

INSPECTION REPORT

South Petherton CE VA Infants School

South Petherton/Somerset

LEA area: Somerset

Unique reference number: 123854

Headteacher: Mrs Jennifer Grazette

Lead inspector: Mrs Pat Cox

Dates of inspection: 28th February to 3rd March 2005

Inspection number: 267692

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant
School category: Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils: 4 - 7
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 75

School address: Church Path
Hele Lane
South Petherton
Somerset
Postcode: TA13 5DY

Telephone number: 01460 240750
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Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of governors: Mrs Sally Coad

Date of previous inspection: 11-May-1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

South Petherton CE VA Infant School is a small school in a village to the west of Yeovil. There are 75 pupils on roll between the ages of four and seven. About 12 per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, reflecting the average range of socio-economic circumstances of their families. Seventeen per cent of pupils have been identified as having special educational needs, a proportion that is similar to the national picture. No pupil has a Statement of Special Educational Need. Most pupils are of white British ethnic backgrounds, a few being from mixed ethnic backgrounds, and almost all have English as their first language. The children's attainment on entry to the school varies from year to year, as is common with small schools, but overall is similar to others of their age. Although the proportion of girls and boys is fairly even in the reception class and Year 1, there are few girls in Year 2.

The school received a Healthy Schools Award in 2002 and Investors in People in 2004. It is currently working towards the standard for Dyslexia Friendly status and is taking part in the Primary Leadership Programme.

Religious education will be inspected separately by a diocesan inspection.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
19178	Pat Cox	Lead inspector	English, science, information and communication technology, art and design, design and technology, music, English as an additional language
9399	Roger Watts	Lay inspector	
22657	Mark Madeley	Team inspector	Special educational needs, Foundation Stage, mathematics, geography, history, physical education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school provides its pupils with a **satisfactory** standard of education. The pupils achieve satisfactorily in almost all subjects and do well in some. They behave well and have good attitudes to school. Teaching and learning and leadership, management and governance are satisfactory. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The pupils' achievement is good in history, geography and music but is unsatisfactory in information and communication technology.
- The pupils' achievement in science is good in Year 1.
- Time and assessment are not used well enough in the reception class.
- The pupils' personal development is provided for well and consequently they behave well and have good attitudes to school.
- The school does not use the information it has to track and evaluate the pupils' progress sufficiently.
- Provision for the pupils' welfare, health and safety is very good.
- The school has a very good partnership with the parents of its pupils and with the community.

The school has made satisfactory progress since it was inspected previously in May 1999, when there was a significant amount of unsatisfactory teaching and weaknesses in management, improvement planning and governance. These deficiencies have now been eliminated and classroom assistants are now fully briefed on their role in supporting groups and individual pupils. Behaviour and relationships have improved, as have links with parents.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
reading	C	A	D	D
writing	C	A	C	C
mathematics	D	A	C	C

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

Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals.

Achievement is **satisfactory** overall. As is usual with small schools, the test results at the end of Year 2 tend to vary from year to year, depending on the proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the year group. While in 2003 they were well above the national average, the results in 2004 were similar to the national average and the results of similar schools in writing and mathematics but below those in reading. The teachers' assessments in science were also below the national average and those of similar schools. The trend of improvement over the past four years is above the national trend. While the more able pupils in the present Year 2 class are working at a higher level, the overall standards are below the national average in

reading, writing, mathematics and science because there is a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs who are unlikely to reach the expected level. Nevertheless, all pupils, including those whose first language is not English, achieve satisfactorily. Standards are below those expected in information and communication technology and the pupils have not done well enough, mainly because there were problems with the equipment beyond the school's control. The pupils achieve well in history, geography and music and satisfactorily in design and technology. Those in Year 1 do well in science. There was not enough evidence to make judgements on standards in art and design or physical education. The children in the reception class achieve satisfactorily and the majority reach the expected standard by the time they enter Year 1.

The school makes **good** provision for the pupils' personal development, in all areas of their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Consequently, they behave well and have good attitudes to school. Relationships between pupils and with adults are good. Attendance is satisfactory, although some parents continue to take their children on holiday during term time.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides its pupils with a **satisfactory** quality of education. Teaching and learning are **satisfactory** overall. They are satisfactory for the children in the reception class but lesson time and assessment are not always used effectively in some areas of learning, so the children do not build on their skills and knowledge as rapidly as they could. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and sometimes good for those in Years 1 and 2. The teachers plan their lessons carefully so that the pupils' skills and knowledge are developed soundly. Those with special educational needs and whose first language is not English are taught satisfactorily. Most pupils work hard and try their best. There are thorough procedures for assessing the pupils' progress and these are used appropriately to plan further work. The teachers use their assessments satisfactorily to set targets for the pupils in writing and mathematics.

The curriculum is satisfactory and the school provides good enrichment opportunities. The accommodation is satisfactory, although the playground area is rather small and there is no dedicated outdoor area for the reception children. The school takes very good care of its pupils and involves them well in its work. Partnerships with parents and the community are very effective.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The headteacher provides a clear sense of purpose and has a sound focus on standards. The staff work as a team and carry out their leadership and management roles satisfactorily. There are suitable methods for monitoring the work of the school, identifying key areas for improvement and planning for development. However, the school does not use test and other information well enough to track the pupils' progress and evaluate how well they have done. This shortcoming has already been identified as a priority and there are well-advanced plans to address it. Governance is satisfactory and all statutory requirements are met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and pupils have very positive views of the school. The pupils are very happy to be there and enjoy their lessons.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- improve the pupils' achievement in ICT;
- use lesson time and assessment more effectively in the reception class;
- develop the use of assessment and other data to give a clear picture of pupils' progress over time and to set targets for them.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

The pupils' achievement is **satisfactory** throughout the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory in information and communication technology.
- They do well in history, geography and music in Year 2.
- The pupils in Year 1 achieve well in science and music.

Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.5 (17.2)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	14.9 (16.2)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	16.4 (17.6)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 26 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

1. The results of the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2 have varied considerably from year to year, as is usual with small schools, as the results of each pupil have a significant impact on the percentages. In most years, the results have been at or around the national average in reading, writing and mathematics, but in 2003 they were well above the national average and those of schools with similar levels of entitlement to free school meals. In 2004, by contrast, they were similar to the national average and those of similar schools in writing and mathematics and below in reading. The teachers' assessments in science were also lower than the national average and those of similar schools. The lower results were because the proportion of pupils reaching the higher level was lower than usual. Nevertheless, the trend in the school's results has been rising more steeply than the national pattern.
2. The children enter the school with attainment, overall, that is similar to others of their age, although it varies from year to year. They achieve satisfactorily in the reception class, so that most are working at or above the expected level by the end of the year in personal and social development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical, creative and physical development and knowledge and understanding of the world.
3. In Years 1 and 2, the pupils continue to build satisfactorily on their skills and knowledge in almost all subjects, as they did at the time of the previous inspection. Standards in speaking and listening are similar to those expected for their age. However, the pupils presently in Year 2 are working below the national average overall in reading, writing, mathematics and science. While

the more able are reaching the higher level, there is a higher than usual proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the class. Nevertheless, they are achieving satisfactorily and those with special educational needs and whose first language is not English make satisfactory progress towards their targets. The pupils with special educational needs make good progress in English in Year 2. However, the pupils in Year 2 have not done well enough in information and communication technology. There have been difficulties in using the equipment, beyond the school's control, and the pupils have not had sufficient opportunity to develop their skills. However, the situation is improving and the pupils in Year 1 are more competent in using the technology.

- Standards in history and geography are similar to those in other schools and the pupils achieve well, particularly in Year 2. In music throughout the school and in science in Year 1, standards are higher than are usually seen and achievement is good. The teachers have a particular enthusiasm for these subjects and teach them well. The pupils' attainment in design and technology is similar to that of others of their age and their achievement is satisfactory. It was not possible to make a judgement on standards in art and design or physical education. The test results over the years suggest that the gap between the boys and girls normally seen at this age is narrower than usual. However, there is little evidence of any difference in achievement between them, particularly as there are few girls in Year 2.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Attendance and punctuality are **satisfactory**. Pupils have **good** attitudes towards their school, behave **well** and provision for their personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Good procedures to monitor attendance have resulted in an improvement in both attendance and punctuality from last year.
- Pupils enjoy school and play a full part in its life.
- Bullying is rare and relationships are good.
- The pupils respect others and know right from wrong.
- The pupils play a full part in the life of the church and the village.

Commentary

- Last year, the overall attendance was well below average and several pupils were consistently late. The school has tightened up its procedures and taken effective steps, such as ringing parents on the same day if their child is not in school, to encourage better attendance. So far this year overall attendance is at least as good as the national average. While the school discourages them, some parents take their children on holiday during term time. Although some pupils are still a few minutes late, punctuality has also improved.
- At the meeting held before the inspection, all parents agreed that their child enjoys school; this was largely confirmed in a questionnaire. The enjoyment of pupils is evident by the enthusiasm with which they start school in the morning.

They feel secure and willing to learn. They appreciate the help they get from teachers to understand and improve their work. The pupils take responsibilities such as class monitor or school councillor very seriously. Older pupils help in the playground organising the equipment for games. They have good relationships with the other pupils and adults and say that bullying is rare. When it occurs, it is dealt with effectively. Pupils with special educational needs behave very well in small group situations because they get a lot of adult attention.

7. The children in the reception class behave satisfactorily and have positive attitudes to school. Most are well behaved and enjoy their lessons, but they sometimes lose attention and behave in an inappropriate way. The pupils in Years 1 and 2 are usually attentive in lessons and keen to answer questions. They start work quickly when asked and try hard. Interest does sometimes start to wane if the lesson goes on too long, however. Pupils' overall behaviour is good and teachers rarely have to speak sharply to them, although there are a few examples of silliness. Some pupils are concerned about rough play at playtimes and there are times when over-exuberance causes clashes. The school is aware of this and has tried various measures, such as dividing the older pupils, to reduce these concerns. There were no exclusions last year and behaviour and attitudes have improved since the previous inspection.
8. The school is proud of its positive, Christian, family ethos in which all pupils feel valued as individuals. The pupils respond with equal respect to all staff, whether teachers or lunchtime supervisors, because all have equal standing. They are encouraged to understand the effects of their actions on others and explore how to solve personal problems in activities such as personal and social education times. The few pupils from other ethnic groups are integrated very well into school life.
9. The school raises pupils' spiritual and social awareness effectively through assemblies and class sessions in which they can discuss personal issues. This is improving their speaking and listening skills, as well as their moral development. Pupils understand the difference between right and wrong and discuss their feelings confidently. The end of each session is marked by prayer.
10. The pupils have a good knowledge of their own culture and the school utilises the close contact with the church and village to promote this. Because they are physically so close to both, the staff make use of events to extend the classroom learning. For example, when a village cottage was being re-thatched, the children were taken to look at what was happening. They attend regular short services in the church and celebrate Christian festivals. This is largely a mono-cultural school with few pupils from ethnic minorities and, although they know about some other religious traditions such as Judaism, they have limited opportunities to learn about the many other cultures found in Britain today. They contrast life in the Scottish islands with their own village and, in the past, they have had a productive contact with a school in Kenya. The school is aware of the need to renew this link and to extend the pupils' understanding of life in other parts of this country.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	6.3	School data:	0.3
National data:	5.1	National data:	0.4

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides its pupils with a **satisfactory** quality of education. Teaching and learning are **satisfactory**, as are assessment and the curriculum. The school cares **very well** for its pupils and has **very good** links with parents and the community.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **satisfactory** overall and are sometimes good in Years 1 and 2. Assessment is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Lesson time and assessments of the children's attainment in some areas of learning are not always used well enough in the reception class.
- The teachers in Years 1 and 2 have good discipline so the lessons move on smoothly.
- Teaching is good in music in Years 1 and 2, in history and geography in Year 2 and in science in Year 1.
- The pupils usually work hard and do their best.
- Marking is not effective enough in showing the pupils what they need to do to improve.
- The final part of the lesson is often not used effectively enough.

Commentary

11. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in the reception class. The teacher has an adequate understanding of the needs of children of this age and plans activities that are effective in developing their skills and understanding, particularly in reading, writing and mathematical development. However, the time in lessons is occasionally not used well enough to ensure that the children build consistently on the skills they have acquired. Many detailed assessments are kept but these are not adequate in demonstrating the progress the children have made in some areas of learning during the year. There is not enough assessment of the progress the children make when working on free-choice activities. Consequently, the teacher does not always have sufficient information to match the activities precisely enough to the children's previous attainment.
12. The use of assessment is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2, so that the teachers base their teaching reasonably accurately on what the pupils already know and understand. However, the information is very detailed, making it less manageable than it could be. The teachers usually plan work that meets the

needs of the range of attainment in their class, so that the more able, and the pupils with special educational needs or whose first language is not English, build consistently on their knowledge and skills in most subjects. The teachers set short-term targets in writing and mathematics, and these are mainly effective in helping the pupils to concentrate on the improvements they need to make. However, the teachers' marking does not do enough to support the targets. While marking is regular and sometimes detailed, the comments are usually praise and rarely refer to the targets or show pupils what they could do to improve.

13. Teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 are satisfactory, as it was at the time of the previous inspection, but the school has worked well to eliminate the high proportion of unsatisfactory teaching seen at that time. Teaching is satisfactory in English and mathematics and in science in Year 2. The skills of literacy and numeracy are built on soundly through other subjects. Teaching and learning are good in science in Year 1, where the teacher's expertise and enthusiasm ensure that the pupils have a wide range of experience and build well on their skills of scientific enquiry. This is also evident in the work in history and geography, where the pupils experience a wide range of interesting activities that develop their understanding well. Music is taught well in both year groups: the teaching is lively, challenging and moves on briskly and consequently the pupils reach higher standards than are usual.
14. Because the teachers in Years 1 and 2 have good discipline, their lessons proceed smoothly and there are few interruptions. The pupils settle to their work quickly and usually concentrate well throughout the lesson. However, there are occasions when the lesson goes on too long, so that the pupils have already achieved the intentions of the lesson and their attention starts to slip. When they are given the opportunity, the pupils usually work together sensibly and take turns.
15. The teachers introduce their lessons briskly and give clear, unambiguous instructions so that the pupils know precisely what they have to do. However, the final part of the lesson is not always used as effectively so that opportunities are missed to consolidate what the pupils have learned or to move their learning on further. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Work in English, mathematics and science is prepared at their level. They get substantial support from classroom assistants to help them understand concepts and complete work. Specialist support in small groups is good. Varied resources and different types of programme are used well to maintain pupils' interest and concentration and help them learn. The learning support assistants and parent helpers support teaching soundly, and sometimes well, during the lessons, often contributing much to the pupils' experience. This is an improvement since the previous inspection, when the way in which they were prepared for their work was not effective. However, they are not always used as effectively at the beginning and end of lessons, and sometimes sit under-occupied.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 13 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	0	4	9	0	0	0

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

The curriculum

The school offers a **satisfactory** range of worthwhile curriculum opportunities. The pupils' learning is enriched by **good** extra-curricular activities and visits. Staffing, accommodation and resources are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- 'Rise and shine' sessions and 'thinking skills' are having a positive effect on pupils' learning.
- Pupils have a good understanding of what constitutes a healthy life style.
- Pupils' understanding of history and geography benefits from walks in the locality and visits to places of historic interest.
- Although the school provides a good range of other activities, the small hall and playground restrict pupils' opportunities to play some sports.

Commentary

16. The quality of the curriculum is similar to that seen at the time of the previous inspection. The school meets the statutory requirements to teach the National Curriculum subjects in Years 1 and 2. The long-term planning includes suitable units from the national guidance. History and geography, and art and design and design and technology, are taught alternately so that the school can focus more precisely on each subject. In history and geography, the pupils achieve well because teachers have a specific interest in these subjects and use television programmes and visits well. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are followed closely and help the pupils achieve satisfactorily.
17. The personal, social, emotional and health programme is planned well and is effective in promoting a healthy lifestyle and the pupils' positive attitudes and values seen in the school. Recent innovations like 'Rise and shine' sessions have been well thought through and are helping pupils learn and enabling them to see the links between exercise and study. The vigorous physical activity prepares the mind and body for work. 'Thinking skills' sessions support the development of more imaginative approaches to problem-solving by developing the strategies they use. The school has satisfactory resources and accommodation to teach the curriculum, though the relatively small hall and the small playground restrict pupils' games opportunities. The very recently completed adventure playground has the potential to be a valuable resource for all pupils.
18. Planning in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory, being a mixture of subject-based activities and structured play, though occasionally the six areas of learning are broken down into the National Curriculum subject areas. This

sometimes leads to children missing out on play activities and doing too many adult-led activities.

19. Provision for the pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. They receive considerable support from the teaching assistant, who runs the special educational needs programme. She is guided primarily by her wealth of experience because some of the pupils' individual education plans are not very detailed. Those whose first language is not English receive suitable support to develop their use and understanding of the English language.
20. Pupils sing very well and entertain their parents and villagers quite frequently. Sports coaches develop pupils' games skills, for example in rugby and cricket. Visiting artists, as well as parents and villagers, have worked with the pupils to produce some very effective work. Pupils have become more skilled at working with willow structures to produce a sculpture of the local river and with textiles to produce the 'hangings' which adorn the walls. Pupils are frequently taken on walks in the locality to help them compare and contrast their home with elsewhere. Visits to local places like the Fleet Air Arm Museum and Glastonbury stimulate interest in the topics they study.

Care, guidance and support

Procedures for ensuring pupils' care welfare and safety are **very good**. The school gives **satisfactory** support and guidance for pupils based on the monitoring of their achievements and personal development and consults pupils **well** on what they would like to see improved.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Health, safety and welfare procedures are very thorough.
- The caring, family ethos of the school ensures that all pupils can turn to an adult for advice.
- The school takes good account of the pupils' views.

Commentary

21. The high quality of care has been maintained since the previous inspection. The premises are thoroughly inspected each term for safety hazards and any necessary remedial action taken promptly. External agencies, governors and school staff play a full and complementary role in these inspections. In addition staff are vigilant and report any hazards they see on a day-to-day basis. When pupils are taken on educational visits, even if it is just down the road to the village, the appropriate risk assessments are made and recorded. Staff who are trained in first aid care for pupils who have minor scrapes and these are properly recorded. All equipment is correctly maintained. Child-protection procedures are in place and staff are trained appropriately. The children are inducted satisfactorily into the reception class when they first start school. The class teacher has a good link with the local pre-schools so that the children have a smooth transition into school.

22. The school is a happy, secure place where pupils feel confident and are hence able to learn. All pupils in the survey agreed that there was an adult they could turn to if they had concerns. Conversations with pupils confirmed that most could rely on staff to resolve minor conflicts and personal worries. There are some concerns about boisterousness at playtimes. The school has started to devise ways of occupying pupils in less hectic activities, in which older children act as play leaders. Lunchtime supervisors are integrated very well into the system and play an important role in keeping the pupils safe and happy. The teachers use the personal and social education sessions to discuss any issues that arise with the whole class so that pupils can co-operate in understanding and resolving conflicts. Staff know the pupils very well and support them individually.
23. Behaviour is managed well. The pupils understand and accept the rules and appreciate the rewards that good behaviour brings, such as a leaf on the 'Golden Tree' in the hall. Academically, staff know individual pupils well and usually match the task to what pupils already know. The school sets individual targets for pupils in writing and mathematics but this has yet to be extended to other subjects. The new school council, which was set up after consulting pupils about its format, is acting as a good method of finding out about their concerns, for example about the boisterous play as the pupils are lining up at the end of playtimes. The school is acting on their ideas.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has **very good** links with parents and links with the community contribute **very well** to school life. Pupils benefit from **good** links with other schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides good information to parents.
- Parents provide very good support at home for their children's work and work well with staff to raise their standards.
- There is good liaison between the staff of this school and other educational establishments.

Commentary

24. Strong links with parents have been maintained and built on since the previous inspection. When their child begins school, parents receive good information about what is taught and how it is taught. Curriculum information is updated each half term. Parents are kept up to date with practical information in regular newsletters. The annual pupil reports meet statutory requirements and describe what the pupil has learned in the year. At present, they tend to be couched in standardised phrases describing educational attainments and this sometimes diminishes their sense of commenting on the progress of an individual during the year. However, they contain good comments on the pupil's personal development. The school is in the process of making them more concise and accessible. The home-school book is used as a dialogue between teacher and parent and can help parents to extend their child's work at home. Parents also

have regular formal opportunities to meet the teacher to discuss their child's work.

25. Parental support, as shown in the meeting and questionnaire for parents, is very strong. Most parents hear their child read at home and give very good support with this and other homework. Parents can borrow maths games to share with their child at home. Many parents, as well as other adult volunteers, give valued support in classrooms and around the school, hearing readers or supporting groups in lessons. They are very well prepared with guidance from staff. The Parent Teacher Association organises fund-raising and social events that contribute prodigious amounts for resources, for example the new adventure playground. Parents are regularly consulted about issues, for example on induction arrangements to the reception class. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept informed of the school's concerns about their child and invited to voice their own observations. They review the education plan after it has been written but few parents offer written comments on its contents or the part they will play in helping their child.
26. The school plays an active part in the local community and calls on local people to broaden pupils' experiences and bring lessons to life. The pupils visit local shops, such as the butcher and the post office. Members of public services, like the police, talk to pupils as part of the personal and social education. Church personnel take regular assemblies and pupils are involved in the life of the church. Pupils recall with great delight their efforts at the annual village carnival parade. These very productive links are being further extended by the 'Church, School and Community' project.
27. The reception teacher has good relationships with the two local pre-school groups which most children attend and visits the children before they start; they in turn have many opportunities to visit this school. Staff liaise well with the junior school, running a transition programme and opportunities for interchange between staff to smooth the transfer.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The headteacher leads and manages the school **satisfactorily**. The staff lead and manage their subjects **satisfactorily**. Governance is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher motivates the staff well and has created a strong team ethos.
- The school does not use the information it has well enough to show how effective its work is.
- Improvement planning does not give a clear enough long-term direction for the school.
- The school's finances are managed efficiently.

Commentary

28. The headteacher and staff work closely together and there is a strong sense of teamwork. The staff are hard working, highly committed and supportive and the headteacher provides a good role model through her own enthusiasm and

teaching expertise. All members of the staff are fully involved in the team and feel valued in making their own contribution. There is a strong commitment to joint review and decision-making. The staff meet regularly to discuss issues and the progress of individuals and groups of pupils. Appraisal systems, through performance management, are well established and all staff are involved in the process. There is a satisfactory focus on raising standards and bringing about improvement.

29. Management of the school has improved since the previous inspection and the headteacher has worked hard to rectify the significant shortcomings identified at that time. The role of subject co-ordinators has been developed so that they lead their subjects satisfactorily and have a reasonable awareness of standards and priorities. The school caters well for equal opportunities and the inclusion of all pupils. The leadership and management of the special educational needs provision are satisfactory. The school works soundly with parents and external agencies. Some adequate informal monitoring of special educational needs provision is undertaken by the headteacher.
30. The staff and governors are suitably involved in decision making and planning for school improvement is now satisfactory overall, with appropriate areas identified for development. The plan shows clearly how the developments will be brought about, who will take responsibility and the timings. However, it does not provide a clear sense of direction for the school after the current academic year or show how progress is to be monitored or evaluated. The school does not use the data it has, particularly about the pupils' progress, to provide a focus for strategic planning. This weakness has been recognised and plans are already well advanced to bring about improvements.
31. The headteacher has carried out a considerable number of observations of classroom practice and this is an improvement since the last inspection, when it was identified as a weakness. Planning and the pupils' work are scrutinised. However, this monitoring lacks some depth and rigour. The systems to monitor and evaluate provision are not sufficiently focused on standards or the impact of teaching. Consequently, the school has an over-optimistic view of its own effectiveness.
32. The governors make a purposeful contribution to the work of the school and fulfil their statutory duties satisfactorily. They bring enthusiasm, commitment and loyalty to their role and there is a sound balance of experience and expertise. The chair of governors is a frequent visitor and works closely with the headteacher. Governors have improved their working practices since they were criticised by the previous inspection, through better committee work and by becoming more involved in the monitoring process. All governors are involved in monitoring standards in the subjects with which they are linked and they receive regular updates from subject co-ordinators at governors' meetings.
33. The school's administrator manages the school's day-to-day finances efficiently and provides the headteacher and governors with up-to-date information, enabling them to monitor expenditure in a routine way. Proper records are maintained on specific grants and the school is able to demonstrate that they

are used appropriately. There is a sound understanding of how to gain the best value from the decisions they make. There is close liaison with the local education authority in seeking to ensure that the school gets good value for expenditure. The large balances kept from previous years were accumulated to maintain the level of support staff and for improvements to the accommodation and have been reduced to an appropriate level for the year 2004-05. Taking into consideration the quality of provision, the standards achieved, leadership and management and the below average income for a school of this size, it gives satisfactory value for money.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	233,446	Balance from previous year	28,273
Total expenditure	215,512	Balance carried forward to the next	46,207
Expenditure per pupil	3,123		

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The quality of provision is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Initial assessment of children's attainment does not give a clear picture of what children know, understand and can do.
- Most children make good progress in number.
- Too often, the same worksheet is used for children of different abilities.
- Day-to-day assessment is very detailed but observations of children's play are not as good.
- There is no dedicated outdoor area for the reception children.

Commentary

34. The children achieve satisfactorily overall, in all areas of learning, from their different starting points. The vast majority will reach the Early Learning Goals in all areas of learning by the time they start in Year 1. A few more-able children have made good progress, especially in mathematical development and communication, language and literacy, and are already working comfortably within the early stages of the National Curriculum.
35. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The planning covers the six areas of learning well. However, it occasionally focuses on discrete National Curriculum subjects and children lose, to a degree, the rich cross-curricular nature of the Foundation Stage programme. Lessons are planned in some detail but play is not structured well enough to promote learning. The intentions of the lesson are too wide-reaching at times to be achieved in a single lesson. Staff demonstrate and explain quite well, for instance using straws to show simple addition and personally leading a singing session. But the same worksheets are often used for all children and, even though the less able get significant additional support, they find the tasks very difficult. Resources are used well, for example during a well managed outdoor session which promoted children's physical development and their independence well by allowing them to freely move around a good range of activities. However, in mathematics and language lessons the introduction is sometimes too long and consequently a few children lose interest.
36. Information about children's abilities on entry is varied. Extensive time is spent during September assessing the children but some information is not immediately productive, like testing numeral recognition. Because sufficient information on all six areas of learning is not available, the school finds it difficult to measure how much children have improved in the reception class. Day-to-day assessment of adult-led tasks is very detailed and the information used to plan the next stage in children's learning but observations of their play are less well thought through. Leadership and management of the Foundation

Stage are satisfactory. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection and children continue to make steady progress.

37. Children are happy in class, keen to learn and enjoy coming to school. Their **personal, social and emotional development** is promoted satisfactorily. The less able children find it difficult to concentrate for long periods of time and are occasionally fussy. Children are starting to share resources and work together. They work independently during outdoor sessions, making choices about what to do next.
38. In **communication, language and literacy**, children normally use words and phrases to communicate their thoughts and needs. They exchange ideas during play quite well but do not receive sufficient adult support during role-play to extend their language even further. They listen quite attentively to adults but occasionally call out answers during whole-class discussions. Children know how to use books and do so sensibly. They mostly identify their own name and know the sounds of some of the letters of the alphabet. The most able children are recognising a few words. 'Mark making' is strongly encouraged. Children undertake many writing exercises and frequently choose to work at the 'writing' table.
39. Children work hard in **mathematical development** lessons. They make good progress in their understanding of number, but other areas are less well developed. They all count, recognise and write the numbers to five accurately, with more able children working way beyond this. However, the children do not use their mathematical language enough during play, partly because adults do not join in their play often enough.
40. In **knowledge and understanding of the world**, the children understand that living things need food, drink and sleep to live. They asked very sensible questions of a parent who had brought in a live rabbit but the session went on too long for the concentration of the least able. The task challenged the most able to write about the rabbit in their own words and many succeeded. Children use the mouse to control the computer well. They identify sources of light on a worksheet and sequence pictures of the events of a day and stages in aging of people.
41. Children's **physical development** benefits from the recently completed adventure playground, where the children improve their balancing and climbing skills, and the well-organised outdoor sessions. In them, children move freely from tricycle and tractor riding to balancing on the swing bridge to painting with water. However, these sessions do not happen daily and there is no dedicated outdoor area for the children. Consequently, they do not always make the progress they could.
42. The children play imaginatively in the sand, talking about their play whilst building tunnels. They sing well and most beat the pulse of the song but they become over-excited when asked to move around the room to fast and slow beats. Children enjoy making things and show good cutting skills when creating

a daffodil from junk materials. Their **creative development** is fostered satisfactorily.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils do not always have equal opportunity to speak in discussions.
- The presentation of their work is good.
- The marking of pupils' work is not helpful to them in improving their work.
- Writing skills are developed well in science in Year 1.

Commentary

43. Results in the national tests in reading and writing for pupils at the end of Year 2 have been mainly similar to the national average for some years, although there have been some years when standards were below average. By contrast, in the tests in 2003, results were well above the national average and the average of similar schools. In 2004, they were average in writing but below average in reading, as a small proportion of pupils reached the higher level. The standards of the pupils in Year 2 now are similar to the national average in speaking and listening but below in both reading and writing because the year group has a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Overall, they are achieving satisfactorily and achievement is similar to the time of the previous inspection.
44. Many pupils are confident speakers who answer fluently and at length when asked questions and express their own ideas clearly and confidently. Most listen closely to what others are saying, although some boys have a tendency to shout out and are constantly eager to answer. Teachers do not always do enough to involve other pupils when they sit quietly without volunteering to answer and, consequently, they do not receive sufficient attention during discussions. The school develops the pupils' reading skills satisfactorily by structured teaching of the letter sounds and blends and by regular visits to the school library. Most pupils in Year 2 read familiar stories without help and the more capable pupils achieve above average standards because they read with expression, with due attention to punctuation. However, some have weak skills in working out new words and are not confident in using the sense of the text to support their efforts. The pupils have a sound knowledge of how to use reference books and of the index and contents pages. The library, with adequate non-fiction resources, is in a central position and the pupils use it regularly. However, class libraries of story books are rather sparse.
45. Most pupils place events in their correct sequence and write them as clear, recognisable sentences with capital letters and full stops. A few pupils achieve higher than average standards because, for example, they write at length, in

well-constructed sentences and regularly use punctuation with accuracy. They are beginning to join their writing. While the less able pupils write some common words independently, they need support in spelling and in structuring their writing. The presentation of pupils' work is good; they take care and try their best.

46. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall throughout the school. The teachers have a suitable range of assessments and use this to plan further work for their pupils. Appropriate work is usually set for the different levels of attainment in the class and there is a calm working atmosphere in class. While the pupils with special educational needs and those whose first language is not English receive appropriate support in lessons and make satisfactory progress overall, those with special educational needs in Year 2 have done well. However, lessons sometimes go on too long so that the pupils continue to rehearse skills they already have. The strategy for setting targets for improvement in writing is at an early stage and many targets are too general to be useful. The marking of work is inconsistent; there is little that guides pupils towards improvement.
47. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinator has an adequate knowledge of standards and there is a sound whole-school approach to tackling priorities. There is an appropriate method for tracking the pupils' progress in writing as they move through the school, enabling teachers to predict end-of-year test results reasonably accurately.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

48. The development of literacy skills through teaching in subjects across the curriculum is satisfactory. There is an effective whole-school focus on developing speaking and listening skills across the curriculum and writing and reading are used and developed soundly in most subjects. However, while the science work in Year 1 successfully promotes the ability of the pupils to set out their work themselves, too many worksheets are used in Year 2 to build on this good practice.

MATHEMATICS

The quality of provision is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The 'thinking skills' programme and good use of questioning by teachers has helped pupils explain their methods better.
- The most able pupils in Year 2 make rapid progress because they get challenging work.
- The school is not able to measure improvement easily for Year 2 pupils.
- There is no system for setting learning targets for each pupil.

Commentary

49. In the 2004 national tests, the results of the pupils in Year 2 were average when compared with both all school and schools with a similar percentage of free school meals. The vast majority of pupils achieved the expected grade but the proportion of pupils scoring the higher grade in the test was far smaller than anticipated by the teacher assessments. Over a five year period pupils' scores have been rising steadily, though the scores of different year groups have varied considerably because each pupil represents about 4 per cent.
50. Pupils' attainment in Year 2 is below the national average. There is a higher than average proportion of pupils with special educational needs, who are making sufficient progress from their low starting point but who are unlikely to achieve the average grade, and few pupils are likely to achieve the higher grade. The most able pupils are moving forward at a fast pace because their tasks frequently challenge their thinking and their skills. From their individual starting points pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall.
51. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers use questioning well to encourage pupils to explain their methods, which aids their understanding. The 'thinking skills' programme also encourages this and gets pupils talking about mathematics and different methods. Tasks are set according to the abilities of pupils and therefore the more able are given more difficult work, while the learning of the least able is supported. The school does not have a system for setting pupils' individual learning targets, though it is developing one, and because of this not all pupils are sufficiently challenged. The pupils' work is marked and praise given where it is due, but the teachers' comments do little to move the pupils forward. Pupils' progress is assessed every half term and test data is analysed. However, the school does not know by how much these pupils have improved because it has no data on the attainment of current Year 2 pupils when they entered school and when they entered Year 1. The introduction and use of the Foundation Stage Profile in the reception class has improved this greatly.
52. Leadership and management are satisfactory. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. Pupils' rate of achievement has been maintained and the co-ordinator has started to monitor teaching and learning.

Mathematics across the curriculum

53. Pupils' use of their numeracy skills in other subjects is satisfactory. They use basic grid references in geography and make block graphs in many subjects to illustrate their findings. They frequently sort things by specific properties in science and they use positional words to describe what they are doing in physical education.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils achieve well in Year 1.

- The good practice of pupils recording their work independently is not built on adequately in Year 2.

Commentary

54. The results of the teachers' assessments in 2004 were below the national average because a lower proportion than nationally attained the expected level. This was particularly the case for scientific investigation and physical science, while standards were higher in life processes and materials. Results fluctuate from year to year because of the small number of pupils involved. The pupils presently in Year 2 are again working at a lower level than nationally because there is a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and few who are working at the higher level. The pupils are nevertheless achieving satisfactorily, although they do not do as well as those in Year 1. Achievement overall has been maintained since the previous inspection.
55. The pupils in Year 2 have a secure understanding of topics such as healthy foods and the lifecycle of plants. They sort materials by their properties and carry out investigations into the effects of forces. Evidence taken from samples of previous work and discussion with pupils indicates that the overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, although it is good in Year 1. The teachers use technology such as interactive whiteboards, microscopes and digital cameras in interesting ways. They set different levels of work for the different levels of attainment in their classes. The development of literacy and numeracy skills is satisfactory and is good in Year 1, where the pupils are encouraged to measure, observe and record their own findings. They predict the outcome of their investigations from their previous knowledge and draw simple conclusions from their results. While some of this good practice continues in Year 2, it is not developed well enough, particularly because much of the pupils' work is recorded on prepared worksheets.
56. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinator has developed the use of scientific enquiry and this is having a positive impact on the way in which the pupils work and understand. She has a realistic understanding of where improvements are needed, although not of the full picture of standards throughout the school. Assessment procedures are satisfactory and teachers keep detailed records of their pupils' attainment in each topic.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

57. It was not possible to judge provision in **information and communication technology**, as no discrete lessons were being taught. However, it is evident from observing Year 2 pupils in other lessons and from discussions with them that their attainment is lower than expected for their age and their achievement is unsatisfactory. While they are able to find their way around the keyboard, this is very slow and they have a limited knowledge of the functions of the keys. While the pupils can change the style, size and colour of fonts, and type their own work on the computer, their ability to save and open files and programs and to print their work is lower than most pupils of their age. They have some

experience of controlling the movements of a screen robot, but have had little opportunity as yet to use and analyse data. Standards are lower than they were at the time of the previous inspection.

58. Part of the reason for the pupils' underachievement is the previous lack, and unreliability, of equipment, which has recently been remedied. However, the pupils have not had, overall, sufficient access to the computers and little use was seen of the resources during the inspection. Nevertheless, there has been improvement recently because the resources have been enhanced and there is a satisfactory programme of work. The pupils have had some opportunities to use the newly-installed interactive whiteboard in Year 2 and this has captured their imagination. The use of the technology is improving and therefore the achievement of the pupils in Year 1 is better than that of Year 2. Leadership and management are satisfactory, as the subject leader has ensured that standards in the subject are now rising.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

59. The use of information and communication technology across the curriculum is **unsatisfactory**. Although there are improvements, the resources are not often used as an integral part of teaching and learning. Some interesting resources such as a microscope and linked computer programs were evident in science in Year 1 and the pupils sometimes use word processing programs in their work in English. They use music programs for composition on occasion. However, the use of the technology in mathematics and other subjects is limited and the pupils report that they tend to use art and design and other programs when they have finished other work rather than as part of the curriculum in different subjects.

HUMANITIES

Geography

The quality of provision is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have good subject knowledge and a personal interest in the subject.
- Pupils quickly learn to use the correct vocabulary to describe what they see.
- Good use is made of aerial photography.

Commentary

60. The attainment of the pupils in Year 2 is comparable with that in other schools, despite a high percentage of pupils with special educational needs in the class. The pupils carefully observe the good range of photographs of Scottish islands presented to them and pick out significant detail, like natural and manufactured objects. They quickly adopt technical terms to describe what they see. Life on an island is thoughtfully contrasted with life in their village. All pupils achieve well from their different starting points.
61. Teaching and learning are good. Precise questioning by the teacher encourages the children to consider the problems of living on an island, like health care and schooling. Aerial photographs are used well to help pupils pick out details of land use and to transfer this information to basic maps. All pupils succeed because much of the work is recorded in pictures and maps rather than in writing. Leadership and management are satisfactory. No judgement can be made on improvement since the last inspection because geography was not inspected in depth last time.
62. No **history** lessons were seen during the inspection because the teaching of the subject alternates with geography and so no overall judgement can be securely made about provision. The available evidence indicates that pupils' attainment in Year 2 is similar to others of their age and that they achieve well. Well-planned topics help pupils consider their past as babies and young children. Later, they compare life in the past with their current situation, for example bath time routines. They also know about major events and some famous people of the past. Their pictures and writing are stimulated by the good array of resources made available for them to feel and use. More able pupils write very well, whilst less able pupils receive support to record their thoughts in picture or writing. The curriculum is good and helps pupils achieve well. Visits to places of historical interest and walks in the locality further develop children's understanding of life in the past.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Music

Provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils achieve well and reach higher standards than expected for their age.
- The teachers have good subject knowledge which they use well.

Commentary

63. The pupils make good progress and achieve well because the teaching they receive is knowledgeable and enthusiastic. The teachers have a good understanding of the way in which pupils of this age develop musical skills and appreciation and build on these with precision. The activities are focused but enjoyable, move on with a rapid pace and involve all, although occasionally a

group of boys dominates the discussion. Lessons are a good balance of activity so that the pupils develop their appreciation of a variety of music, such as 'The Four Seasons' by Vivaldi in Year 1 or 'La Mer' by Debussy in Year 2. The lessons move at a brisk pace, developing rhythm, knowledge of instruments and the pupils' own singing rapidly.

64. As a consequence, the pupils sing well; their voices are tuneful and unforced. Those in Year 2 enjoy using physical gestures to demonstrate different ways in which pitch can change. They sing in rounds, most being able to hold their own part of the melody. The pupils talk thoughtfully and with maturity about the music they hear and develop mental pictures and narratives as they consider it. They remember with pleasure listening to 'Scheherazade' by Rimsky-Korsakov. They have a good sense of rhythm and the Year 1 pupils already use simple notation for the quite complex rhythms they clap. Achievement and teaching have improved since the previous inspection. Leadership and management of the subject are good and ensure that there is a good programme of work and high expectations of the pupils' achievement.
65. No lessons were observed in **art and design** or **design and technology** and only one in **physical education**, and therefore no judgement can be made on provision. Little of the pupils' work in **art and design** was on display, so it is not possible to make an overall judgement on standards. The pupils have studied the way in which Vincent Van Gogh used hot and cold colours and have attempted to use his techniques in their own work. However, the topic and medium used were not conducive to this technique and the results demonstrate little influence. Nevertheless, the portraits and the work based on the Ancient Egyptian funerary masks show a competence similar to other pupils of their age.
66. Standards in **design and technology** in Year 2 are comparable with the work of other pupils of that age, as was the case at the time of the previous inspection. The pupils have designed their own wheeled vehicles, using pictures and plans to show their intentions. They list and collect the resources they require, considering the properties of the materials. This links soundly with their work in science. The pupils have worked in groups to construct wheeled vehicles, using correct vocabulary such as 'axles' confidently. They evaluate the success of their work, where they found the most difficulty and how they overcame any problems. However, they have a limited experience of working with a wide variety of materials, such as food, and a range of mechanisms.
67. Only one lesson, of dance with Year 1, was seen in **physical education** during the inspection so no secure judgements can be made about standards and provision. The Year 2 pupils report that they enjoy their lessons and know how to handle the apparatus safely. They have a good awareness of the need for exercise and its effect on their bodies. They understand that the 'Rise and shine' sessions get their brains 'ready for learning'. The curriculum fulfils the requirements of the National Curriculum. Visiting sports coaches, for example for cricket and rugby, develop pupils' skills and enhance the curriculum for them.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

68. Only one lesson was observed in personal, social and health education and therefore no judgement can be made on provision. The curriculum is well planned and produces positive outcomes. It incorporates clear messages on behaviour, caring and friendship as well as important points about healthy living and repeats them in each age group. These are understood and followed consistently by the pupils. They are friendly to visitors, staff and each other, have positive attitudes to work and follow a healthy life style. The lesson observed provided the pupils with a satisfactory understanding of the importance and value of working together.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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