

INSPECTION REPORT

Norton Fitzwarren CE Primary School

Taunton

LEA area: Somerset

Unique reference number: 123798

Acting Headteacher: Mrs Carol Smith

Lead inspector: Mrs Jean Harding

Dates of inspection: 29th November – 2nd December 2004

Inspection number: 267416

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary
School category: Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils: 4 – 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 124

School address: Blackdown View
Norton Fitzwarren
Taunton
Somerset

Postcode: TA2 6TB

Telephone number: 01823 276611

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of Mrs Jo Chester
governors:

Date of previous June 1999
inspection:

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This school is smaller than the average primary school. Numbers on roll are falling as the birth rate falls. The school serves a community of mixed housing, including a military base; about a quarter of pupils come from military families and the movement in and out of the school from Year 1 to Year 6 is higher than average. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. Attainment on entry, including those pupils who join the school after Year 1, varies widely from year to year; it is below average overall and especially in some areas of development, but current children in the reception class had skills that were as expected, overall, on entry. Almost all pupils are of white ethnic origin and none speaks English as an additional language. There are no groups, such as travellers or pupils in public care, which need special support. An above average percentage of pupils have been identified as having special educational needs, but few have significant difficulties and no pupil has a statement of special educational needs. Most of the special educational needs are for learning difficulties.

There have been significant recent changes to the staffing and management of the school. Many governors are new and there have been several changes in teaching staff over the

last two years. The former headteacher left in July 2004. The school has an acting headteacher for this term. A new headteacher has been appointed for next term.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21378	Mrs Jean Harding	Lead inspector	English Religious education Art and design Music
9880	Mr Tony Comer	Lay inspector	
16038	Mrs Jill Bavin	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage Science Geography History Personal, social and health education & citizenship Special educational needs English as an additional language
34180	Mr David Stanier	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Physical education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This school is not effective. It provides an **unsatisfactory** quality of education for its pupils except for those in the reception class. Pupils' learning is unsatisfactory due to the unsatisfactory teaching over time and so their achievements are unsatisfactory. Pupils' standards in English, mathematics and science are well below average. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of religious education are much weaker than those expected. The curriculum is poor due to weak leadership and management. The school provides **poor value for money**.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards in English, mathematics and science are low because pupils' achievement is, at best, unsatisfactory and sometimes poor.
- Standards in religious education are well below those expected as pupils have not been taught enough.
- Provision is good for children in the Foundation Stage (the reception class) and so they do well.
- Apart from that provided in the Foundation Stage, the curriculum is poor and its weak planning is affecting the teaching.
- Teaching is good in the reception class but there are significant weaknesses in the teaching in the rest of the school, particularly the assessment of pupils' achievement, which are affecting learning.
- The leadership is unsatisfactory and the management is poor, except for the Foundation Stage, and this has affected the curriculum and the teaching.
- The school does not plan its finances well enough and, as a result, it spends more than it receives.
- Provision for pastoral care is very good, resulting in a supportive atmosphere in the school.

There has been poor improvement since the previous inspection over five years ago. Satisfactory improvement has been made to provision and standards in information and communication technology, but no improvement to standards in reading at Key Stage 1 or in science at Key Stage 2. Standards in some subjects, such as English and mathematics, have declined significantly and other deficiencies noted in 1999 have not been overcome, for instance some weaknesses in teaching.

In accordance with section 13(7) of the School Inspections Act, 1996, I am of the opinion, and HMCI agrees, that special measures are required in relation to this school.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Achievement is unsatisfactory overall.

Children start in reception with below average skills, knowledge and understanding, overall. In spite of good learning and good improvements to their communication, language, literacy and mathematical skills, a significant proportion of children do not achieve the goals they are expected to reach by the end of the reception year. They do, however, reach the expected levels for social development.

The overall standards achieved by pupils in Years 1 and 2 are well below those expected and achievement is unsatisfactory. The good start from reception is not maintained. Standards are well below expectations in English, mathematics and science and below expectations for religious education. For the last three years pupils at the end of Year 2 did much worse in the national tests in reading than pupils from similar schools, and mostly results were well below average for mathematics. Last year results were in the bottom five per cent in the country for reading and writing. There has not been an improvement, over several years, as has been seen in most schools. Standards in information and communication technology and physical education are as expected and progress is satisfactory.

Pupils' achievement in Years 3 to 6 is unsatisfactory and standards are well below average overall. Although there are signs of improvement this term, standards over the last two years have been well below average in English and mathematics; standards in science have been consistently low for several years. Results in the national tests from 1999 to 2004 have been generally below the national average and well below the average for similar schools. The trend is below the national trend for improvement. In 2003 and 2004 the results for mathematics were amongst the lowest five per cent of schools in the country.

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

Key: A – well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average

Similar schools are those who attained similarly at the end of Year 2

The above table is deceptive in respect of 'similar schools' because the measure of added value against prior attainment is based on very small numbers, especially when the number of pupils not entered for tests at the end of Year 6 is considered.

In Years 3 to 6 standards in religious education are well below those expected. Standards in information and communication technology and physical education are as expected. Pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory overall, except in information and communication technology and physical education in which it is satisfactory. Throughout the school the achievements of pupils with special educational needs and more able pupils are unsatisfactory because they are not given work appropriate to their needs. There are several factors contributing to the low standards, such as pupils' movement in and out of school, but none are as important as the weak provision by the school.

Pupils' **personal development is satisfactory**. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall, but the provision for their spiritual development is unsatisfactory in religious education. Children in the reception class have good attitudes and behave well. Most other pupils have satisfactory attitudes to school and their behaviour is satisfactory. Attendance is very good and has improved recently.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided is unsatisfactory. Apart from in the Foundation Stage where it is good, **the teaching is unsatisfactory**, although most lessons seen during the inspection were at least satisfactory. In lessons observed there was, generally, appropriate

work given to pupils of different abilities, but much other evidence reveals that this is not usually the case. Teachers do not organise their lessons so that pupils do sufficient written work. For several years expectations, based on a restricted curriculum, have been too low. As assessment is not thorough, the planning of lessons is not good enough to ensure suitable work for pupils of all abilities. Learning is unsatisfactory; pupils are not given the chance to learn in depth or produce enough written work.

Except in reception the curriculum is poor and this is the root of many of the problems. It has not been planned well enough to ensure that all pupils cover all the work they should, at the right level. There is a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities. Generally pupils receive satisfactory care and support. The school has satisfactory links with parents. Links with the community and other schools are good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The **leadership and management are unsatisfactory** overall. The leadership is unsatisfactory. The management is poor at all levels of the school, except for the Foundation Stage where it is good. The acting headteacher is doing her best to keep things going pending the arrival of a new headteacher, but she has not been able to effect much change in one term. The management of the curriculum is poor and so the curriculum has been deficient for several years. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching and standards are unsatisfactory; staff know that standards in core subjects are low, but not how to improve them quickly enough. Senior management does not know about the standards in other subjects; assumptions of adequacy have been made without evidence for this. Planning for improvement and the financial management to ensure this is poor. The school is not run well by the governors and several statutory requirements are not met. The governors are supportive but are not aware of the many weaknesses; they do not know what is going on in many aspects of the school. The governing body has not ensured best value for money and has failed to raise standards.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are generally satisfied with the school. A few are concerned about bullying but inspectors found that, usually, this is not a problem. Most pupils are very happy with the school.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- raise the standards in English, mathematics and science;
- ensure that sufficient religious education is taught so that standards rise.
- devise effective systems and structures to ensure better planning, monitoring and evaluation of the standards, the curriculum, teaching and learning;
- improve the teaching, including assessment, and hence pupils' learning;
- improve the effectiveness of the governing body;
- improve school development planning, linking this to financial planning;

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- ensure that pupils with special educational needs are provided with work that is appropriate to their needs;
- ensure that all the requirements of the National Curriculum are met.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Standards are well below average in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Pupils' **achievement is unsatisfactory** overall. Pupils are starting to make better progress in English and mathematics, but this is not yet secure. Pupils' achievement is good in the Foundation Stage and unsatisfactory in Years 1 to 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in English, mathematics and science are low and are the result of weak teaching over time. Standards in English and mathematics have declined since the previous inspection.
- There has been little improvement in the standards of reading in Years 1 and 2 and of science in Years 3 to 6 since the previous inspection.
- Children achieve well in the reception class because of the effective provision.
- Pupils' knowledge and understanding of religious education are poor because they have not been taught enough.
- Standards in information and communication technology are as expected and have improved since the previous inspection.
- The achievement of pupils with special educational needs and those who are more able is unsatisfactory and the school is unaware of this.

Commentary

Foundation Stage

1. Achievement is good for children in the reception class. Their attainment on entry varies each year, but over time it tends to be below expectations in skills such as communication, language, literacy and mathematics. Current children in reception were about average on entry, as were some other groups in the school. Children achieve well in reception as the provision is good and so they start in Year 1 with a good base for learning. Some children are still a bit behind expectations, but not by much. Current children are on track to achieve the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy and mathematical development by the end of the reception year.

Key Stage 1

2. Pupils' achievements are **unsatisfactory, overall**, through **Years 1 and 2** and so their standards are not as high as they should be. In some respects achievement is poor, as staff have not capitalised on the good start provided in reception. Pupils of all abilities are under-achieving because the curriculum supplied is not well enough structured and the teaching lacks challenge. Standards in English, mathematics and science are low because these subjects have not been taught in an organised way. The national tests and assessment at the end of Year 2 show a poor improvement compared with schools nationally. The only subjects in which pupils perform as well as other pupils of the same age are information and communication technology and physical education. There is too little evidence to judge standards in all other subjects as so little work has been done and records of attainment and progress, where they

exist, are not good enough. The work seen suggests that pupils' knowledge and understanding of religious education is less than expected.

Table omitted, as there were fewer than 10 pupils in the year group

Key Stage 2

- Although, through **Years 3 to 6**, pupils do better, overall, than they have through Years 1 and 2, their achievements are unsatisfactory. Standards in English, mathematics and science in Years 3 to 6 are well below average. For the six years from 1999 to 2004 the National Curriculum test results were declining. Standards have gone down since the last inspection, whereas the national trend has been one of improvement. The statistics are affected by the number of pupils that join the school after Year 2 and staffing difficulties that have affected the teaching. However, the main factor in the poor grades is the unsatisfactory teaching and, more importantly, the unsatisfactory curriculum provided. The standards of English and mathematics seen in some of the work completed this term are better than they have been, but it is too early to predict how soon the grades attained will rise. Standards cannot rise unless pupils do more sustained work on their own. Standards in science are well below average and standards in this subject were identified as weak in the previous inspection; the school's response to the key issue to raise standards in science has been poor. The targets for pupils to achieve the required level in the tests at the end of Year 6 in English (50%) are lower than they were for last year and are not challenging enough because, for the same group of pupils, targets for mathematics (at 75%) are considerably higher.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	24.9 (24.0)	26.9 (26.8)
Mathematics	23.5 (22.8)	27.0 (26.8)
Science	27.0 (25.8)	28.6 (28.6)

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

- The progress of pupils currently in Years 3 to 6 has been unsatisfactory, as they have not had good enough teaching, especially in the past. The improvement in pupils' achievement from Year 2 to Year 6 in the last two years for those pupils for whom there was data (and this was a bit sparse because some were not entered in tests, or did not have results at the end of Year 2) shows that pupils made poor progress overall, using any of the usual comparisons such as the national distribution or similar free school meals entitlement. There is a current focus in the school on mathematics, in which pupils' achievement has been the worst; this is reasonable, but more attention should have been paid to this subject over the period of time when results were declining.
- There are some differences in the attainment of boys and girls but these are insignificant compared with the lack of achievement overall, and groups are so small. The pupils who are more able are not getting a fair deal; little special work is given to them and so their achievements are unsatisfactory, especially in Years 1 and 2. No pupil has been identified as being particularly talented at a specific subject and only a

few pupils at the top of the school have special provision to extend their literacy skills; this lack of provision is unsatisfactory.

6. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs parallels that of their peers overall and is, therefore, unsatisfactory throughout the school, except in information and communication technology and physical education, where it is satisfactory. This means there has been a decline in achievement for pupils with special educational needs since the previous inspection. The reason is that teachers do not plan consistently to modify work for pupils with special educational needs any more than other pupils. However, in separate individual reading and spelling sessions with a learning support assistant pupils achieve well over the term. Pupils from Year 3 are achieving very well this term in additional literacy sessions with a learning support assistant.
7. The low standards and pupils' unsatisfactory achievements in non-core subjects, including religious education, are mainly due to the poor planning of the curriculum. Standards are as expected in information and communication technology and physical education. They are well below expectations in religious education; this is of particular concern because Norton Fitzwarren is a Church of England school. Standards have deteriorated in religious education since the previous inspection because pupils are not taught enough. Current pupils know too little about the major faiths of the world, including Christianity. There is insufficient evidence to judge standards in other subjects. This is because non-core subjects are not taught regularly, there is very little written work and staff's records do not show how all pupils progress in each subject. This is the crux of the problem.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils have **satisfactory** attitudes to school. Behaviour is **satisfactory**. Attendance is **very good**. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the Foundation Stage make good gains in their personal, social and emotional development.
- Religious education does not make a strong enough contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural development.
- There is no formal whole school approach to improving pupils' attitudes where necessary.
- Efforts to improve attendance have been very successful.
- Good relationships between staff and pupils contribute positively to pupils' sense of self-worth.
- The school council makes a valuable contribution to pupils' social development.
- The termly topics make a positive contribution to pupils' cultural development.

Commentary

8. The previous inspection report stated that personal development and relationships were very good, pupils' attitudes to school were good and that behaviour was very good. This is no longer the case; pupils' attitudes and behaviour are satisfactory, although there is not now the large number of exclusions as was reported in 1999. Children in the reception class develop well in their social and personal skills because of the supportive atmosphere in the class. Most pupils enjoy school, have satisfactory

attitudes to their work and behave politely and sensibly around the school. Staff recognise that the attitude of a significant minority of boys is not as mature as it should be. The acting headteacher has rightly identified that the lack of any systematic approach to dealing with negative attitudes is unhelpful to teachers and pupils alike. She is discussing strategies with staff for a formal whole-school approach to sustain more consistently good behaviour from all pupils. Pupils with special needs appreciate the help they receive from learning support assistants in individual or small group sessions. In these situations they persevere enthusiastically and diligently in areas of work where they have difficulty.

9. Weaknesses in the planning for religious education mean that it is not taught regularly and systematically. This means that there are missed opportunities for the subject to make a full contribution to developing pupils' ideas and understanding about morality and spirituality. Similarly, the subject is not playing a full part in helping pupils to understand and appreciate the cultural diversity of the major world religions. For example, pupils demonstrated their lack of awareness, understanding and respect when, in one lesson, they giggled at, and imitated, the sound of an Imam calling Muslims to prayer.
10. Adults and pupils have good relationships. Consequently, informally throughout the day teachers and learning support assistants give pupils positive messages about their worth as unique individuals. This makes a significant and positive contribution to the sense of order and community within the school and fosters good relationships between pupils. The school council makes a valuable contribution to pupils' social development. They learn very effectively through the system of voting and meetings about representing their peers, expressing ideas, negotiating and taking responsibility for elements of school life. Teachers share their cultural interests with pupils by planning work around central topics such as 'Egypt' and 'India' or using books and literature as a basis for work. However, there is no system for adults to know the extent to which pupils are gaining a secure understanding of the diversity of culture within contemporary Britain.
11. Attendance has been significantly improved since the previous inspection and evidence suggests that this improvement continues during the current school year. It is now well above the national average and unauthorised absence is average. The school has good procedures in place to monitor and follow up on pupils' absence. Pupils arrive punctually at school and lessons begin on time.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	4.1	School data:	0.2
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.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

12. The quality of education provided is unsatisfactory in Years 1 to 6, but it is good in reception. The teaching is unsatisfactory in Years 1 to 6. The assessment of pupils' attainment is improving in English and mathematics but is unsatisfactory overall, especially as the results of assessment are not used properly. The curriculum is poor as it is not planned effectively, but there is a satisfactory range of extra-curricular

activities. The accommodation is satisfactory and there are sufficient resources except for books. The school works well with the community. Relationships with parents are satisfactory.

Teaching and learning

The teaching and learning are unsatisfactory overall. They are good in the reception class and unsatisfactory in Years 1 to 6. Assessment and its use are unsatisfactory in Years 1 to 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- For pupils in Years 1 to 6 the teaching has been unsatisfactory over a period of time; pupils' learning is, therefore, unsatisfactory.
- The teaching is good in the Foundation Stage and this promotes children's achievement well.
- Lessons are not planned well enough in Years 1 to 6; this is often because the whole curriculum is not well structured.
- The assessment is unsatisfactory and, when useful information is acquired, it is not used well enough. More able pupils and those with special educational needs are particularly disadvantaged by this deficiency.
- The teaching provided by support assistants outside the classrooms is good and this promotes the learning of pupils with additional needs.
- Relationships between staff and pupils encourage pupils to take a full part in lessons.

Commentary

13. The teaching observed during the inspection was generally at least satisfactory and some good teaching was seen that shows that, for most subjects, staff have at least satisfactory skills, knowledge and understanding to deliver what is required. The weakest teaching observed was in lessons when all pupils did the same work and the lessons lacked challenge. This was because the curriculum on which they were based was not good enough. The teaching is weakest in classes for pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3.
14. The teaching in the reception class is good and, because of the way it is planned and children's learning is assessed, it is effective. In this class expectations of children's work and behaviour are high and staff work well together to establish a secure, supportive environment in which young children can thrive.
15. In the rest of the school pupils' learning is unsatisfactory because the teaching is unsatisfactory. The unsatisfactory teaching has resulted in pupils' unsatisfactory achievement over time and significant deficiencies in their skills that affect all of their work. The reason that teaching is ineffective is that it is not planned well enough, over time and within individual lessons. Teachers expect too little of pupils and so they have not produced enough work. The very basic planning means that pupils of different abilities do not receive work that is consistently appropriate to their needs. The targets on pupils' individual education plans are not often considered when work is given to the class. More able pupils are not given appropriately challenging work. Evidence in pupils' books shows that, generally, all pupils do the same work. During the inspection the teaching was more specific for less and more able pupils, even if this was not written down. However, very little good teaching was seen in core subjects where the match of work to different pupils' needs is most important.

16. Teachers' planning does not ensure that pupils do enough practice of their basic skills of writing. The unsatisfactory planning is based on unsatisfactory assessment. There are generally appropriate formal assessments for English and mathematics, but no effective diagnostic assessment of pupils' reading, even lower down the school. Marking was identified as a weakness at the previous inspection; it has hardly improved in many subjects. Although the school has a satisfactory marking scheme, much marking is cursory and does not help pupils improve. The information gained from marking and assessments is not used well enough to inform teaching. This is especially the case in the teaching of pupils with special educational needs and for more able pupils. Where pupils have targets, such as in English, they are sometimes too broad. Targets for individual pupils in mathematics are not yet embedded and useful. Assessment in all subjects is less than satisfactory; in science and religious education it is poor. Only in the Foundation Stage is assessment satisfactory.
17. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs, provided by learning support assistants in sessions outside the classroom, is good overall. This is because good relationships successfully encourage pupils to work hard at areas of difficulty and because the literacy work is well matched to pupils' needs. In these situations pupils learn well. However, this does not compensate for the greater part of pupils' time in class with their peers when work is not consistently modified sufficiently for them. A contributory factor to this is that teachers are over-reliant on the special educational needs co-ordinator to identify targets for pupils. When teachers are addressing the whole class they do not always use support staff effectively to help them assess, address and monitor pupils' learning. This represents a significant fall in the quality of provision for pupils with special educational needs since the previous inspection.
18. One of the strongest aspects of teaching is the relationship that staff have with their pupils which encourages participation in lessons. The new interactive whiteboards are being used regularly by all staff and provide a valuable focus for teaching all subjects, although too much reliance is being placed on the effectiveness of this teaching tool compared with more traditional strategies. Although a lot of talking is done and pupils generally converse well, there is no real assessment of their speaking and listening skills.
19. The teaching was judged to be good, overall, during the previous inspection, although a significant amount of unsatisfactory teaching was observed in classes for pupils in Years 1 to 6. Therefore, there has been a decline in the quality of teaching since 1999, especially for pupils in Years 3 to 6. The teaching observed during this inspection was nothing like the good quality that is seen during most school inspections. There have been recent improvements to the teaching, with the appointment of new co-ordinators and a new member of staff. These improvements are not yet embedded and are reliant on better planning of the curriculum and an acceptance that good teaching produces good learning. The culture of the school means that the quality of the teaching is judged on the inputs to the lessons, rather than on the results. The teaching is currently not good enough to make an appreciable difference to pupils' learning.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 27 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
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0	3	9	14	1	0	0
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The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

The curriculum

The curriculum is poor. Provision for enrichment is satisfactory. The accommodation is satisfactory. Resources are mostly satisfactory, but there are too few books.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The overall curriculum is not properly planned and cannot ensure that pupils receive progressive development of their skills, knowledge and understanding.
- The provision for science and religious education is poor and has affected standards in these subjects.
- The curriculum in the reception class is good and promotes children's development well.
- The specific needs of more able pupils and those with special educational needs are not met.
- The school is generously staffed and cannot afford so many teachers.
- There is an elegant new library but not enough books in the school.

Commentary

20. The curriculum, which is the backbone of the teaching, is ineffective and so pupils are not doing as well as they should. It does not meet the statutory requirement to provide pupils with all the experiences necessary for them to cover all the National Curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. It provides pupils with interesting experiences but it lacks substance and depth. The judgements on the curriculum during the previous inspection were favourable and so the current provision shows a very significant decline over the last five years. The only improvement to the curriculum has been the provision for information and communication technology, which is now satisfactory. It is of concern that the school considers its current curriculum very good. The way of presenting the curriculum to pupils is so deeply embedded in the culture of the school that staff are unable to change practice without help.
21. For a long time the school has used a skills-based curriculum which, if it were planned and delivered well, might serve its purpose. It is the sort of curriculum to which many successful schools are now moving to give their pupils enjoyment and relevance by crossing subject boundaries. However, this school has not started from the basics. The curriculum is poorly co-ordinated and so lacks coherence. The philosophy of the curriculum, which is supposed to extend pupils and encourage creativity, is understood well by the long-serving assistant headteacher who teaches in the reception class. In reception the curriculum provided is successful. There is no proper co-ordination of the curriculum for Years 1 to 6, which is based on termly topics. Too much is left to chance and the interests and aptitudes of class teachers. Topics such as Peru, China and Japan are interesting for pupils but take time that might be devoted to essential studies of the National Curriculum. The lack of structure to ensure continuity means that teachers have not been able to do their best work. Many new staff over the years have been inexperienced and the lack of proper management of the curriculum has meant that they have not been able to teach in sufficient breadth and, particularly, depth.

22. There are major inconsistencies between classes and in ways of working, with good practice not being shared and significant differences in provision for pupils in the same year group. The organisation of the curriculum does not ensure that pupils make sufficient progress from year to year. All classes except the reception class have pupils from two year groups, and one class crosses Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Pupils from the same year group, such as Year 2 and Year 5, have different provision in different classes and this compromises equal opportunities. There are no effective rolling programmes to ensure that pupils do not miss any required course of study, or to repeat it. Traditionally the teachers have not worked to timetables, apart from one arranging use of the hall and the information and communication technology suite. Apart from often very casual notes in their daybooks, the teachers have not kept a check on what has been taught and how well the lessons have gone. Due to the less than rigorous planning, co-ordinators cannot check how much teaching has been done in their subjects. For this reason subjects such as science and religious education have been taught too little and this has seriously compromised pupils' achievement.
23. Even for core subjects such as English and mathematics the curriculum is not well enough planned. There is no structured reading scheme for younger and less able readers. There are too few books in the school and they are not organised to ensure that pupils read at the correct level to develop their skills; pupils' achievements are, therefore, unsatisfactory, especially in Years 1 and 2. There are no books that would challenge very able readers or to help those older, more able pupils who have difficulties with reading. There is some valuable extra input on literacy and thinking skills for older and more able pupils but this is insufficient to compensate for the lack of appropriate provision in other subjects and through the school. Lots of work is done verbally but there is no effective planning established to teach or assess pupils' speaking and listening skills. All through the year pupils do too little written work and this is not only unsatisfactory because their writing skills are insufficiently developed, but also it disadvantages them in national tests, as they are unused to writing at length and working to time. In the pupils' books there are significant time gaps between written work. Even though results have been consistently low for reading at the end of Year 2 and for mathematics and science at the end of Year 6, the staff have not adapted their practices. The effect of the curriculum on pupils' standards has not been effectively evaluated for many years.
24. The school tries to give pupils a wide curriculum and to some extent this has been successful. It aspires to a creative curriculum; art and design has been used effectively to enhance topic work for years. There are valuable trips out to extend the curriculum and a sound range of extra-curricular activities. Music is taught by a specialist and several pupils have individual music lessons, but there is insufficient time available to each class for them to learn all that is required in music. The time for some subjects, such as the humanities, is restricted because other activities such as swimming, which is not required for pupils in reception or Years 1 and 2, take up the time available. There is no effective planning to teach pupils about personal, social and health education and citizenship; there is hardly any evidence that this subject is taught.
25. The school is generously staffed for the number of pupils. The classroom assistants give sound support to teachers and their skills are generally used well. The school cannot justify the number of teachers it employs, even without the precarious financial state it is in. Until this term, the school has not employed a teacher with special skills that would enable the school to raise standards in science, where pupils' achievement has been known to be unsatisfactory for several years. Several teachers are

inexperienced in leading a subject, but two have recently started a course. No teacher carries responsibility for design and technology, a subject that had deficiencies at the previous inspection. As well as the class teachers there is a non-teaching headteacher and part-time teachers for music and special educational needs who are also not class-based. The school pays for a counsellor to help pupils with emotional difficulties; this is a good idea but there are insufficient funds to continue this work in the long term.

26. The special educational needs co-ordinator is half-time, but there are few pupils in the school with major difficulties and a significant amount of her time is taken up with administrative tasks and individual teaching. This shifts the balance of the planning and teaching to her from the class teachers and is not the most effective way of providing for pupils with special educational needs. The school has rightly endeavoured to meet the needs of particular groups of pupils with special educational needs by responding flexibly to them. During the inspection it was not possible to see a 'nurture group' session but the school quite rightly seeks to address the problems of pupils with emotional needs with special provision. Nevertheless pupils with special educational needs quite rightly spend most of their time with their peers in mainstream classes. Therefore they mostly experience the same curriculum as their peers, which is poor because of the significant weaknesses in planning.
27. The accommodation is satisfactory. There is an elegant new library, which is not yet in use for pupils to study and select books. The stock of books is insufficient and this is known to the school. Resources are mostly satisfactory with an appropriate new suite for information and communication technology, but this is not as well used as it might be and the school has not planned well enough to replace ageing computers and peripherals.

Care, guidance and support

Provision for pupils' general care and well-being is satisfactory. The guidance and support offered to pupils are unsatisfactory because assessment of all aspects of pupils' development is unsatisfactory and their needs are not always fully met. The school involves pupils in its work and development well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pastoral care that pupils receive is very good.
- All pupils have trusting relationships with one or more adults.
- Support, advice and guidance that pupils receive are not based on effective monitoring and recording of their academic and personal development.
- The school actively seeks, values and acts upon pupils' views.

Commentary

28. Policies and procedures for child protection and for promoting the general welfare of pupils are very good and have been improved since the last inspection. The school's provision for pastoral care is very good and is exemplified by the work of the school counsellor and the positive effects of the 'nurture groups' in improving pupils' social skills and their self-esteem. The introduction of Rainbow Time has also had a very positive impact on pupils' attitudes and self-esteem. Most staff know pupils and their families well and cater for their pastoral needs very well. All pupils have very trusting relationships with one or more adults in the school. Adults provide good role models for the pupils.

29. The advice, support and guidance that pupils receive throughout their time at school are unsatisfactory overall. The monitoring and assessment procedures are unsatisfactory and there is no formal provision for, or monitoring or recording of, pupils' personal, social and health education. Arrangements for the induction of pupils into the school are satisfactory and for their transfer to the next phase of their education they are good. The school council provides effective consultation with pupils and opportunities to express their views.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's links with parents are satisfactory and with the local community they are good. Links with other schools and colleges are also good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school uses its links with the wider community, including other schools and colleges, to good effect.
- There are some omissions in the governors' reports to parents.

Commentary

30. Parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire, or who attended the parents' meeting, have positive views of what the school provides and achieves. This would appear to be the same situation as was reported in 1999, but parents are happier about homework now. The concerns expressed by a small number of parents about bullying are not substantiated by the inspection evidence. Whilst inappropriate behaviour does occur from time to time, the school has satisfactory systems in place to monitor this effectively and deal with it.
31. The general information that parents receive is satisfactory. Newsletters are regular and informative but do not celebrate the school's and the pupils' achievements and successes. Pupils' reports are also satisfactory, but many of the targets for improvement that are set are neither rigorous nor measurable. Neither parents nor pupils have the opportunity to make written comment about these reports. The governors' annual report to parents has omissions of statutory information and this was also reported at the previous inspection.
32. The school makes good efforts to encourage parental involvement in the life of the school and in their children's education and these efforts are beginning to bear fruit. The 'family learning week' held recently seems to have been well received. Parents are consulted about school policy and they appreciate this. There is a supportive Friends at Norton School group which raises money and supports the school in social events.
33. The school's links with the local community remain good. Links with other schools and colleges, particularly through the Taunton Learning Partnership and with Ladymead Technology College, are strong. Links with the adjacent armed forces community are also strong. The school involves the wider community in arranging educational visits and visitors. All of these links provide challenging opportunities for pupils and staff as well as benefits for the whole school, especially in terms of the transfer of pupils and sharing of expertise of staff.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management are unsatisfactory overall. There has been a very significant decline in the quality of the leadership and management since the previous inspection. The leadership is unsatisfactory. The management is poor at all levels and staff are not aware of many weaknesses. The governance of the school is unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Senior management has allowed the school to drift into a position in which standards have declined and many aspects of provision are unsatisfactory.
- The governors are supportive but not aware of many weaknesses in the school. Some statutory requirements are not met because governors do not know what is required.
- Senior managers do not have sufficient time or skills to lead their subjects and aspects properly and so there are serious deficiencies in the monitoring of standards and procedures.
- The school is spending well above its income and some difficult decisions will have to be made to balance the budget for next year.
- Staff are not used efficiently.

Commentary

34. The leadership and management were judged to be good at the previous inspection. The lack of improvement in over five years and the deterioration in standards are indicative of the unsatisfactory leadership since 1999. At every level the management is not as effective as was reported before. The school has assumed that all was well, when it was not, and this has caused the significant problems that it now faces. The senior managers have not looked outside the school to see the professional way that other schools have planned their curriculum, deployed their staff and managed their budgets. The current acting headteacher knows that there is a lot to do. The new headteacher appointed for next term is also under no illusions about the urgent need for improvements.
35. The leadership has produced order and a very pleasant, supportive ethos in the school. Staff have been motivated and believe in the vision of a creative curriculum and challenge for all pupils. Senior management has given staff and pupils a feeling of belonging and raised self-esteem. The vision of giving pupils the best is there but the school does not know how to realise this effectively. The management of the school is poor at all levels except for that in the Foundation Stage. The style and culture of the school has made it difficult for individual staff to change things. Strategic management is weak and this is linked to poor results. The planning for improvement, the planning of the curriculum, the budgeting and the organisation of staffing and training, the monitoring of teaching and results have not been properly done. The result is a school that has not halted the decline in standards and has little knowledge and understanding of where they are in relation to other schools, and why. Self-evaluation is flawed because the staff and governors mostly have little experience of other schools and have wrongly believed that mostly factors outside their control have affected the results.
36. The special educational needs co-ordinator works extremely hard to provide individual education plans but this means that teachers have remained over-reliant on her in this respect and are not working in accordance with the guidance of the latest Code of Practice. This contributes to inconsistencies and planning to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs in class is inadequate. Administrative systems are not

rigorous enough for teachers to know what pupils are missing when they leave class for special sessions and this is not good enough. Previous strengths in the curriculum provision for special educational needs have not been maintained and, consequently, the overall leadership and management of this aspect of the school's work are unsatisfactory.

37. There are too few systems and structures in place for governors and senior staff to be able to monitor what is going on. Several being inexperienced, and with little information at their fingertips, governors are not aware that some statutory requirements are not met. Some current governors are very new and have no way of knowing how well the school is doing. They are supportive and anxious for the school to do well, but they do not have sufficient reliable information to be able to change things for the better. There has been a change in subject co-ordination but new subject leaders have been given little information about what was happening before they took over. In the past the teachers have not been sufficiently accountable for what they teach. Some senior staff have, just recently, started special training to lead their subjects, but very little of this has happened in the past. Most staff do not know how to monitor their subjects effectively; most lesson observations note the input of the teachers rather than the outcomes for pupils. There has been little further training of teachers to address some of the major problems, such as attainment in science.

38. Financial control was judged to be good at the previous inspection; this is not now the case. Strategic decisions have been taken without reference to the major resource implications. School development planning is unsatisfactory; things have been done with little reference to what was done before and how improvements were to be paid for. The school is spending well above its income and this cannot be sustained. Budgeting has not taken proper account of the falling number of pupils over the last four years. Although costs are proportionately higher in smaller schools, the school spends above the average for each pupil and the amount it spends on staffing is too high. The school is overstaffed for the number of pupils it has on roll, does not properly monitor the impact of additional staffing and pupils' results remain well below average. There is no clear link between the school's priorities for improvement and the budget available, as current targets have not been properly costed. The local education authority's auditors have not visited the school in order to check on financial controls since before the previous inspection in 1999 and that audit report is well out of date. The school does not use the principles of 'best value' that it should do when purchasing expensive services.

39. Part of the unspent money carried forward last year was for the new library, which has yet to be put into full use. There is no effective planning at present to replace computer equipment as it gets older or to replace bulbs on the new ceiling-mounted projectors, which are very expensive and an ongoing cost. The school has been very slow to respond to the serious financial position that was flagged up to governors in June and has had to apply to the local education authority for extra money to balance its budget this year, as it has overspent. The school needs to reduce its overheads until it can balance its budget because it will not be able to ask for extra cash next year. The value for money given by the school is poor because the costs are high and pupils' results are low. This is the result of very weak management.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	Balances (£)
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Total income	370,055
Total expenditure	394,831
Expenditure per pupil	3,037

Balance from previous year	41,190
Balance carried forward to the next	16,414

40. There is no complacency in the school; it aspires to the best for its pupils. However, it has not sought external accreditation, nor had the benefit of outside objective assessment of its procedures and practices, for a long time. Without the outside evaluation that most schools enjoy, the school has become stuck in a rut and current senior staff and governors are understandably surprised and shocked by many of the judgements given in this report. However, some deficiencies, such as achievements in science, *were* known to the school, but not enough was done to improve the situation because staff did not know how. The future looks brighter with a new headteacher coming and new training for some senior staff in leading their subjects. However, much more training in management, at all levels, and evaluation from outside professionals is needed in order to bring the school up to an acceptable standard in a reasonable time.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for children in the reception class is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children grow well in confidence because they are listened to carefully.
- Adults successfully stimulate children's interest in books and letters so they achieve well in writing.
- The teaching is good because adults have a good understanding of the value of children learning through play and using their imaginations.
- There are missed opportunities to meet individual needs when children have chosen activities themselves.

Commentary

41. There is one reception class in the school with seventeen children attending full time. Attainment on entry to this class varies from year to year. However, usually the majority of children joining the class demonstrate fewer social, communication, language and literacy skills than are expected for their age. In addition there are seldom any children with very mature skills. Nevertheless children achieve well in these key areas and also in their understanding of mathematical ideas. In spite of this good progress and increased skills, by the time they join Year 1 most children in many years do not fully meet expected levels of attainment for their age in reading and using mathematical language, although they do meet expected levels of social development. However, most children in the current reception class have joined school with the level of skill expected for their age and are on track to attain the early learning goals in **social development, communication, language, literacy and mathematical development** by the end of the year. There is not enough evidence to make secure judgements about provision, attainment and achievement for children in knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and physical development. Very few children were in reception during the previous inspection and so comparisons about attainment are not valid, but the current provision appears to be of the same good quality as was reported before.
42. Provision for **personal, social and emotional development** is good and children flourish as a result of the care that both the teacher and learning support assistant take to value what they say and do. Teaching and learning are good and so children's achievement is good. Children benefit from being treated with unfailing courtesy and respect, which provides them with very good examples of how to treat each other. In this environment they develop a strong sense of justice and an awareness of the importance of respecting other people's feelings. Children co-operate well together in small groups when they share equipment that they have chosen and generously acknowledge each other's contributions. They concentrate well in whole class sessions and overall reach the level of independence and awareness of themselves and others expected for their age by the time they join Year 1.
43. Teaching and learning for **communication, language and literacy** are good and so children achieve well. A key strength is that staff successfully stimulate children's interest in books, letters and sounds and therefore in reading and writing. Children

achieve particularly well in writing and reach expected levels of skill for their age by the time they join Year 1. This is because they have plenty of opportunities to record their ideas on paper and their attempts at writing are valued by being displayed and celebrated. While achieving well, pupils in previous classes have not fully reached the expected level of reading skills by the end of the year. However, new 'reading logs' have successfully interested children this term and they enjoy showing adults their record of the books they have shared with their families at home. Similarly, staff have recently developed new resources such as 'story sacks' of books and related objects and activities. If children continue to learn at the rate seen during the inspection the current class is likely to benefit from these new resources and reach expected reading levels by the end of the year.

44. Teaching and learning in **mathematical development** are good because of high expectations tempered with a good understanding of how children at this age learn best. For example, during the inspection a lesson designed to increase their understanding of weight and their use of mathematical language worked successfully because the task was set in the context of a story that captured children's imaginations. Adults have a good understanding of the value of various activities so they encourage children to use mathematical language and develop an interest in number and calculating throughout the day. Overall, children achieve well in this area. However, when they are working at activities of their own choosing support from adults is encouraging but more general than specific. On these occasions opportunities to meet individual needs are sometimes missed.
45. Although it is not possible to make overall judgements about the very broad area of **knowledge and understanding of the world**, during the inspection some very good teaching was seen. In a religious education lesson very skilful teaching ensured that children handled the class teacher's Bible reverently, developing a very strong sense of respect and wonder. They were so enthralled that they observed closely and one child commented that the honeycomb pattern on the Bible was 'like bees', indicating a good awareness of the world around him. No lessons with a specific **creative** focus were seen but children have regular access to suitable imaginative play areas and are encouraged to develop their ideas well in these situations. A consistent and important strength in the teaching is the extent to which the teacher and learning support assistant encourage children to learn through being imaginative. No lessons focusing specifically on **physical development** were seen. However, the variety of suitable activities available throughout the day means that children are constantly developing their co-ordination skills in manipulating tools and equipment. The reception class teacher highly values the time children spend at 'The Forest School', when children spend one whole day a week in an outside classroom. This experience contributes to all areas of learning through physical and practical activity. Her good understanding of the needs of children at this age and the good teamwork between her and the learning support assistant contribute positively to the good provision overall.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' standards have been well below average for some time; achievement is unsatisfactory.
- Pupils do too little writing and so their skills are not good enough.
- Standards in reading are low in Years 1 and 2 and below average, but improving, for many pupils in Years 5 and 6.
- Pupils' speaking and listening skills are as expected, overall, but with variations.
- Pupils' learning is unsatisfactory as the quality of teaching is unsatisfactory.
- Procedures for assessing how well pupils do in reading and writing are unsatisfactory; there is no real assessment of speaking and listening.
- There are deficiencies in the provision of books.
- The management of English is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

46. The school has made unsatisfactory improvement in English since the previous inspection. The recent national tests results are a true reflection of pupils' achievement. The biggest problem affecting pupils' learning rests with the unsatisfactory teaching of literacy throughout the school, based on weak planning of lessons and the unsatisfactory assessment. As a result, the national test results over the last few years have been, with few exceptions, at best below average and in comparison with similar schools the results for the last two years have been well below average.
47. In 1999 pupils' standards of writing in Years 1 and 2 were judged to be about average; they are now below average, and well below in some respects. Reading standards have not improved from the well below average grades that they were then, in spite of this being made a key issue for improvement; in fact standards have been getting worse. The national tests results show a declining picture with writing, especially, going down. Given that pupils start in Year 1 with skills, knowledge and understanding that are at, or just below, those expected, their achievement is at best unsatisfactory and sometimes, in the case of writing, it is poor.
48. There has been a marked deterioration in standards at the end of Year 6 over the last five and a half years; attainment in English has gone down from well above average in the national tests in 1999 to well below average for the last two years. Compared with similar schools' results, even taking into account the different abilities of each cohort of pupils and the problems, such as transience and emotional difficulties, that pupils bring into school, this is poor performance and is the result of weak management over an extended period of time. The statistics comparing pupils' attainment with their prior attainment are unreliable as some pupils were not entered for tests and other pupils do not have data for matching; also there is rather a small percentage of pupils included.
49. The curriculum is unsatisfactory because it does not ensure that pupils learn what they need. There has been recent focus on the improvement of pupils' skills in English and current pupils in the older classes are making better progress in their learning, but this is still not fast enough to compensate for the difficulties engendered by unsatisfactory provision over several years. The low percentage of pupils (only half) expected to reach the required grade in next summer's tests points to deficiencies in the provision for English for older pupils as they have moved through the school. There are many reasons given by the school for what has happened; some are valid, but the main reason is that the provision was weak. The school continued to do what had been done for years.
50. The school concentrated on provision in speaking and listening last year and this is paying off, although staff have not had a specific programme to follow to ensure the best development of pupils' skills and there is no assessment for them to know what to do next. With large variations, pupils have adequate speaking and listening skills by the time they leave the school. The listening of pupils in Years 1 and 2 is as expected and this says a lot for the quality of the relationships in the classes and how the staff have focused on this aspect of English as pupils come up from reception. In Years 1 and 2 pupils' speaking skills are below those expected; few pupils possess a wide vocabulary and a significant number speak in short phrases and need encouragement to speak. By the time they are in Year 6 pupils listen and speak at about the level expected and few lack confidence when responding to questions in class. A few more able pupils converse with maturity, demonstrating a satisfactory vocabulary.

51. The standard in reading is well below average throughout the school and this is the result of a weak curriculum, weak teaching and too few books. Standards are starting to rise at the very top of the school. The school still uses the reading logs, which go home to parents, and this strategy has improved since the previous inspection. However, the key problem, which is how well reading is taught in school, has not been addressed. There are several appropriate strategies used to teach reading and those for pupils with the greatest difficulties are working. Some pupils with special educational needs are getting better provision during individual or group sessions with support assistants. There is no reading scheme, even for younger and less able pupils. The assessment of reading is weak. There has been no useable library and pupils sometimes read books that are too easy or too hard. This is because there is no organisation of books into levels that would help staff and pupils. Younger, less able pupils have few reading skills; their reading is hesitant and they show little knowledge of books. Pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3 are lacking in skills to build up words. More able pupils in Years 2 and 3 do not have books that are guaranteed to improve their skills. The provision for older, more able pupils is poor; there are very few books in the school that are relevant to their learning needs.
52. Pupils' attainment in writing is the current biggest concern for the school. Standards in writing are well below average in all year groups and grades in national tests have been falling faster for two or three years. The reason why is clear. Pupils do too little writing. The English co-ordinator cannot be sure how much of each week has been devoted to English because of the lack of timetables. Class lessons are not planned in sufficient detail and it is down to the organisation of individual teachers whether written work gets done or finished. The evidence in all pupils' books is that too little writing is done in English lessons and in other subjects. Older pupils do not have the chance to do sustained periods of writing, using their own resources and without help. They do almost no work which they are required to finish within a set period of time. They cannot write at length with accuracy because they have not practised. Throughout the school handwriting is taught consistently and pupils, generally, can produce well-formed writing that is properly spaced, using spacers. However, when not concentrating on the presentation, many pupils' writing is much less well formed. There is a little evidence of the use of information and communication technology for drafting work, but more evidence of much re-writing, which is not good use of time. Spelling is below expectations. Spelling logs are used and these are relevant to pupils, but the information gained from these does not always feed into teachers' planning. The writing in these books is sometimes extremely messy and suggests lack of checking by teachers or lack of challenge.
53. Pupils do not make sufficient progress because the quality of teaching is unsatisfactory. Pupils enjoy the lessons but do not learn enough. Targets for pupils' improvement are set by class teachers, but these are not based on valid assessment of what pupils can do and are too vague. Teachers do not mark all work constructively and sometimes not at all. The solid work on basic skills is not done because the whole curriculum is not planned well enough for basic skills to be taught and practised at suitable times. The planning of lessons is rudimentary, even for sessions based on the National Literacy Strategy. There is not always distinctive work for pupils in different year groups within each class, nor is there sufficiently different work for pupils of different abilities. The lesson objectives are not always clear and this means that the success of the lesson is difficult to evaluate. Staff are good at praising pupils but not good at helping them know what is needed to improve.
54. The subject co-ordinator has had insufficient input to the raising of standards. The management is improving over the last year, but is still unsatisfactory. The co-

ordinator has done a little monitoring of lessons but this has been mostly concerned with what the teacher does rather than what the pupils have learned. Some analysis of tests results is done but, given the size of the cohorts, much of this is just playing with numbers. The school has not looked at the big picture and seen that what has been lacking is proper structured teaching and assessment that is useful.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

55. The use of language is satisfactory in other subjects. Many opportunities are given for pupils to talk and this is benefiting their speaking skills. The use of literacy is unsatisfactory overall. Pupils can, generally, read well enough to access information at a basic level. They produce elegant and well-presented topic books, often with good handwriting. These are the result of careful re-writing and checking. However, too little writing is done during the topics and during English lessons. The smart handwriting often slips when pupils do work in other subjects or write in their drafting books.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in mathematics are well below average throughout the school and have dropped considerably since the previous inspection.
- Pupils are making insufficient progress because teaching and learning are not good enough and pupils are not achieving as well as they should be.
- The planning for mathematics is unsatisfactory because it does not match the needs of all groups of pupils.
- Assessment of what pupils need to know is unsatisfactory and both marking and target setting are inconsistent throughout the school.
- The co-ordinator has had insufficient time and support from senior management to make a significant impact on raising standards, resulting in the leadership and management of the subject being unsatisfactory.

Commentary

56. The standards in mathematics are well below average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 and have dropped considerably since the previous inspection. The standards at the end of Year 2 in 2004 were well below average, with no pupils reaching above average levels in national tests. Standards in Year 2 over the last three years have been below average. The standards at the end of Year 6 in 2003 and 2004 were very low. The standards of work seen during the inspection were, at best, below average, with too many pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 working below national expectations for their age. Mental mathematics is poor and many pupils do not have secure methods of manipulating numbers. Most pupils cannot generalise and take information provided in one lesson into the next lesson.
57. The national test results are due to unsatisfactory teaching and learning over a period of time. The school has been aware of this problem, but has not yet taken enough action to improve it. Although during the inspection there was no unsatisfactory teaching seen, teaching is not yet good enough to make the necessary impact on raising standards. Lesson planning is unsatisfactory because it is insufficiently detailed, without clear expected outcomes for all groups of pupils, including more able

pupils and those with particular learning needs. The same teaching goes on for all groups and, although reinforcement work is targeted at the more able pupils, it is generally too easy and does not challenge and extend them enough.

58. Marking was criticised in the previous inspection report and, although there have been efforts to improve, it is still not consistent throughout the school. Marking is unsatisfactory because it does not tell pupils what they need to do to improve their work and there is not a common understanding of how work should be marked. Pupils are set targets, but this target setting is unsatisfactory because the targets are often too wide and not precise enough, especially for younger pupils, and so they take too long to achieve them. Regular reviews of targets do not take place often enough for the process to be effective and helpful. Pupils are now involved in self-assessment at the end of lessons but more able pupils indicate that they find the work too easy. Assessment of what pupils can do and what they need to do next is unsatisfactory, as this information is not feeding into lesson planning effectively enough for it to have an impact on raising standards. Pupils with special educational needs and those who are more able are at a particular disadvantage because of this. Staff are now working to raise the quality of teaching, but there is a long way to go.
59. As mathematics is not taught well enough, there is insufficient opportunity for pupils to make sustained progress. Mental mathematics work is unsatisfactory because pupils have an insecure knowledge of number bonds and tables. A group of pupils in Year 5 receives additional support and is working well on this important aspect of mathematics work, but there is insufficient focus in other mathematics lessons on timed mental work. The layout of work in books is unsatisfactory because there is no real agreement on how this should be done, resulting in work that is untidy and difficult to follow, with pupils working on blank pages using a line guide. Due to deficiencies in the curriculum, older pupils have insufficient experience of working to timed tasks and this disadvantages them in the national tests.
60. The leadership and management of mathematics are unsatisfactory as the co-ordinator has had insufficient time and support from senior management to make a significant impact on raising standards, although some lesson observations have taken place. The monitoring of planning for all groups and the matching of work to pupils' needs are unsatisfactory because they are not rigorous and focused on raising standards.

Mathematics across the curriculum

61. The development of mathematical skills across the curriculum is satisfactory. In physical education clear links are made to work on databases done on increased heart-rate following exercise. In information and communication technology there are two-dimensional shapes made by younger pupils, and in topic work displayed on Macbeth, ticket prices and numbers attending performances are calculated.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **poor**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievement in the subject throughout the school is poor, standards are well below average and these represent a decline in standards since the previous inspection.
- There are barely any assessment procedures in place to support teachers' planning.

- Not all classes cover enough of the curriculum, but there is a suitably high proportion of practical work.
- The new co-ordinator knows what is wrong and teaches the subject well.

Commentary

62. The results of the most recent national tests at the end of Year 6 indicate that standards are well below national averages, which matches inspection evidence from a detailed analysis of work in books. This indicates that standards are low and most pupils are significantly underachieving in the subject throughout the school. This represents a considerable fall in standards since the previous inspection when pupils were judged to be working at average levels by the end of Year 2 and below expected levels by the end of Year 6. Current pupils are not able to record their scientific investigations independently. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of circuits are well below those expected and pupils in Year 6 are working at levels usually seen in Year 4. In all aspects of the subject pupils' achievement is poor as they have not been taught at the correct levels.
63. The teaching and learning are poor, overall. No lessons in Years 1 and 2 were seen, but evidence of the standards achieved and the lack of detailed work indicate lack of appropriate learning by these pupils. Teaching and learning are poor in Years 3 to 6 overall because of weaknesses in curriculum planning and a lack of reliable assessment. This accounts for poor learning over time. However, during the inspection two lessons were seen with pupils between Years 3 and 6. The teaching was good in one lesson and satisfactory in the other. In these lessons teachers demonstrated good skills in interesting pupils and in asking questions with more than one possible answer in order to support pupils' learning effectively. When teaching was good pupils were challenged particularly well with searching questions that accelerated their learning.
64. There are barely any systems for finding out what individual pupils know, understand and can do scientifically and what does exist lacks sufficient detail and rigour to be useful. This means that planning for lessons does not reliably modify tasks to meet the needs of different groups of pupils and so provide all with suitable challenge. Similarly, planning for the year and the term is not clear enough to ensure that all elements of the subject are covered sufficiently and guarantee that pupils make at least satisfactory progress. These weaknesses have an equally detrimental effect on pupils with the potential to attain highly and those with learning difficulties. Recently, teachers have rightly increased the amount of practical work that pupils undertake and this is successfully fostering pupils' interest in the subject, although older pupils tend to demonstrate a slightly immature over-excitement in some activities. Pupils' written work in science is very limited and weaknesses in literacy skills restrict their scientific explanations.
65. The subject co-ordinator is new to the school this term and has made a good start to leading the subject. She has already identified the weaknesses mentioned above. She teaches the subject well and so is in a good position to lead with credibility. However, it is far too soon for her skills to have had an impact upon such significant weaknesses, which have been caused by weak leadership and management since the previous inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

66. There can be no overall judgement about provision in information and communication technology as no direct teaching was observed. As no lessons in the subject were seen, no secure judgements about the teaching in the subject can be made. However, there was plenty of evidence for inspectors to make judgements about pupils' standards, the curriculum and the quality of the leadership and management of the subject.
67. Pupils' skills have improved since the previous inspection as all the required elements of the subject are now taught. From the work seen and the discussion and confident demonstration of information and communication technology skills by older pupils, standards in this subject by the end of Year 6 are in line with national expectations; this is because the curriculum is now satisfactory. The achievement of pupils throughout the school is satisfactory. Standards by the end of Year 2 are as expected. Pupils from Year 1 onwards are using information and communication technology and work on display in the school, discussion with pupils and the work sample analysed showed that there is satisfactory progression in the development of skills.
68. Pupils enjoy using information and communication technology in lessons and for research, are enthusiastic about the subject and use the computers confidently. They demonstrate evidence of competence in word-processing, the use of graphics, simple database programs, the use of spreadsheets, the use of PowerPoint for presentations and the use of the Internet for research. Safe procedures for the use of the Internet are in place. The pupils seen showed sound knowledge of how to save and load their work and were proud of their achievements. The previous inspection report highlighted the lack of the use of spreadsheets and simple control technology, but pupils in Year 6 are able to demonstrate the use of spreadsheets and can use a control simulator program. There was a satisfactory range of evidence around the school of the use of information and communication technology, ranging from graphics programs to newspaper articles with photographs in Year 6. More able pupils in Year 6 have been challenged appropriately to extend their information and communication technology skills.
69. No overall judgements about the teaching and learning of information and communication technology can be given as no direct teaching was seen, but evidence of pupils' achievement suggests that it has improved since the previous inspection. However, the assessment of what pupils' skills are in information and communication technology is unsatisfactory. Staff have a satisfactory range of skills themselves and have had some training on the use of the interactive whiteboards, but need further training in order to make the best use of this technology.
70. The leadership and management are unsatisfactory as too few checks have been made about the teaching and pupils' achievement over time. The co-ordinator is only very recently in post, but has clear ideas on how the subject should be developed throughout the school and has produced a satisfactory action plan for its further development. However, there has been no observation and monitoring of the teaching over time, which is unsatisfactory. The governors and senior managers have not set up a strategic plan to renew ageing information and communication technology equipment and this puts the teaching of the subject at risk.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

71. Pupils' use of their information and communication technology skills is satisfactory. There was evidence of these skills being used in historical work on Macbeth, in

science work on heart-rate, in artwork at various levels, in mathematics with the use of spreadsheets and in research work on the Internet. However, there is insufficient use of information and communication technology to draft and re-draft work, especially for those pupils with specific special educational needs.

HUMANITIES

72. **Geography** and **history** were not a focus for the inspection and there is not enough evidence to make secure judgements about the overall quality of provision in these subjects. Neither were there sufficient work or records for inspectors to be able to judge standards. Nevertheless discussions with staff and a scrutiny of plans indicate the same shortcomings in systems for planning and assessment with these subjects as for others. There is no specific recording of what individual pupils have learned and the subject-specific skills that they have gained. The history co-ordinator has rightly started to monitor the subject and has discovered that there are gaps in what teachers are teaching.

Religious education

Provision for religious education is **poor**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in Year 6 are well below those expected; they have fallen since the time of the previous inspection and pupils' achievement is now poor.
- Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory.
- The curriculum is poor as too little time is devoted to the subject.
- The leadership and management are poor and these deficiencies were not realised by senior staff and governors.
- The subject makes little contribution to pupils' spiritual development or their awareness of other cultures.

Commentary

73. The previous inspection report judged that pupils' standards were as expected at the end of both key stages and their achievement was satisfactory. There has been a significant decline since that time. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 do not know enough about religion and what is learned from religion and pupils in Year 6 have a poor knowledge and understanding of the key facts and concepts of religious faith. The reason for this is clear; pupils have too little religious education taught to them and it is not taught on a regular basis.
74. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have a very basic knowledge about a Christian church as a special place. Few really know what Advent is except for its secular connotations, such as in Advent calendars. In the lesson observed for pupils in Years 4 and 5 attainment was satisfactory, but the attitudes of pupils towards the Muslim religion did not sit easily with the school's aim to be inclusive. Similarly, discussion with older pupils selected by their teacher showed that they had the most superficial knowledge and understanding of any of the major world faiths and a hazy one about Christianity. They know little about the basic tenets of non-Christian faiths and muddle up facts about special places, symbols, books, ceremonies and leaders. They do not have an appropriate vocabulary about religion. This is far below what is expected of pupils in Year 6. These pupils knew a little about religious practices in countries such as Japan

but, although it might contribute to pupils' cultural understanding, this knowledge is not required by the agreed syllabus. Overall the subject makes too little contribution to pupils' spiritual development or even to their cultural development. The incomplete knowledge and understanding and wrongly remembered facts do not promote inter-faith tolerance and multi-cultural understanding.

75. The teaching seen was mixed, depending on the knowledge and understanding of the teacher. It was satisfactory overall during the inspection, but there is a tendency to shy away from the more explicit religious elements and concentrate on those aspects of the syllabus concerning personal and social education, with self and feelings. This was a criticism in the previous inspection report. The teaching has been poor over time as teachers are not aware of how little pupils know. Potentially the teaching could be so much better because the relationships between staff and pupils are good. The teaching is constrained by the curriculum. There is very little evidence that pupils have been taught regularly this term. Very little work is in evidence either in pupils' drafting books or in any other book. There is very little that is explicitly religious, according to the agreed syllabus, in the previous topic books scrutinised. There are hardly any records of what has been done in checklists or teachers' daybooks. In Years 1 and 2 it would appear that no lessons had taken place for the two or three weeks before the inspection. It is clear that the school is not fulfilling the requirements to teach a specified amount of religious education according to the locally agreed syllabus, which should be about an hour a week in Years 3 to 6. This is of concern as the governors of this Church of England school have not ensured that sufficient religious education is taught.
76. Standards are much lower than they should be because the overall quality of teaching and learning is at best unsatisfactory, but the basic problem is the planning of religious education within the planning of the whole curriculum. The schemes of work are said to be planned from the agreed syllabus, but this is not in evidence. Pupils in the same year groups do different work in different classes. The assessment of pupils' knowledge and understanding is on a basic skills sheet which covers all subjects but, in reality, this is not used. If it were used staff would realise how little pupils know.
77. The teaching and curriculum are not good enough because the subject is not properly managed. The subject has not been a high priority for improvement recently, although it is planned to have more emphasis this year. There is a new co-ordinator this term who does not know anything about standards in Years 3 to 6. She has not had the time to look at work or monitor lessons. She does not know how much time is devoted to religious education. She has other roles that are a higher priority for the school. There was no monitoring last year by the former co-ordinator. The new co-ordinator suspects that some staff require further training and this is likely to be the case.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

78. The inspectors concentrated on checking the standards in **physical education** as so much time is spent on this subject. **Music** was not being taught during the inspection as it is only taught by a visiting specialist on Fridays. It is not possible to judge provision in music in the absence of records, teaching plans or a scheme of work. **Design and technology** was not a focus for the inspection and there is insufficient evidence to make overall judgements about the quality of provision. Only part of one lesson was seen. On this occasion pupils in Year 5 worked well together in small groups to make three-dimensional models of scenes from Macbeth. They were very

enthusiastic and clearly accustomed to working from written plans and evaluating their work.

79. There is insufficient evidence to make a judgement about provision in **art and design**. Pupils' attainment in art was judged as well above expectations at the previous inspection and the interesting work on display is evidence that some high quality work is going on. As little of this work is named and dated, it is unclear when it was done, who did it and how much support was given. Lessons in art and design are integrated into the topics and, because there are very few records of what has been taught and how well, it is not possible to judge whether pupils are acquiring a systematic development of their skills, knowledge and understanding. There are no records of critical studies of the work of famous artists and designers and it is unclear how much art is used within other subjects such as English and history. There are some creations that are at least at the expected level on some portfolios of pupils' work and evidence of interesting work on the walls, but the work in sketchbooks is of very variable quality, suggesting that the teaching skills of staff are very varied. The classroom of the art and design co-ordinator is stimulating for pupils, but there is no evidence to show that this teacher with artistic talents has been given the scope to help and monitor other staff.

Physical education

Provision for physical education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Residential experiences and extra-curricular sporting activities make significant contributions to extending and complementing school-based activities.
- There is no physical education co-ordinator at present and there is no monitoring or assessment of physical education so leadership and management are unsatisfactory.

Commentary

80. Standards in physical education are in line with national expectations and there is satisfactory provision for all the aspects of physical education required. Lessons were observed in gymnastics, games and dance and teaching in these lessons was at least satisfactory and sometimes good. It was not possible to see any swimming lessons or athletics sessions during the period of the inspection. Provision is about the same as was reported at the previous inspection.
81. The teaching is satisfactory, overall, and some observed during the inspection was good. Teachers gave clear instructions and demonstrations and these enabled pupils to make satisfactory and sometimes good progress during the lessons. The behaviour of pupils is generally good as a result of the good class control by teachers and a clear emphasis on safety. Pupils enjoy physical education, join in lessons enthusiastically and are dressed appropriately. In dance lessons pupils have good opportunities to discuss their work and how to improve their sequences and are able to work well together in small groups. Pupils are encouraged to listen carefully to the well-chosen music, which is played at a volume that allows teachers to continue giving clear instructions and encouragement to groups. Good questioning and evaluation from the teachers raises pupils' awareness of standards in their work and pupils work successfully to improve their skills. In a games lesson with pupils in Years 5 and 6 there was a clear focus on skills and tactics, both in football and in hockey. At the end of the session, pupils spontaneously congratulated one another and valued each

other's part in the lesson, which was a good contribution to their personal and social development.

82. The curriculum is broad. Pupils throughout the school have regular swimming lessons. There is a clear programme for swimming, based on national guidelines, and the careful records of progress of the youngest pupils were seen. All pupils have the opportunity to achieve the national standard for competency in swimming. However, swimming is only required to give pupils the skills to swim 25 metres by the end of Year 6; the school has used money and curriculum time to give pupils more of what they already can do. There is a good range of extra-curricular sporting activities for pupils to take part in, including gymnastics, football, basketball and hockey, and pupils have the opportunity for outdoor adventurous activities at the Forest School and a farm. All these activities promote pupils' social and personal development well.
83. The leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory as there is no co-ordination of the teaching to ensure that all pupils have sufficient opportunities to achieve well in all aspects of the subject. The school does not have a physical education co-ordinator at present. There is no monitoring of teaching and clear guidelines on thorough school assessment are not in place, which is unsatisfactory.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

84. As no lessons were seen it is not possible to make a judgement about the school's overall provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship. This lack of evidence is due to the poor planning of the curriculum to include satisfactory amounts of this subject.
85. There is no planned programme of regular lessons. The termly planning produced by teachers and based around topics does not make specific reference to this area of pupils' development and learning. The school has neither developed its own scheme for teaching an incremental programme of lessons, nor bought in a commercial scheme. As with other subjects there is no consistent system for recording what individual pupils or groups of pupils have learned. Leaving pupils' learning in relation to specific health and citizenship topics to chance is an unsatisfactory situation. Subjects such as science and English have the potential to contribute to pupils' personal, social and health education but no-one is keeping a reliable record of whether or not this is happening. There is no system for knowing what pupils have done and learned. It is not possible to make a judgement on the teaching or pupils' learning as, apart from one brief 'Circle Time', no lessons were planned during the inspection and there are no records of planning or pupils' progress. There was no overall judgement about this subject in the previous report.
86. On the positive side, pupils' personal and social development is soundly supported through good relationships with adults in the school. Staff do have good relationships with pupils; they do provide them with satisfactory moral guidance and there are opportunities for pupils to develop socially through various curricular activities within lessons and after-school clubs. For instance, pupils are often asked to work co-operatively with peers within practical lessons. Suitable policies to support this area of learning are in place; however, reliance on individual teachers and chance rather than secure organisation is not good enough. Therefore the leadership and management of this area of learning are poor.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	6
How inclusive the school is	5
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	6
Value for money provided by the school	6
Overall standards achieved	6
Pupils' achievement	5
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)	4
Attendance	2
Attitudes	4
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	4
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	4
The quality of education provided by the school	5
The quality of teaching	5
How well pupils learn	5
The quality of assessment	5
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	6
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	4
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	4
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	5
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	5
The governance of the school	5
The leadership of the headteacher	5
The leadership of other key staff	5
The effectiveness of management	6

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