good as is the rate at which pupils learn.
- Learning through investigation and the promotion of pupils' thinking skills is a strength of the teaching.
- The subject is led very well.

### **Commentary**

72. In 2003, science results in the national tests at the end of Year 6 were very high when compared to the national average. The results in 2004 are similar to those of 2003, and, in both year groups, all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and the more able, achieved very well. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in Year 6 are currently lower than those of previous years, however, they are well above those expected. This is because pupils in this year group are not as able as those in 2003 and 2004. However, in relation to their prior attainment both boys and girls continue to achieve very well. The difference in attainment between boys and girls, over the last three years, has been similar to that found nationally. At the time of the last inspection, standards were well above the national average; there has, therefore, been a good improvement upon these results.
73. The teacher assessed science results at the end of Year 2 have fluctuated over the last few years. Results at the end of Year 2, in 2003, were very high; all pupils gained the expected level. Within year groups that have a few pupils, the attainment of one or two pupils has a significant impact on overall standards. The results in 2004 are lower than those of 2003, and are close to being in line with expectations. Unlike the previous year, a very few did not meet the expected level. In relation to their prior attainment, pupils in 2003 and 2004, including those with learning difficulties, achieved well. The school's evaluation of teaching at this time indicates that much of it was at least good. Inspection findings indicate that standards in Year 2 currently are broadly as expected. In relation to their prior learning, pupils achieve satisfactorily.
74. All teachers plan carefully to cover all aspects of the science curriculum. This is often done in very well linked topics, such as the one undertaken last year on habitats. This drew upon pupils' skills and knowledge from many different subjects and made their very good learning highly relevant and enjoyable. Pupils make considerable gains in their learning because of the extensive amount of practical work that is central to the teaching of science throughout the school. Teachers also use an approach that enables pupils to take responsibility for their own learning and to become independent thinkers. Because of this, pupils develop very good observational skills and an understanding of how to carry out experiments and form

hypotheses. Activities are carefully chosen to interest pupils. In a well-organised activity, in which some of the youngest pupils in the school undertook some form of vigorous activity, pupils made good gains in understanding the impact of exercise on the body. However, the teaching did not always sufficiently challenge the most able. Pupils were frequently asked questions about what they knew about the importance and effects of exercise. These questions were often good, but pupils were not always given enough time to think of an answer themselves. The teacher, therefore, provided them with the answer, thus limiting their thinking and lessening their learning.

75. Pupils are both motivated and carefully monitored, thanks to the efforts of both the teacher and teaching assistant. Both ask questions that encourage pupils to think, and ensure that all remain focused on the task. This was particularly good in a Year 6 lesson on separating mixtures of materials. Through probing questions and the posing of problems that they had to solve (for example, how much water should be used to make a salt crystal from a solution) pupils used their prior knowledge and experiences to provide well reasoned and clearly explained suggestions. Because of this, all pupils were very involved and productive, and made good gains in developing their skills of scientific enquiry, as well their knowledge of materials and their properties. An analysis of pupils' work shows that their good literacy and numeracy skills support them well in the recording of their work, as they regularly produce lists, explanations, and graphs. Many of these activities are matched to pupils of different abilities. Teachers and teaching assistants work closely together and know pupils well. They monitor pupils' progress very regularly and respond very well to individual needs.
76. Leadership and management are very good. The co-ordinator is a very good role model and an inspiration to others. There is a continual focus on raising achievement so that each individual pupil always achieves very well. The systems used to monitor and evaluate the subject are very good. The accommodation and resources are very good. Teachers make good use of the school grounds to investigate plants and how they grow, pond and bird life, and how to care for the environment.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils achieve well because teaching is good.
- A lack of resources in the past has limited pupils' achievement.
- Due to very good subject leadership there has been a significant improvement in the provision of hardware.

### **Commentary**

77. Standards since the last inspection have fallen from above expectations to being in line with them in both Years 2 and 6 and pupils have achieved satisfactorily in the past. This is because, during the last 18 months, when extensive and prolonged building work within the school was taking place, pupils were without adequate computer resources. Pupils, therefore, had insufficient opportunity to develop and use their skills. However, as part of the building project, and due to the efforts of the co-ordinator, a very good and very well-equipped computer suite has been created. Because of these factors, and good teaching, all pupils, including those with learning difficulties, now achieve well.
78. Teachers have developed their own skills and competence through in-service training, and most have a great deal of confidence in the use of information and communication technology. This is very evident in the way they all use the interactive whiteboards effectively to present their lessons. Learning support assistants have also developed their skills effectively, and use them to support groups of pupils individually, as well as providing support for teachers in whole-class lessons. Teachers' work is planned and prepared well, enabling them to make their explanations and demonstrations clear, and detailed assessments enable them to

consolidate one skill before moving on to another. Pupils are well managed and motivated, and enjoy their work because much of it is interesting and lessons are conducted at a good pace.

79. The co-ordinator's work on the curriculum, and in supporting teachers, is having a very positive impact on teaching and learning, and on the standards attained. Areas for further development are well known, and detailed plans are in place for improvement, such as, the use of computers to control, measure and model. The effective use of these is due, in part, to the very good teamwork amongst all staff and the realisation of how valuable and effective information and communication technology can be in teaching.

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

80. Pupils' use of their computers in other areas of the curriculum is satisfactory. The school is fully aware that the use of computers in other subjects is not structured as well as the development of pupils' computing skills, and there are well developed plans in progress to address this. Pupils produce bar charts and pie charts to present data from their topics. Older pupils use word-processing and import information from the Internet to aid their historical research on the Tudors and their knowledge of weather conditions in Ghana.

## **HUMANITIES**

As no **geography** or **history** was being taught during the inspection week, no overall judgement about the provision in either subject can be made. However, an analysis of pupils' work, teachers' planning, and a discussion with both teachers and pupils indicate that standards in history in Year 2 were similar to those expected, and pupils achieve satisfactorily. At this early stage of the academic year there was insufficient evidence to make secure judgements about geography. In Year 6 standards in both history and geography are above those expected and pupils achieve well; their good literacy and numeracy skills support them well in this. The standards at the end of Year 6 are similar to those noted at the time of the last inspection.

81. Leadership and management of both **geography** and **history** are good and are firmly based on the success of teachers working as a team. By doing this, the school has created a curriculum that supports pupils' good achievement. The topic approach that has been adopted by the school is securely based on developing specific skills, while drawing very well upon pupils' interests, the school's environment, and its wider links. Exceptionally good use is made of the link with Ghana. Pupils use the Internet and their Ghanaian pen-friends to ask questions of a geographical nature, so that they have a deep knowledge and understanding of the place, the lives of the children there, and how they compare with their own lives in Chewton Mendip. Through their studies, they have developed a very good appreciation of fair trade and the importance of the charity 'Water Aid' in supporting economic development. In history, pupils have a good knowledge of the topics they have studied, such as Britain since 1930. In discussion pupils in Year 6 gave a good account of the events leading to the Second World War. Good use had been made of visits to museums and visitors from the local community to talk about their wartime experiences, in a successful attempt to bring the subject alive. Pupils' knowledge of cause and effect is good, as is their ability to organise and communicate their work. However, in discussion, their appreciation of different sources of evidence and their merits was not as secure.

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

As no lessons in **art and design** and **design and technology** were being taught during the three days of the inspection, no overall judgement about provision can be made in either subject. Useful information was gained from discussions with staff and pupils and the analysis of teachers' planning, records, and pupils' work, but at this early stage of the year there was insufficient evidence to make secure judgement about standards in either subject.

82. From the small amount of artwork on display and evidence from pupils' sketchbooks, it is evident that pupils develop and use their skills in **art and design** appropriately, as they move through the school. Pupils have regular opportunities to experiment with colours, mixing and

matching them creatively, and using colour to show different textures and to produce different tones. They use a good range of materials effectively in their work. Other work in photographs shows that pupils produce an appropriate range of work in three dimensions. In this respect, very good use is made of the local environment and visitors to enrich the curriculum. For example, while working with a local artist pupils produced a large and exceptionally attractive and eye-catching photographic montage of Chewton Mendip. Pupils also study widely the work of other artists, such as Modigliani and Lowry, and create well-formed paintings within these styles.

83. In **design and technology** an analysis of pupils' work indicates that skills are built on progressively as pupils move through the school. An analysis of work indicates that last year pupils made puppets, and some, toys in a topic called, 'Terrific Toys', that used the whole of the design and make process. In this work, pupils' good literacy and numeracy skills support them well.
84. Overall, the leadership and management of these subjects are good because of the commitment of all staff to evaluate their work and seek improvement. There are regular, and often detailed assessments of pupils' work recorded in both of these subjects.

## Music

The provision for music is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils in Year 6 perform at levels above those expected.
- Pupils often achieve well because of the use of specialist teachers.
- Good opportunities are provided for pupils to appreciate a range of recorded music.
- Good provision is made for pupils to learn an orchestral instrument.

### Commentary

85. On the evidence of early in the academic year, standards in Year 2 are in line with those expected, and in Year 6 they are above expectations. Standards at the end of Year 6 are the same as those noted at the time of the last inspection. Teaching is always at least good and often very good, especially when taken by the visiting music specialist who teaches music to all pupils. She uses her expertise well to draw out the best in pupils. She makes good use both of the wide range of resources, and of pupils' prior learning, to develop interesting lessons that pupils enjoy. In a lesson with the youngest pupils, the teacher reinforced well the pupils' musical learning, as pupils had to beat out a rhythm in two parts to accompany a song they had learnt the week before. Lessons move at a good pace and the teacher has high expectations of work and behaviour. In a Year 6 lesson, the quality of singing was good because of the challenge and high expectations set by the teacher. A high level of challenge was continued through their instrumental work. Pupils used intricate body percussion to beat out rhythms to different compositions and quickly identified the beat and how it changed. Pupils enjoyed this challenge, persevered well and were proud of the complex performance that they delivered at the end of the lesson.
86. The subject is led and managed well. There is a rich tradition of music at the school and pupils have many opportunities to listen and appreciate a variety of composers and musical traditions. The music is also greatly enriched by visiting music specialists who teach both individuals and groups of pupils to play a range of orchestral instruments. These lessons, along with recorder groups led by the teaching staff, help to extend pupils' learning well. Pupils have many opportunities to take part in a range of performances throughout the year. They also benefit from a wide range of musicians visiting and performing in the school.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision for physical education is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards exceed national expectations in swimming and games.
- A well-planned and resourced curriculum is very well supported by a good programme of extra-curricular activities.

### Commentary

87. As only one aspect of physical education was observed on more than one occasion, no judgement on overall standards can be made. Gymnastics was observed during the inspection and, in this aspect, standards in Years 2 and 6 were in line with those expected, and pupils achieved satisfactorily. However, school records show that swimming is a strength of the school, and standards are well above national expectations by the end of Year 6. From the tag rugby lesson observed and the good results pupils achieve in matches against other schools, games skills are also well developed by the time pupils leave the school.
88. The quality of teaching is generally good, especially when the teachers are confident in teaching the subject. Teaching points were made clearly, and there were good opportunities for pupils to practise the skills being taught. The school employs a rugby coach and the quality of teaching in his lesson was good because he used his expertise well. The very good pace of his lesson held pupils' interest and engagement completely.
89. The subject is managed well. There is a well-planned curriculum enriched by a large number and a good range of well-attended extra-curricular activities. Teachers make good assessments on pupils' progress and these focus strongly on the progression of skills. The school's very good indoor and outdoor accommodation supports pupils' learning very well. There is a outdoor heated swimming pool, and the playing field that is situated next door to the church close to the school on top of a hill is an inspiration to all those who use it.

## PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

No lessons were seen in **personal, social and health education**, and **citizenship**. It is not possible, therefore, to make an overall judgement on the quality of teaching of standards. It is clear, however, that these aspects of pupils' development have a high priority; they are embedded in the ethos and the curriculum and were therefore continually evident in everything that was inspected. The school actively encourages pupils to have healthy snacks, promotes physical activity, and explains to them why healthy life styles are important. Teachers always have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and reinforce their expectations well through quiet discussion and through being good role models.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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