

INSPECTION REPORT

EAST COKER PRIMARY SCHOOL

East Coker, Yeovil

LEA area: Somerset

Unique reference number: 123719

Headteacher: Mr Peter Sweetlove

Lead inspector: Mrs Jean Harding

Dates of inspection: 24th – 27th January 2005

Inspection number: 266766

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

© Crown copyright 2005

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	254
School address:	East Coker Yeovil Somerset
Postcode:	BA22 9HY
Telephone number:	01935 862532
Fax number:	01935 864137
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Peter Warman
Date of previous inspection:	30 th November 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This average-sized primary school serves a village community on the outskirts of Yeovil. Almost all pupils are white, and none speak English as their second language. No pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is well below average, but this does not mean that families are especially advantaged. There is a wide social mix because many pupils are brought into the village from outside to take advantage of the education in this school. The numbers on roll have been falling in recent years as the birth rate declines. Children's attainment on entry to the reception class varies from year to year; it is average, overall, with strengths in language as they join the school. Movement in and out of the school from Year 1 to Year 6 is low. The school has identified a below average percentage of pupils as having special educational needs, but the percentage of pupils having particular needs that need the protection of a statement is average. Most of the pupils having more serious special educational needs have social, emotional or behavioural difficulties. There are nine classes; nearly all mixed-age classes. The school is in the process of settling down after a period of major staff change, including changes of senior staff, over the last two years. The pupils currently in Year 5 have had very significant disruption to their education over the last three years due to staff changes.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21378	Mrs Jean Harding	Lead inspector	History Music Religious education The Foundation Stage curriculum
9146	Mr Mark Brennand	Lay inspector	
32595	Mrs Gill Williams	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Art and design Design and technology Personal, social and health education Special educational needs
20846	Mr Alan Wilson	Team inspector	English Information and communication technology Geography Physical education English as an additional language

The inspection contractor was:

Criterion School Inspections

*Juniper House
23 Abbots View
Abbotswood
Cinderford
Gloucestershire
GL14 3EG*

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the contractor. The procedures are set out in the leaflet '*Complaining about Ofsted Inspections*', which is available from Ofsted Publications Centre (telephone 07002 637833) or Ofsted's website (www.ofsted.gov.uk).

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6-8
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	9-12
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	12-16
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	16-18
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS	19-31
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	32

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This effective school gives its pupils a good quality of education. The achievement of children in reception is satisfactory, but, overall, pupils do well through their time in the school. The progress of pupils through Years 3 to 6, and especially in Years 5 and 6, is good. By the end of Year 6, standards in English are well above average and above average in mathematics. Standards in other subjects are as expected. Pupils' learning is good because, overall, the teaching is good. The curriculum is good; it is very broad but not as well planned as it could be. Pupils receive very good care and support. The leadership and management are good, overall, but the leadership of the headteacher is very good. Given the relatively low expenditure per pupil and the good outcomes, this school gives good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- By the time they leave the school, pupils' standards in mathematics are above average. Standards of reading are above average by the end of Year 2 and well above average by the end of Year 6. In writing standards are well above average through the school.
- The management of the governors, some subject co-ordinators and the senior management team is good; the headteacher provides very good leadership.
- Pupils achieve well because the teaching is good, overall.
- Pupils have very good relationships with staff and so their behaviour is good. They have very good attitudes to school and their personal development is very good.
- The curriculum is very broad and pupils are given a very good range of extra-curricular activities which, in themselves, raise standards, especially in sport.
- Pupils love school and the school's partnership with parents is very good; an important consequence is that pupils are hardly ever absent.
- Although the teaching is good, the planning of lessons is not always detailed enough to provide work pitched at just the right level for more and less able pupils.
- The organisation of the timetable and the management of the curriculum, for some subjects, are not good enough to ensure that all pupils cover all the learning that they should.
- The assessment of pupils' attainment in some subjects is unsatisfactory.

The school has made good improvements since the previous inspection, especially in the provision for, and pupils' attainment in, information and communication technology, which are now satisfactory. National test results have generally risen, especially in mathematics, and pupils' progress through the school is better. Standards in science and some other subjects are not as high as were reported before, reflecting changes in the management of subjects recently. The school has successfully raised the achievement of lower-attaining pupils, but this could still be better if teaching was more precisely matched to their needs. Most of the minor issues raised in the previous report have been addressed, although there are still some shortcomings in the monitoring and assessment of subjects other than English, mathematics and science.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Pupils' achievement is good, overall.

Children start in reception with generally average skills and understanding but a significant percentage of children have communication skills that are well developed. Children's achievement is satisfactory through the reception year but they progress well in their communication, language and literacy skills. Overall, pupils start in Year 1 with skills, knowledge and understanding that are at least average, as they have achieved the goals that are expected, however, standards in English are above average.

Pupils make satisfactory progress through Years 1 and 2 but they achieve well in English. In most subjects standards are as expected, but standards of reading are above average and in writing they are well above average. Standards of speaking and listening are as expected. Compared with

similar schools, pupils at the end of Year 2 did well in national tests last year and this is an improvement over the previous four years.

Pupils' achievement through Years 3 to 6 is good and standards are above average, overall, by the time that pupils leave the school. Attainment in English is well above average and in mathematics it is above average. Results in the national tests have been improving in English and mathematics but have been variable in science reflecting a change of curriculum and methods of teaching, which, although appropriate, have yet to bear fruit. Results in English and mathematics last year compared very well with similar schools and pupils' progress from Year 2 to Year 6 was very good. The trend in national test grades is upwards and better than the national picture.

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

*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.*

In other subjects, and in speaking and listening, standards are as expected. Achievement has been good in information and communication technology through the school, as pupils have had a lot of catching up to do. No definitive judgements can be made for standards in physical education as only a limited number of activities were observed, but pupils at East Coker are generally fit and do a lot of sport; standards in swimming are high.

Pupils with special educational needs make good progress as they have concentrated help in withdrawal sessions. Pupils who are more able make the same progress as other pupils in the class. Pupils who are less able, but who do not have special educational needs, make at least satisfactory progress, but their achievements could be better if they were consistently given work that was appropriate to their needs. There is no difference in the attainment of boys and girls at this school but boys do better than boys do nationally, especially in English.

Pupils' personal development is very good. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good, overall; their moral and social development are very good, but spiritual and cultural development are satisfactory. Pupils have very good attitudes to school and behave well. Relationships between pupils and staff are very good. Attendance is very good and the punctuality of most pupils is good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided is good. Teaching and learning are good, overall. Teaching is especially good in the two classes for pupils in Years 5 and 6, because staff are knowledgeable and encouraging, pupils are eager to learn and get down to work well. All teachers insist on high standards of behaviour and use homework well. The planning of lessons is satisfactory but is not recorded well enough to ensure realistic evaluation after the lesson; as a result, pupils of lower ability are not always given work that is suitably matched to their needs, allowing them to make the best progress. Achievement in English and mathematics is assessed well. In the reception year assessment is satisfactory. It is also satisfactory in subjects other than religious education, geography and music where it is unsatisfactory.

The curriculum is good, overall, but, in general, planning is not tight enough to ensure that all pupils are taught all that they should in a sequential way. Provision for English and mathematics is good; for physical education provision is very good. There is a very wide range of stimulating extra activities to enrich the curriculum and to improve standards. The school is well staffed. Pupils receive very good care and support and they are involved well in the running of the school. Links with the community are good and there is a very strong and productive relationship with parents.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management are good, overall. The headteacher provides very strong leadership, and the governors manage the school well, ensuring all statutory requirements are met. The management is good, overall, but the management of some subjects, although satisfactory, is not good enough to ensure the best progress by pupils. The overall management of the curriculum has weaknesses that are affecting standards. Staff work very well together. The school has, deliberately, saved a large sum to carry forward into the next year to ensure the continuation of the current staffing levels. Financial planning and control are strong and sensible decisions are made about future priorities for improvement.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents think very highly of the school and almost all are totally satisfied with the provision for their children. Even those who have some criticisms trust the headteacher to address them. Pupils love school and take a full part in all that is on offer.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to continue the good improvement already made, and to achieve consistency in all that is done, are:

- improve the planning of lessons to ensure that appropriate work is provided for pupils of all abilities;
- improve the organisation and management of the curriculum and plan the overall timetable better so that pupils do sufficient work to cover the whole of the required curriculum;
- improve the assessment of religious education and subjects such as geography and music.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Standards are above average, overall, by the time pupils leave the school. They are consistently well above average in writing through the school; they are above average in reading in Years 1 and 2 and well above average by the time pupils are in Year 6. They are above average in mathematics in Years 3 to 6. Standards are as expected in other subjects. Children in the reception classes make satisfactory progress but pupils' progress from Years 1 to 6 is good; achievement improves as pupils move up the school. There has been good improvement in information and communication technology since the previous inspection, but a decline in standards in science and religious education.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of reading and writing are high in Years 1 to 6 and pupils make good progress through these school years.
- Standards of mathematics are above average in Years 3 to 6 because so many pupils achieve higher levels.
- Pupils have achieved well in information and communication technology through Years 3 to 6 and standards are now as expected in all the areas required.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well, especially in Years 3 to 6, due to the special support they receive from classroom assistants.
- As a result of teaching that is geared to higher levels of study, more able pupils make good progress in English and mathematics, but their achievements could be better in other subjects.
- Lower-attaining pupils do not always do as well as they could because they do not have consistently appropriate work in whole-class situations.

Commentary

1. Children start school with at least average skills, knowledge and understanding in all areas of learning. Many of them have fairly well developed communication, language and literacy skills. They make at least satisfactory progress through the reception year and they often make good progress in language and literacy. Their achievements in knowledge and understanding of the world, although broadly satisfactory, are not as good as in other areas of learning. However, children start in Year 1 with at least satisfactory skills and have a good base for learning, with a significant percentage already achieving well in English. The achievement of children in the Foundation Stage¹ is similar to that reported at the previous inspection.
2. Pupils' progress through Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory, overall. More able pupils do better than their classmates because the teaching is better tuned to their needs. The grades in the national test results have improved at a faster rate than the national trend over recent years, but have fluctuated depending on the abilities of the different year groups of pupils; the current pupils in Year 6, when they were in Year 2, did not do as well as subsequent groups. Standards of speaking and listening are as expected; in reading and writing they are high. Standards in mathematics for the pupils currently in Year 2 are average, but they have been consistently above average over the last three years. There has been an improvement in national test grades for writing and mathematics since the previous inspection.

¹ The Foundation Stage caters for children from the age of three to the end of the reception year.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	17.0 (16.5)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	15.5 (15.9)	14.6 (14.6)
Mathematics	18.0 (17.1)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 41 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

3. Through Years 1 and 2 standards in other subjects are as expected. This represents an improvement in the standards in information and communication technology since the previous inspection, reflecting better provision and teaching. However, pupils' attainment in other subjects is average and this indicates a decline in standards in some subjects, such as religious education; this is because these subjects have not had so much emphasis and have not been as well managed as others.
4. Standards are above average, overall, by the time pupils leave the school. Pupils currently in Year 6 have made especially good progress since they were in Year 2. Similarly, the pupils in Year 6 last year did very well in English, mathematics and science over the four years from Year 3 to Year 6. Generally, results in national tests have been at least above average and are rising faster than the national trend. The exception to this is in science. Grades were below average in 2003 and average in 2004; currently pupils' attainment is also average. This is because the staff, quite rightly, decided to change the curriculum and the way of teaching and there will be a time delay before the improvement results in higher standards. The school knows that science is relatively weak and the subject is currently a priority on the school improvement plan.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	29.9 (27.6)	26.9 (26.8)
Mathematics	29.6 (28.3)	27.0 (26.8)
Science	29.1(27.9)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 40 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

5. Pupils currently in Year 5 have had considerable disruption to their education due to staff changes, but they are doing well in the core subjects². The school sets appropriate targets for pupils and these targets are achieved. Standards in non-core subjects are as expected. There has been an improvement in pupils' attainment in information and communication technology since the previous inspection, but a decline in standards of science, religious education and in some other subjects. This reflects changing emphasis in the curriculum.
6. No overall judgement can be given about standards in physical education in Years 1 to 6 as insufficient work was seen in any element of the curriculum. However, taking into account the good curriculum, the standards in the lessons seen and the very good range of extra-curricular sport, it is likely that overall standards are high. Pupils make at least satisfactory use of their key skills of learning, such as literacy, numeracy and computing, in other subjects. Although the school provides a wide range of experiences in the creative and performing arts, attainment is not as high as the school assumes it is, because the curriculum for these areas is not as well planned as it could be. For example, singing is at the expected level, but, from the amount of singing done and the use made of it, it could be higher.

² The core subjects are English, mathematics and science.

7. Although pupils of all abilities achieve well in English and mathematics, their progress is not as good in all the other subjects as most of the work provided is virtually the same for the whole class. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, overall, but this progress is very dependent on the extra help from good support staff. Within whole-class lessons, work is not always provided that is appropriate to their needs and so achievement is only satisfactory, especially in non-core subjects. Similarly, pupils who are less able are not always given suitably modified work to enable them to make the best progress and so their achievements, although satisfactory, are not as high as they could be. This is an area for development and is accepted by the school. The provision of suitably differentiated work for less able pupils was a key issue at the previous inspection; the school has made some improvements in this respect, but more needs to be done. Boys do considerably better in core subjects than many boys do nationally; their achievement in English is particularly good.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes to their school are very good and this is reflected in the high level of attendance. Behaviour throughout the school is good. Pupils' moral and social development is very good, and their spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The attitudes of pupils, both in lessons and at other times, are very good.
- The quality of relationships within the school is very good.
- The level of attendance is very good.
- There are limited opportunities for pupils to develop an understanding of cultures other than their own.

Commentary

8. This is a school that promotes very good attitudes amongst its pupils. The way in which pupils hold doors open for visitors, without thinking about it, and the mature way in which they talk about their school are indicative of their desire to show the school in its best light. It is clear that this state of affairs is ingrained in pupils' behaviour and it reflects an environment where social and moral development is taken very seriously. As a consequence, the pervading atmosphere is one of calm and, in lessons, this means that teachers are free to concentrate on teaching. Pupils speak highly of their school and back this up through their strong commitment to the very good provision of extra-curricular activities. There have been no exclusions and behaviour is good. The school's provision and pupils' response are of the same high standard as were reported at the previous inspection.
9. Relationships are very good and this too is a particular strength. In lessons teachers adopt an empathetic approach, enabling them to gain the trust of the pupils in their charge. As a result pupils acquire the confidence to respond to questions without fear of failure. Planned group work in lessons encourages pupils to work together collaboratively, which they do very well. A natural consequence is that older pupils take responsibility for the younger ones. For example, when the children in reception needed help to put their shoes on, following a physical education lesson in the hall, older pupils willingly assisted them so that their assembly could begin in time.
10. Pupils, however, do not have sufficient exposure to cultures other than their own. Whilst religious education is used to study the major faiths, conversations with pupils indicate that their knowledge of these faiths and cultures is stereotypical and, thus, rather limited. The work in other subjects provides only a limited appreciation of what it is like to grow up in a modern multi-cultural society.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	3.2	School data	0.1
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

11. Attendance is very good. Pupils are keen to attend and there are few, if any, whose attendance is having a detrimental impact on their education. Parents are very aware of the need for their children to attend regularly and provide good support, particularly when informing the school about their children's absence. Punctuality is also good, with the majority of pupils arriving in time for the start of the school day.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education given to pupils is good, overall. Provision is satisfactory in the Foundation Stage where the teaching and curriculum are satisfactory. Teaching and learning are good for pupils in Years 1 to 6 and pupils are provided with a good curriculum, which is enriched with a very wide range of extra activities. Provision for sporting activities is excellent. The school is well staffed and properly resourced. The accommodation is satisfactory overall, but the size and position of the information and communication technology suite presents problems for staff and pupils.

Teaching and learning

The teaching and learning are good overall, but satisfactory in the Foundation Stage. Assessment is satisfactory overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching, and hence pupils' learning, is best for pupils in the two classes for pupils in Years 5 and 6.
- Very good relationships between staff and pupils and high expectations of work and behaviour mean that pupils learn well.
- Assessment is unsatisfactory in some non-core subjects.
- Teachers do not always produce sufficiently differentiated class-work for pupils of higher and lower ability and those with special educational needs.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and understanding.
- Pupils apply themselves well to lessons and produce a good amount of work.
- Pupils work well together on collaborative tasks but are not able to work so well on their own as they are given so much help; this is especially the case for lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs.

Commentary

12. The teaching is of the same good quality as was seen at the previous inspection. The teaching of information and communication technology has improved, but science is not as well taught as it was reported to be before.
13. In the reception classes the teaching is satisfactory and produces sound learning for the children. Teachers provide interesting experiences for the children and, in the best lessons, ask good questions to promote children's thinking and speaking skills. The planning of lessons in the reception classes is rather basic. Few differentiated activities are planned for more and less able children and, in lessons that are just satisfactory, a lot of time is spent getting organised. Children respond well to the teachers because they are keen to learn and know that they are expected to behave and try hard.

14. In Years 1 to 6 there is clear evidence of good teaching over time; during the inspection over two-thirds of lessons observed were graded as better than satisfactory and over a quarter as very good. Over time the best teaching has been in Years 3 to 6 and this reflects the experience of the staff and has promoted consistently good learning by pupils. The teaching for the two classes containing pupils in Years 5 and 6 was nearly all good and over half was very good. The teaching of English, mathematics, information and communication technology and physical education is good and so pupils' achievement in these subjects is good.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 43 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	11 (26%)	18 (42%)	14 (32%)	0	0	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

15. There are many strengths in the teaching which promote good learning by pupils. Teachers have a good command of their subjects and prepare the resources for their lessons well. They expect high standards of work and behaviour from their pupils and so pupils try hard and learn well. Pupils state that they love their lessons and are good at settling down to work. Parents appreciate the way they are involved in their children's learning. Homework is appropriate and generally used well.
16. The strategies used for teaching are effective, although, quite often, teachers do too much talking and this restricts the opportunities that pupils have for speaking and for doing work on their own. In instances where the teaching was not as good as it could be, the problem usually lay in deficiencies in the planning of the lessons. The inconsistencies in planning between classes for pupils in the same year-group reflect less than firm monitoring of the teaching by subject co-ordinators over the last few years. The organisation of many lessons is not as good as it could be for two main reasons: first, the timing of the lessons, within the timetable and within each lesson, is not tight enough, and so time is wasted; second, teachers are not always aware of their pupils' learned skills, prior knowledge, and understanding of the subject, and so cannot plan appropriately to improve their learning. This is a weakness that is related to the unsatisfactory assessment in some subjects.
17. Pupils of lower ability and those with special educational needs are often provided with extra help by staff, and this is very valuable, but they are not given different types of work or taught using different strategies. Throughout the school these pupils are given good support by the experienced and knowledgeable classroom assistants and so their achievement is good. However, at times this help is counter-productive. Many teachers plan extra help for their pupils but not for different work suitable for their needs, and so pupils' independence in their learning is not always well promoted. Pupils who have special educational needs are correctly identified by the teachers and satisfactory individual education plans are devised for them. The targets set are addressed when pupils work on a withdrawal basis with the special support assistants. However, targets from pupils' individual education plans are insufficiently considered in the class teachers' planning for lessons and so this aspect of provision is not as secure as it should be. Some teachers make differentiation clear in their planning, but many do not, especially in non-core subjects.
18. Assessment is satisfactory, overall. Teachers mark work constructively and pupils act on their recommendations. Assessment is good in English and mathematics and so teachers plan appropriate work for the needs of pupils of different abilities. Assessment is satisfactory in the Foundation Stage and for science, information and communication technology and physical education, as the management of these subjects is sound. Because the pupils are not formally assessed in many non-core subjects, teachers cannot report the progress of their pupils in subjects such as religious education, music and geography, and this is linked to the less-than-detailed planning for the varied needs of pupils of different ability for these subjects. Mostly all the pupils do the same work and so some pupils, especially those of lower ability, find the work too hard. This lack of detailed planning of lessons is partly due to the lack of firm management of the subjects by new or inexperienced co-ordinators.

The curriculum

The overall quality of the curriculum is good. Opportunities for enrichment are very good.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- The curriculum is broad with very good extra-curricular activities, especially sport.
- The lack of overall management of the curriculum is restricting pupils' attainment.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good, but class teachers do not fully incorporate their individual targets in their planning.
- Provision for information and communication technology has improved significantly since the previous inspection, but the suite is too small.
- The school is well staffed.

COMMENTARY

19. The school provides well for its pupils through a broad curriculum that fully meets statutory requirements. The curriculum is greatly enriched by a wide variety of clubs and activities that are run at lunchtimes and after school. Activities include chess, choir, art and craft, country dancing and a full range of sports. Students from Yeovil College run sports sessions and gymnastics and pupils benefit from this input.
20. The curriculum for children in the reception classes is satisfactory. However, it is not planned in terms of the required areas of learning for children in the mixed reception/Year 1 class. Although these children are, mostly, working within the levels of older pupils, their learning is insufficiently evaluated with reference to the goals they are expected to reach by the time they join Year 1.
21. The school has put an appropriate emphasis on implementing the literacy and numeracy strategies. The governors have ensured that there are good numbers of staff to cope with the demands of these subjects, and staffing levels are good. Resources are satisfactory. Suitable schemes of work are in place for the non-core subjects and effective links are made between subjects. However, the organisation and management of the curriculum is not as tight as it could be, largely because no one has overall responsibility for taking an overview. The planning of the timetables does not ensure that appropriate amounts of time are given to each subject. As a result the time devoted to religious education, for example, varies considerably. Some lessons in English and mathematics are planned to be too long and this wastes valuable time. Also, the amount of time allocated to non-core subjects, such as the humanities, is not clear on the teachers' timetables. Too much time is allocated to assemblies for pupils in Years 1 and 2 and this takes up time that could be given to other subjects.
22. Subject co-ordinators monitor the teachers' planning each term, but there is no system in place for checking to what extent the plans were implemented. For example, in religious education there is a satisfactory curriculum based on the locally Agreed Syllabus, but the planning of this is not detailed enough to ensure that all pupils cover the full range of the syllabus in sufficient depth. Pupils in mixed-age classes are not ensured a coherent programme of study and so a few have missed certain essential teaching in the subject. The number of classes with mixed year-groups, and the changes in these, have not helped. The headteacher and senior management team are aware of the need to review the curriculum and changes are currently being considered. There are active plans to have a greater emphasis on an integrated approach, incorporating information and communication technology fully into the curriculum and focusing more on the development of skills.
23. Overall, provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Appropriate individual education plans are written by the special educational needs co-ordinator and these are regularly reviewed and progress assessed. Targets in the individual education plans are addressed on a one-to-one basis, or in small groups, with support from the learning support assistants. Individuals and small groups of pupils are regularly withdrawn from classes to work

on their targets and the designated learning support assistant keeps records of progress. Teachers discuss and review targets in pupils' individual education plans with the special educational needs co-ordinator. However, targets are not always incorporated into the planning for class lessons.

24. The weakness at the time of the last inspection, of unsatisfactory provision for information and communication technology, has been addressed, with the installation of a purpose-built information and communication technology suite. However, because the suite is in a main teaching area, only half a class can use the computers at any one time, and this makes the delivery of the curriculum difficult at times.
25. The school is successful in ensuring that the pupils are equipped for the next stage of education. On leaving the school, each pupil is presented with an informative Record of Achievement which contains a selection of the pupil's best work, collected by their teachers during the time the pupil has been with the school.

Care, guidance and support

Procedures to ensure pupils' welfare and safety are very good. The support, advice and guidance based on monitoring are satisfactory. There are very good arrangements for seeking pupils' views.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- There is a high level of care and pupils have total confidence in staff.
- The school council is a worthwhile body.

COMMENTARY

26. The high quality of care and support given to pupils that was recorded at the previous inspection has been maintained and enhanced in some aspects. East Coker is a school in which there are very effective arrangements for the care and welfare of pupils. These stem from the very good relationships which exist between staff and pupils, resulting in pupils who are confident that their teachers will listen to and act upon their concerns. Interviews with pupils, together with the responses to the parents' questionnaire, confirm that the school is a secure and caring place in which pupils can flourish. This strong provision is enhanced by secure arrangements for health and safety and first aid, together with an emphasis on sport, physical education, and healthy eating resulting in a very low percentage of overweight pupils.
27. In a school which places such a strong emphasis on personal development it is not surprising that it should encourage the involvement of pupils in its running. This it does through an active school council. The school has acted upon pupils' suggestions in a number of areas: by regenerating the nature area, improving the boys' toilets, and developing plans to install a shaded area for the playground. Outside the remit of the council, older pupils are responsible for supporting the induction of children into the reception year by acting as 'buddies' and there are also a number of monitoring tasks through which pupils can help with the smooth running of their school.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has established very good links with parents. It has established good links with the community and satisfactory links with other schools and colleges.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The way in which the school informs parents about its work is good.
- There is very effective involvement of parents in the work of the school.

- The links with the local community are good.

COMMENTARY

28. The school has an even better partnership with parents than was reported at the previous inspection. Parents have very positive views of the school and the way it relates to them. The pre-inspection parents' questionnaire was overwhelmingly supportive and this positive picture was reinforced at the parents' meeting. Communication, in all its guises, is considered to be a strength. Not only does the headteacher operate an open door policy, but he is also proactive in gauging parents' views by attending the regular open forums run by the Friends' Association. The information which the school provides about itself and pupils' performance is also good. Curriculum worksheets are informative, as are the newsletters that are sent out by the headteacher and Friends' Association giving information on forthcoming events and achievements. The annual reports to parents on pupils' progress are very good. They provide clear information for parents on the academic progress their children are making, the level they are working at, and their personal development. To these are added clear and concise targets for improvement.
29. Parents are encouraged to help out in school during the week and many do, supporting a variety of activities in all year groups, and this helps to raise standards. The parent body is particularly supportive of the school in all its work ensuring that children attend regularly and helping with homework. The Friends' Association is very active, organising numerous fund-raising and social events, which are always well supported.
30. Being at the heart of a small village, East Coker Primary School enjoys good links with its local community. The school provides a base for events run by the Brownies, Mill Fellowship and East Coker Rangers FC. Its country-dance club and choir give performances in the local area giving a real purpose to the extra-curricular activities. Work on religious education is enhanced by visits to the local church, which is also used for the annual carol concert.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good, overall. The leadership of the headteacher is very good and the governance is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good leadership by the headteacher has provided a very good climate for learning and is key to the effectiveness of the school.
- Governors are effective in managing the school and know what is going on.
- Although the leadership of most subjects is good, the overall management of the curriculum and of some non-core subjects is not good enough to ensure the best progress by pupils.
- Given the resources at its disposal and the good outcomes for pupils, this school gives good value for money.

Commentary

31. The headteacher is very experienced and leads the school very well. He has set the style and ensured shared values and a commitment to the best for all pupils. Even over a time of significant change for the school, with many experienced, long-serving staff leaving for good reasons, such as promotion, the headteacher has ensured good teamwork among the staff and as easy a transition as possible for pupils. He has a very sharp awareness of all that goes on. He creates the vision of constant improvement, but also of having fun, and he ensures that the school runs smoothly. He is a good role model to staff and pupils and, with his own teaching, sets a very good example of best practice. Parents, governors and staff all acknowledge his firm leadership and his commitment to the community, which has resulted in a 'family feel' to this school in which pupils can thrive. The positive features of the leadership and management reported in the previous inspection report have been maintained and there

have been improvements to a few aspects in which practice was not as good as it could be, such as some statutory non-compliances.

32. The leadership is good overall, and senior staff have determined sensible strategies and motivated staff. There have been changes in senior management recently and so the input of some senior staff is not as effective as it has been in the past. However, senior staff have monitored assessment data well and taken effective action when results have not been as good as they had hoped; an example is the sensible change in the curriculum for science. The leadership of special educational needs is good but the management, although satisfactory, is not as effective as it could be; too many pupils, not on the special educational needs register, are given extra help, and class teachers are not monitored well enough to check whether they are implementing pupils' individual education plans.
33. The management of subjects and the Foundation Stage is satisfactory, overall. A problem not realised by the school is that the culture of teamwork, in which all adults in the school are very familiar with what has been happening, has resulted in some systems of management being rather informal. The structures for planning and checking what has been done are not as strong as they should be. The monitoring of lessons is rather bland, with senior staff commenting on teachers' inputs rather than the outcomes for pupils, and points for improvement not being followed up. Subject co-ordinators are insufficiently well trained to evaluate teaching in their subjects. The overall management of the curriculum, including the planning of the timetable, although satisfactory, is not tight enough to ensure the best provision for pupils. Because of this, standards in some subjects are not as good as they could be. In subjects that have been a priority for the school, such as English and physical education, the management has been good and so provision is good, resulting in pupils' attainment improving. In subjects that have not been a priority for a while, such as religious education, standards are not as high as they could be. The monitoring of teachers' planning and teaching, although satisfactory, currently cannot ensure that the outcomes of the work are high enough in all subjects. This is an area for development known to the school.
34. The governors and headteacher have clear strategic vision and so plan well for the school's development. They have a good grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses and have solved problems presented by falling rolls, staff changes and the accommodation, with realism. Governors know the school well and are constructive in their monitoring and suggestions. They take effective action when problems arise and have been very influential in the recent appointments of staff. They have ensured good induction procedures and effective professional development for staff, which has resulted, for instance, in staff being much more effective in their teaching of information and communication technology. They ensure that there is no discrimination on the grounds of race or disability. The formal school improvement plan is good, on the whole, but some criteria with which governors plan to evaluate success are too vague. However, through their good involvement, governors have ensured continuous improvement since the previous inspection and are far from complacent about what is being achieved now.
35. The headteacher and governors are taking seriously the issues of the work-load of staff and have active plans to keep up the numbers of staff to deal with this. Governors are also totally committed to giving pupils with special educational needs as much help as possible and so have allocated extra money to fund support staff. The school also has accrued money because some expensive, experienced staff have left and some younger less experienced staff have been appointed. These appointments have been successful and these teachers bring a lot to the school. But, as a result, the carry forward from the previous financial year and into the next year is higher than would normally be recommended. The headteacher has also made realistic predictions about numbers on roll and finance available for the next two years and governors have prudently set aside cash to cover the extra costs. Financial control is tight. The governing body uses the principles of best value well when making decisions about improvements.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	625,655
Total expenditure	618,894
Expenditure per pupil	2,380

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	68,946
Balance carried forward to the next	75,707

36. The amount spent per pupil is relatively low when compared with schools nationally. Pupils do well as a result of the good education provided and the quality of relationships in the school. Given these factors and its overall effectiveness, this school gives good value for money.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The provision for pupils in the Foundation Stage is **satisfactory**, as it was at the previous inspection.

37. There have, however, been improvements to the provision in some respects; the school has developed a better outside area for children to play and resources in this respect have improved. Most children have had some suitable pre-school educational experience before they join the reception classes. Staff liaise effectively with parents and playgroup providers before children start school. Attainment on entry varies from year to year; it is as expected, overall, with strengths in children's social skills and in their communication. Those children who exhibit better skills on entry to the school join a class in which most are pupils in Year 1; they receive teaching at a higher level. This is successful.
38. Children's achievement is satisfactory, overall. By the time they finish the reception year nearly all children will achieve the goals that are expected in all areas of learning, and in communication, language and literacy they are working at levels that are above average. Last year children started in Year 1 with above average attainment.
39. The teaching is satisfactory, leading to children's satisfactory progress, overall. However, the achievements of more able children in the mixed reception/Year 1 class are good because they receive challenging teaching. The staff of teachers and classroom assistants work well together, but there are several changes of support staff during the week and, at times there are no paid support staff working in the classes. This is not the best practice for working with young children. Parents and volunteers give good support to the teachers. The planning of lessons is mostly satisfactory, but sometimes it is in the form of activities to be done, rather than specific definition of the objectives of the teaching.
40. Assessment is satisfactory. There is very basic assessment on entry to the reception classes and detailed profiling at the end of the reception year. Teachers keep appropriate records of on-going assessment. After lessons the response and achievement of groups of children are evaluated, but not those of individual children.
41. The curriculum provided is satisfactory. It covers all the areas of learning for young children, but it is not planned according to the best practice, which includes play and all the required elements of learning, for more able children in the class for children in reception/Year 1. Children in this mixed-age class sometimes cover the same work as pupils in Year 2, who are in the Year1/2 class, and this is unsatisfactory; it is possible that children will not have the skills, or, more likely, the maturity to be able to understand the work. The curriculum allows children time to play, but this play is not always well enough structured by staff; this was also a weakness pointed out at the previous inspection.
42. The accommodation is satisfactory in terms of size, but storage is a problem. The organisation of the classrooms and the working areas has not been well enough thought through. Although the management of the provision is satisfactory, there has been little input from senior staff in order to promote better teaching.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's behaviour is good.
- Children show interest in all the activities provided.

- Adults tend to do too much for children.

Commentary

43. The staff, quite rightly, spend a lot of time developing children's personal and social skills. As a result of the sound teaching in this aspect children make at least satisfactory progress in acquiring more mature skills and most are well prepared to join Year 1, achieving the expected goals. Children are well behaved because they have learned the routines of the classes and know that they are expected to conform to these. Children work quite well together in groups and do not flit from one activity to another. They work and play well together. Children cope with their own dressing and changing, such as when they get ready for physical education, but several take a long time and frequently ask for help. At times adults do too much for the children which slows the rate at which the children become independent.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's attainment in literacy is above expectations.
- More able children make good progress in acquiring reading and writing skills.
- The role-play area is not used sufficiently to develop children's language skills.

Commentary

44. The teaching in this area of learning is often good. Workable records are kept of children's achievement and these show that overall children acquire literacy skills that are above average by the time they finish the reception year. Children enjoy stories and know many of the characters. They listen carefully to stories. A good percentage of children know their letter sounds. Many write at a level above that expected for their age. Although children enjoy talking to each other and playing together, there is insufficiently detailed planning for them to extend their language skills as they play.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's skills in counting are improving through a good range of teaching strategies.

Commentary

45. Due to the satisfactory teaching in this area of learning, children's mathematical development is sound. Children count and compare size using appropriate language at the expected level. More able children can count at least to ten reliably and recognise numerals to nine. Singing and dancing are used creatively to reinforce children's knowledge and understanding of number.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- An interesting range of early work in history and geography is provided.
- Children are not used to working on the computer and many need help to do even simple tasks using information and communication technology.

Commentary

46. Few activities in this area of learning were observed, but in those seen the teaching was satisfactory, overall. Some good teaching of historical skills was observed in which children showed great interest and took a full part in the session, talking about features of old houses. Children use the school's information and communication technology suite to learn to use the computers; few of them show confidence and many need a lot of help. Although several children have computers at home, insufficient use is made of their prior learning on these. Appropriate work in religious education is provided and last term children enjoyed the work about the birth of Christ.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are active and can use their bodies in physical education sessions at the expected level.
- Many children have skills in cutting and using small tools that are not as well developed as most children of the same age.

Commentary

47. The teaching is satisfactory and so children make satisfactory progress through the reception year. Children enjoy physical education sessions in the hall and most are well co-ordinated. They are active when playing outside and have access to satisfactory outside play areas. They also enjoy using small apparatus, but a significant number do not find cutting with scissors easy, and the staff are appropriately working on these skills. Children are on course to achieve the expected level by the time they join Year 1.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A good range of experiences in music and art are provided.
- Children sing well.
- Children need encouragement to try new work.
- Children's imaginative play is not as well developed as it could be.

Commentary

48. The teaching in this area of learning is satisfactory and so children make satisfactory progress, although achievement is good in singing, as music is taught well. Children know the words of a good range of songs; they sing in tune and keep the beat. Most children draw and colour at least at the levels expected and some have made good progress since they started

in reception. A good range of artistic experiences is provided that stimulate children and make them want to take part in activities. There is a satisfactory range of equipment for outdoor play but, during the inspection, it was too cold for children to be able to use these facilities. Although opportunities for indoor play are provided these are not structured well enough to promote children's imaginative play in the best way.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in writing are well above average throughout the school and standards in reading are well above average by the end of Year 6.
- The quality of teaching is good, so pupils throughout the school are achieving well.
- The co-ordinator provides very good leadership and the management of the subject is good.
- The school makes very good use of assessment data to set clear targets for improvement and provide additional support for identified groups of pupils.
- Lesson planning does not always meet the needs of pupils of different abilities.
- There is insufficient emphasis on developing speaking and listening skills in all subjects.

Commentary

49. Standards in English are well above average overall in Year 2 and Year 6 and the inspection findings strongly reflect the school's performance in the national tests in recent years. This represents good improvement since the previous inspection when standards were judged to be average in Year 2.
50. Standards in speaking and listening at the end of Years 2 and 6 are in line with national expectations. Pupils throughout the school are confident speakers and good listeners. They readily engage in conversation with adults and classmates, listen intently to their teachers and are keen to answer questions. Consequently, the vast majority of pupils in Years 2 and 6 comfortably achieve the national expectations for their age and only a very small minority need to be prompted to join in discussions. Some of the more able pupils are articulate and fluent speakers, particularly in one to one conversation with adults. On the other hand, not many achieve above the expected standards for their age, because too few opportunities are created for them to develop their speaking and listening skills to a consistently higher level. Given that pupils come into school with relatively good language skills, achievement in this aspect is satisfactory overall and could be better.
51. Standards in reading are above average in Year 2 and well above average in Year 6. The school successfully promotes good attitudes to reading from an early age and pupils achieve well. Pupils with special educational needs receive good additional support, which enables them to achieve as well as their classmates. There is carefully structured teaching of sound blends and the key skills for reading new words are well established. The very good relationships between teachers and parents enable pupils to develop good reading habits by taking books home, reading to volunteer helpers in school, and changing books regularly at the school library. Consequently, most pupils in Year 2 read familiar stories without help and more capable pupils achieve above average standards because they read with expression, are developing an interest in a favourite author and are comfortable reading non-fiction books as well as stories. From Year 3 onwards, volunteer helpers continue to play their part in developing pupils' confidence and teachers provide focused support through regular guided reading sessions so that pupils continue to achieve well. By Year 6, pupils of all abilities have healthy attitudes towards reading and many are avid readers who collect whole series of books by the same author. The subject co-ordinator stimulates interest in reading by organising very well supported book fairs and uses the income from these to add exciting new fiction and non-fiction books to the library.

52. Standards in writing are well above average in Year 2 and in Year 6. Pupils of all abilities achieve well and boys achieve better than in schools nationally. In Year 2, a high proportion of the more able pupils write at length with consistent accuracy in spelling and punctuation, which is above national expectations for their age. Most of the remainder place events in their correct sequence and write them as clear, recognisable sentences with capital letters and full stops, whilst only a very small minority need adults to model writing for them. There is a similar picture in Year 6, where most pupils are at least adequately skilled at planning their work and converting their ideas into extended pieces of writing for a wide range of audiences. Many of the most able pupils achieve well above the national expectations because they successfully engage the reader's interest by writing persuasively, or imaginatively.
53. The quality of teaching is good throughout the school. A significant strength of teaching is the school's very accurate tracking of pupils' progress through detailed analysis of national and optional test results. Teachers successfully use this information to identify areas of weakness, create clear targets for improvement and provide additional support for identified groups of pupils. These targets are shared with pupils, who know what they need to do to improve and this has a positive impact on achievement. Written work is conscientiously and consistently well marked, usually with constructive comments. Through the initiative of the co-ordinator, planning of work for the term is based on clearly identified learning objectives for each unit of work and is very good. The objectives are pasted into work books at the start of each unit and very successfully focus the attention of pupils, teachers and support staff alike, with positive results. There are two main areas for development in teaching and learning. First, in some lessons, pupils are given the same activity to complete, regardless of ability. Teachers and learning support assistants provide good support for focus groups and these often make good progress. On the other hand, there are occasions when tasks are either too difficult or too easy and this slows the rate of achievement, particularly for unsupported groups of average or less able pupils; this sometimes leads to a lack of concentration and effort. Second, all teachers provide opportunities for pupils to contribute orally, especially at the beginning of lessons, through well-directed questions. However, these sessions are often very lengthy and in many cases questions only demand a one-word answer. In order to raise attainment in speaking and listening, there is a need to provide more planned opportunities for pupils to talk in groups, to formulate and ask questions of their own and to speak clearly and at length to the rest of the class.
54. The co-ordinator provides very good leadership. She has effectively identified previous weaknesses in the subject and has successfully addressed them by providing strong support to her colleagues in order to improve the quality of medium-term planning. The overall management is good. The co-ordinator ensures that resources are kept up to date and that the initiatives she has established, such as drama and theatre visits, continue to enrich the curriculum. She has carried out some lesson observations and these should continue in order to share the best features of some of the very good teaching in the school. To ensure the maximum impact of monitoring, however, there is a need to place far greater emphasis on the standards and learning outcomes achieved in the lessons observed.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

55. The development of literacy skills through teaching in subjects across the curriculum is good overall. Teachers throughout the school provide regular opportunities for pupils to write extensively, and in their own words, and there are high expectations of the quality of presentation and handwriting. Similarly, pupils read for understanding from a wide range of texts in the course of their work and this contributes well to their achievement. In speaking and listening, activities such as drama and role-play make a positive contribution to achievement. To raise standards in this area, there is a need to provide planned opportunities for discussion in each subject and for all adults to encourage and expect pupils to speak clearly and articulately throughout the school day.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Standards are above average in Years 3 to 6.
- Coverage of the mathematics curriculum is good.
- Teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6 are good.
- Higher-attaining pupils in Year 6 achieve well, but the use of worksheets sometimes fails to challenge the higher-attaining pupils in other classes.
- Teachers' planning fails to incorporate the targets of pupils with special educational needs.

COMMENTARY

56. Achievement in mathematics is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. Standards by the end of Year 2 are average, but they have been above average in tests for the last three years. The difference is due to the different abilities of the year-groups, with fewer pupils working at higher levels. Also, pupils are working at average levels in the investigative element of mathematics, which is not part of the national tests. There has been a steady improvement in the results of the national tests since the previous inspection, with a significant number of pupils achieving higher levels in 2004. Achievement in mathematics is good in Years 3 to 6 and standards are above the national average. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because they receive good quality support.
57. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good; it is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and in Years 3 to 6, it is good. Teachers' planning identifies appropriate activities for pupils of differing abilities, but it is not clear how the targets set in the individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs are incorporated into the lessons. In all lessons teachers use quick warm-up sessions well to develop pupils' mental agility and recounting of number facts. Mathematical vocabulary is promoted well so pupils have a good understanding of technical words. Where teachers encourage pupils to devise a range of strategies for solving problems, pupils demonstrate secure mathematical thinking. However, in lessons where worksheets are the basis for recording, the recording method itself often constrains the ability of the pupils to demonstrate their thinking.
58. In the good and very good lessons seen during the inspection, teachers reminded pupils about the purpose of the lesson, mathematical vocabulary was used accurately, skills were taught effectively and pupils encouraged to explain their thinking. Good progress was made by the pupils because they understood the purpose of the lesson and teachers took them through the processes in a structured way, providing interesting activities which were accurately matched to their needs. Learning support assistants gave a high level of support to groups of lower-attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs, giving additional explanations when appropriate. The interactive whiteboards are used in all mathematics lessons. They are used most effectively with purchased software because techniques, such as finding co-ordinates, can be demonstrated quickly and accurately.
59. The management of mathematics is good even though the subject co-ordinator is new to the post. He is clear about his role as co-ordinator and has observed teachers teaching mathematics lessons in order to identify strengths and areas for development. Working with the staff, he has active plans to audit the subject and use the results as a basis for staff training. He understands the need to assess pupils regularly and to use assessment to identify pupils who need extra help and pupils who can be given more challenging tasks. Currently, pupils do not have individual targets for mathematics and this is an area for development. Resources for teaching mathematics are well organised and enable the curriculum to be delivered effectively.

Mathematics across the curriculum

60. Pupils use mathematical skills well as part of their work in other subjects. Examples include the use of graphs and tables in science and geography and the use of measurement in design and technology.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is an appropriate focus on investigation and practical work.
- The curriculum is matched to the needs of each class group.
- The subject co-ordinator leads the subject well.
- There is limited evidence that tasks are clearly matched to the specific needs of pupils of differing abilities.
- Data from assessment is not fully used to track pupils' progress.

Commentary

61. Standards at the end of Year 2 are in line with the national average and pupils make satisfactory progress. Results of the national tests in 2004 indicated that standards at the end of Year 6 were in line with the national average but the percentage of pupils gaining higher levels meant that the standards were well below those of similar schools. These results led to the school putting an emphasis on improving the teaching of science. Lower-attaining pupils in Years 5 and 6 are being given focused help in a good 'booster' group. A useful commercial scheme was purchased and pupils now have more opportunities for practical work, using the scientific techniques of exploration, fair testing and investigation. Standards at the end of Year 6 are in line with national expectations, and pupils make satisfactory progress. In the last two years standards have not been as high as were reported at the previous inspection, but they have started to rise again this year as the curriculum is better, with more occasions for pupils to carry out experiments.
62. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. In the lessons seen during the inspection it was often good and it was very good in the two classes in Years 5 and 6. Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan clear learning objectives, which they share with their pupils. Teachers use well targeted questions to assess their pupils' understanding; however, they rarely allow pupils enough time to explain their thinking in depth, which prevents the opportunity for extended learning. There are now many good opportunities for pupils to carry out experiments, but there is little evidence that pupils plan their own investigations.
63. Pupils' exercise books shows little evidence that work has been matched to individuals of differing abilities because most is recorded on worksheets aimed at one level of ability. By not encouraging pupils to record their findings in their own words and to construct their own tables and charts, teachers restrict the opportunity of pupils to demonstrate their thinking or, for higher-attaining pupils, higher levels of attainment. Pupils are tested at the end of each unit of work and the results will enable progress to be tracked. However, because the tests have been in place for only a short time, it is not yet possible to use the information to track progress or to identify trends. Pupils also assess their own progress by using 'I can...' statements, and this is sensible.
64. Good links are made with other subjects such as literacy and art, and pupils' mathematical skills are used to record their findings in the form of graphs, charts and tables. During investigations involving temperatures, for example, pupils learn to calculate negative as well as positive readings.
65. The co-ordinator leads the subject well. She has a clear vision of what is required and has worked hard to ensure that each class covers an appropriate scheme of work. The

management of science is satisfactory. The co-ordinator monitors teachers' planning and ensures that topics have been covered as arranged. Science resources have been updated and organised so that each science topic has the appropriate resources available. A useful 'virtual experiments' program is used in Years 3 to 6 on the interactive whiteboards, and the co-ordinator is ordering a similar program for Years 1 and 2, so that the information technology can be used fully.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is good and pupils are achieving well in relation to their prior attainment by the time they leave the school.
- The limited space in the computer suite and its location sometimes restrict pupils' achievement in information and communication technology and in other subjects.

Commentary

66. Provision was unsatisfactory at the time of the previous inspection and standards were below expectations throughout the school. In recent years the school has significantly improved resources and teachers have worked hard and successfully to improve teaching and learning despite continuing constraints of the accommodation. Standards are now in line with national expectations in Year 2 and Year 6 and pupils throughout the school are achieving well in relation to their prior attainment, reflecting good improvement since the previous inspection.
67. By Year 2 pupils are entirely used to working at a computer, either on their own or with a partner. They successfully word-process sentences they have written in their English books, using the appropriate keys for spacing words, deleting errors and making capital letters. They are confident in accessing websites on the internet under supervision from an adult and the majority save, store or print their work without adult help. In Year 6 all pupils gain adequate insight into wider uses of information and communication technology by having the opportunity to use a heart rate monitor, or to create a virtual science experiment. Keyboard skills are satisfactorily developed at this stage. A small minority of pupils depend on support from a classmate for routine tasks, which is below national expectations for their age, whilst some of the more able pupils quickly complete work and explore alternative solutions of their own.
68. The quality of teaching is good overall throughout the school. Despite the constraints created by the narrowness of the computer suite and its position in a busy area of the school, teachers successfully plan interesting activities, with good adult support, to ensure that the portion of the class using the computers makes good progress. On the other hand, the fact that the lesson has to be repeated to enable all pupils to use the equipment slows down the overall rate of progress over time. In addition, learning in the activity being carried out by the remainder of the class, whether related to technology or another subject, is also slower because it is difficult to provide sharply focused teaching or support. Teaching and learning are more successful when a very capable specialist teacher takes pupils from mixed age classes exclusively for work on computers. Pupils clearly benefit from uninterrupted attention from a teacher and one of the many competent learning support assistants.
69. The subject co-ordinators have been in post for a relatively short time and are providing satisfactory leadership and management. There is a suitable action plan, including firm proposals to relocate the computer suite and the school has recently invested very positively in new resources. Appropriate in-service training has been organised with the aim to embed the use of information and communication technology in the curriculum. These are promising developments that have created a strong platform to raise standards further. The co-ordinators recognise the need to monitor developments closely, particularly in relation to the effect of the new resources on standards.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

70. The use of information and communication technology in subjects across the curriculum is satisfactory. Some good use of information technology to support learning in other subjects was seen when classes were working in the computer suite and on some occasions in the classroom. The interactive whiteboards, which have been very recently installed in all rooms, are being used, understandably, with varying degrees of expertise and success so far. As part of their aim to promote the use of information and communication technology as an integral part of day-to-day learning, the co-ordinators should ensure as soon as possible that staff and pupils are trained in the use of these resources.

HUMANITIES

History was not a focus for this inspection and so no judgement can be given about provision or standards in the subject. Pupils in Year 2 have a clear idea about the differences between their lives now and those of children a long time ago and make sensible comments about why this is. Pupils in Year 6 have a sound knowledge and understanding of the history of their own locality, but some have a rather hazy knowledge of how the various periods of history they have studied fit together chronologically. There is a satisfactory curriculum based on a government-approved scheme of work, but from the apparent gaps in some more able pupils' understanding it would appear that the subject has not been a major focus over the last few years.

Geography

Provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching successfully promotes pupils' use of technical vocabulary.
- There are no effective systems for monitoring teaching and learning or assessing pupils' progress.
- The same work is often planned for pupils of different abilities.

Commentary

71. Standards are in line with expectations at the end of Years 2 and 6. This reflects a decline in standards since the last inspection, and this has occurred because the school has concentrated its attention on improving other subjects whilst the monitoring of geography has become less rigorous. In Year 2 most pupils have an adequate knowledge of their own location and where they live. They recognise the key features of East Coker on a plan and are beginning to understand the use of symbols. Pupils in Year 6 have good knowledge of the topics they have more recently covered such as coastal erosion, distant locations and features of mountain ranges and confidently use the technical vocabulary associated with these. Mapping skills, on the other hand, are less well developed at this stage.
72. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teaching is good in some individual lessons because teachers are confident in their subject knowledge and provide good opportunities for pupils to develop research skills. They expect pupils to write extensively using the correct geographical terms and these strategies have a positive impact on learning. On the other hand, there is a tendency to place slightly more emphasis on research than on the activities that enable pupils to practise their technical skills. In addition, the tasks and worksheets provided in lessons are often pitched at the same level of difficulty in classes where there is a wide range of abilities and this slows the overall pace of pupils' learning.
73. There are clear indications that the management of the subject is satisfactory. A broad curriculum is in place; geography is regularly and often taught well and teachers continue to

enrich learning in the classroom by organising relevant and exciting field trips. It is equally clear that in order to raise standards there is a need to introduce a system of assessment that will enable teachers to measure pupils' progress from year to year. It will also be necessary for the subject co-ordinator to monitor the effectiveness of assessment on teaching and learning and to restore a more equitable balance between the various aspects of the subject.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Religious education is linked well with other subjects and with personal, social and health education.
- The subject has not been managed well enough and so the planning of the curriculum, the monitoring of standards and the organisation of assessment are unsatisfactory and have restricted pupils' achievement.

Commentary

74. Standards in religious education are in line with those expected in the locally Agreed Syllabus. Pupils' standards are lower than they were reported to be at the previous inspection, because the subject has not been a priority for improvement. Generally, pupils have satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the facts and basic concepts of the faiths they have studied. Pupils in Year 2 know some of the stories of the New Testament, such as the story of the Good Samaritan, and can talk about the implications of this tale for their own lives. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 have satisfactory knowledge of the rituals and symbols of the Christian faith at the expected level. Pupils in Year 6 generally have a satisfactory understanding of the difference between some of the major world religions, but they do not have as secure a knowledge of these facts as they should. They can, however, relate religious practices to their own lives and to what is happening in the world in quite a mature way, suggesting that the subject is used well to promote moral development.
75. The teaching is satisfactory overall. One lesson seen with the oldest pupils was good because it was challenging; it promoted pupils' interpretation of religious art well. Individual teachers plan and deliver the subject in a coherent, sensitive way and appropriately include topics of current concern, such as the Tsunami disaster, and how people with faith may cope with the tragedy. This promotes pupils' spiritual, moral and social development well and ensures that pupils' knowledge and understanding of religion, and the way they learn from religion, are satisfactory. Teachers link the subject effectively to other subjects, such as art and design and personal, social and health education, which makes the study of religious education relevant to pupils.
76. Although standards are satisfactory, they are not as high as they could be because the subject is not taught in an organised way. The range of work is good, but there would appear to be significant gaps between lessons, which are not conducive to pupils' good learning. The planning of the curriculum has not been properly organised in the past, and is currently being changed, so there are risks that some pupils will miss parts of the curriculum set by the Agreed Syllabus and a few pupils may duplicate work already done. There is the proper emphasis on Christianity but, because the curriculum has not been well enough planned, some older pupils do not have sufficient depth of understanding of the differences between the four faiths they have studied. Teachers are not aware of the gaps in some pupils' knowledge and understanding because systems for formal assessment are only just being introduced. This is unsatisfactory and is because the subject has not been managed well enough over the last few years. The co-ordinator has not had the time or training to manage the subject well enough, and so standards have slipped.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design was not a focus for this inspection and, therefore, a judgement about and provision and standards cannot be made. No evidence was gathered to make any judgements about **design and technology**

77. In **art and design** the curriculum is broad, with appropriate links to other subjects. Pupils in Year 5 and Year 6, studying a topic on slippers in **design and technology**, created satisfactory abstract slipper pictures, inspired by the work of artists such as Paul Klee. Work in Years 5 and 6 on mountain ranges in geography was the basis for the satisfactory three-dimensional sculptures made of paper and card. Sketchbooks are appropriately used for drafting ideas and for sketches in pencil and crayon. Pencils, pastels and charcoal are used by pupils in each year-group to create satisfactory still life pictures of fruit. Pupils use the art packages in the information and communication technology suite to create pictures, for example, scenes of the four seasons were used to create a design for a calendar. Pupils study the work of famous artists such as Monet and Lichtenstein and so they have appropriate knowledge and understanding about different styles and techniques. Assessment is unsatisfactory because there is no means of recording or tracking pupils' skills and strengths and weaknesses in the subject.

Music

Provision in music is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A wide range of activities is provided.
- There is no realistic assessment of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding.

Commentary

78. No overall judgements about standards can be given as, apart from one lesson, only the singing part of the curriculum was observed. The singing heard was in line with national expectations and pupils' achievement is satisfactory, overall. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 sing sweetly and with expression above the standards expected for their age. The singing of pupils in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory but lacks dynamic variation. Pupils' progress in playing musical instruments is satisfactory, but their skills are not sufficiently taken into account when whole-class lessons are planned. The teaching is satisfactory, overall. The school uses the services of several members of staff with professional skills and also outside professionals and volunteers, but as there is virtually no assessment of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding, the teachers are not able to plan lessons to address the needs of individual pupils.

79. The curriculum is broad. A significant number of pupils play a range of instruments and have individual tuition. There is a good choir and a flute group and the school puts on ambitious musical productions. A satisfactory commercial scheme of work has been acquired so that non-specialist teachers can deliver part of the music curriculum. However, there is not much time on each class's timetables to cover all the wider aspects of music, including time to listen to and appraise, in depth, a range of music. The subject makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral and social development, but the absence of evidence of the use of non-Western music means that its contribution to pupils' cultural development is limited. The management of the subject is satisfactory as the co-ordinator is aware of the strengths and weaknesses and has given non-specialist staff some training.

Physical education

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Physical education during and beyond the school day considerably enriches the curriculum and is fundamental to the good health and personal development of pupils throughout the school.
- Provision for sport is excellent.
- Achievement in swimming is very good.
- The leadership and management of physical education are very good.

Commentary

80. No overall judgement has been reached about standards, since not enough teaching of any one aspect of physical education was seen. The quality of dance seen in the lessons for pupils in Year 1 and Year 3 suggested that pupils were achieving well, whilst the standard of gymnastics in the lesson for pupils in Years 5 and 6 seen was in line with national expectations. Detailed records confirm that pupils achieve very well in swimming. Almost all pupils leave school able to swim at least 25 metres and the higher-grade awards earned by many pupils place great emphasis on good quality technique in the full range of styles. The school has successfully maintained the quality of provision for physical education reported in the previous inspection and has further improved the contribution made to the curriculum by extra-curricular physical activities and sports.
81. The quality of teaching is good; results suggest that teaching consistently promotes at least good learning. Teaching was good in two lessons and very good in the third lesson seen, this is because teachers make good use of praise and are quick to ask good performers to show the rest of the class what can be achieved, which has a positive impact on standards. At the same time, they invite pupils to assess the quality of their own and their classmates' performance and this also results in increased concentration and effort. This is a positive and effective means of assessment, although the standard of gymnastics seen in Year 6, whilst satisfactory, suggests that there should be a more formal system for measuring progress from year to year in aspects of the subject other than swimming. Teaching is occasionally less successful, where signals or instructions are not communicated clearly enough, which interrupts the flow of the lesson and reduces concentration and effort. A good feature common to all lessons and outdoor activities is that teachers dress appropriately and expect pupils to do the same. This sets a good example and promotes good attitudes to physical education.
82. The subject is led and managed very well by the co-ordinator who has very successfully promoted the ethos of the school as a provider of a rich variety of outdoor and indoor physical activity during and after school. This has been achieved by establishing links with a wide range of outside agencies, such as Yeovil College. Many parents offer their time and expertise in areas such as swimming and parents, as a whole, are very appreciative of the school staff, who generously give up their own time to manage sports clubs and adventurous outdoor activities. The impact of their effort and commitment is reflected in the majority of East Coker pupils who are fit, active and healthy. The school has been awarded a gold 'Activemark' in recognition of the work it does in physical education.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

As no lessons in **personal, social and health education** were seen during the inspection, there is no judgement on provision or standards. The appropriate scheme of work is implemented in all the classes and effective links are made with other subjects. Pupils know that they are part of a caring community where their views are valued.

83. Pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 are paired with a pupil in Year 1 and Year 2 and meet with their 'buddies' on a regular basis. Recently, the younger children were shown how to use the library by their older 'buddies'. The school promotes the school council and suggestions are put forward for improvements to school life such as providing more places to eat outside in the summer and creating a wild life area. Pupils are given satisfactory opportunities to explore and

discuss moral issues. Classes have a 'circle time'³ as part of the personal, social and health education programme, which pupils feel is a useful way of telling others about issues that concern them.

84. The school has a 'Healthy Schools' award and emphasis is put on living a healthy life. The school provides many opportunities for pupils to take part in a variety of sports and pupils are encouraged to eat healthily. Fruit is provided for the youngest pupils and pupils are allowed only to bring fruit for their snack at break time. In discussion with inspectors, pupils in Year 6 demonstrated a genuine enthusiasm and appreciation for the many opportunities provided for them in their school.

³ 'Circle time' is a session provided for pupils to discuss a wide range of personal issues as a class, following strict rules about listening to others and taking turns to speak.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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