

INSPECTION REPORT

TIMBERSCOMBE CE FIRST SCHOOL

Minehead

LEA area: West Somerset

Unique reference number: 123841

Headteacher: Mrs Lesley Lyle

Lead inspector: Derek Watts

Dates of inspection: 7 – 8 March 2005

Inspection number: 268132

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First school
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 to 9 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	29
School address:	Timberscombe Minehead Somerset
Postcode:	TA24 7TY
Telephone number:	01643 841259
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr N Hockin
Date of previous inspection:	19 October 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Timberscombe Church of England School is a voluntary aided first school, located in the village of Timberscombe. With only 29 pupils on role, the school is much smaller than average. Children's attainment on entry to the school varies from year to year, but is above average in the current reception class. Most of the pupils are from a White British background and there are no pupils with English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is below the national average and there are no pupils with statements of special educational needs. The school's intake is mainly from the village of Timberscombe, with some pupils coming from surrounding villages. The socio-economic circumstances of the school's intake are broadly average. The school's roll has fallen in recent years but this is consistent with other schools in the area. The school is organised into two classes with one class comprising of reception, Year 1 and Year 2 pupils. The other class consists of pupils from Years 3 and 4.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
22092	Derek Watts	Lead inspector	Special educational needs English as an additional language English Science Information and communication technology Design and technology History Physical education
32667	Liz Coleman	Lay inspector	
28014	Peter Buckley	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Mathematics Art and design Geography Music

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Timberscombe Church of England First is a good school and is highly regarded by its parents. The headteacher and staff have created a positive school ethos where pupils are valued and included well in all activities. Pupils achieve well because of the good teaching they receive. Standards are above average overall across the school and they are well above average in English and mathematics in Year 4. The school is more expensive to run than most and provides sound value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Teaching, learning and achievement are very good in English and mathematics in Years 3 and 4.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning and behave well.
- The headteacher provides good leadership and direction.
- The curricula for the Foundation Stage and for information and communication technology are less well developed.
- The curriculum is enriched by a good range of additional activities.
- The partnership with other schools is very good.

Overall, the school has made good improvements since its last inspection in October 1998. The school had two key issues for improvement. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching have been satisfactorily addressed and financial planning and monitoring are now good. Standards in English, mathematics and science have improved in Year 2 from average to above average. In Year 4, standards have improved from average to well above average in English and mathematics and to above average in science. The school's positive ethos, where pupils have good attitudes and behave well, has been maintained. Similarly, the good teaching and the effective leadership and management have been maintained.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Pupils' achievement is good overall. Children's attainment on entry to the school varies from year to year but it is above average in the current reception. Children in reception achieve satisfactorily. All children are likely to reach the expected early learning goals by the end of reception and a significant proportion should exceed these.

Care has to be taken when interpreting national test results in a small school because one pupil's performance represents a high proportion of a year group's results. The school's national test results for Year 2 in 2004 were above average in reading and mathematics and average in writing. In the current Year 2, standards are above average in speaking and listening, reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils are achieving well in these areas.

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

Pupils in Years 3 and 4 achieve very well in all areas of English and in mathematics because of the very good teaching they receive. Standards in the current Year 4 are well above average in these two subjects. Standards in science are above average across the school and achievement is good.

Across the school, standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are average and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. The school's provision for ICT is not as well developed as it is for other subjects. Pupils receive insufficient direct teaching and during the inspection the class computers were underused. Pupils with special educational needs are achieving well because of the good teaching and effective support they receive.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and they behave well in lessons and around the school. Attitudes and behaviour are often very good in Years 3 and 4. Relationships between pupils, and between adults and pupils, are very good. Attendance is good and punctuality is satisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is good. Teaching and learning are good overall. In Years 1 and 2, teaching and learning are good in English and mathematics. Teaching and learning are very good in English and mathematics in Years 3 and 4. This contributes to pupils' very good achievement in these subjects. Teaching is good across the school in science and pupils make good gains in acquiring scientific knowledge and skills. In ICT, little direct teaching was seen during the inspection and pupils have insufficient opportunities to use ICT to support their learning. The curriculum is satisfactory. A good range of activities is provided to enrich the curriculum, including musical instrument tuition, football, hand bells and tennis. The school has been particularly successful in inter-school sports tournaments. While the Foundation Stage curriculum for children in reception is satisfactory, the range of activities is not sufficiently varied and children have too few opportunities to explore and find things out for themselves. Care, welfare and support for pupils are good. Links with parents and the community are good. The partnership with other schools in the area is very good and this enables a smooth transfer to the middle school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides clear direction for the school and leads by example in her teaching. The school's performance is effectively monitored and evaluated. Improvement planning is sound but targets and success criteria in the plan are not always focused enough on pupils' outcomes. Governance is good. The governing body is supportive, is involved in the life of the school and has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and development areas. All statutory requirements are met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents' views of the school are very positive. Parents are very pleased with all aspects of the school and few have expressed any concerns. Pupils are also happy with their school and participate well in the activities offered.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Increase the range of learning opportunities for children in reception in order to raise achievement further.
- Increase the learning opportunities in ICT in order to raise achievement further.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Pupils' achievement is good overall. Standards are above average overall in reception, Year 2 and in Year 4. Standards are well above average in English and mathematics in the current Year 4.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well in English and mathematics.
- Pupils achieve well in science.
- Pupils achieve less well in information and communication technology (ICT).
- All groups of pupils including those with special educational needs, achieve well.

Commentary

1. Children's overall attainment on entry to the school varies due to the small numbers in each year group. In the current reception class, attainment on entry is above average. All children are likely to attain the expected early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; mathematical development and in knowledge and understanding of the world. Nearly half of the children are likely to exceed these. Children are achieving satisfactorily in most areas of learning due to satisfactory provision. Achievement is better in mathematical development.
2. Care has to be taken in interpreting test results with small year groups in small schools because one pupil's performance represents a large proportion of the year group's results. In the National Curriculum tests for Year 2, the school's results were above average in reading and mathematics and average in writing.
3. In reading, results have been above average during the last two years. The boys have performed better than the girls in reading in recent years and this pattern is against the national trend. Writing results have been less consistent as these were above average in 2002, below average in 2003 and average in 2004. Boys and girls performed equally in 2004 but the boys did better than the girls in 2003. This again is against the national trend. Results in mathematics have been above average during the last two years. The boys have consistently performed better than the girls in mathematics but this is in line with national findings.
4. In the current Year 2, standards are above average in speaking and listening, reading, writing and mathematics. Most pupils, including higher attainers and those with special educational needs, are achieving well because of good teaching and support.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.8 (16.7)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	15.0 (14.3)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	17.3 (17.3)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 8 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

5. In the current Year 4, standards are well above average in speaking and listening, reading, writing and mathematics. These pupils have achieved very well based on their attainment in Year 2. This is because of the very good teaching they receive in English and mathematics.
6. Standards are above average in science in the current Year 2 and Year 4. Pupils are achieving well because of good teaching and good opportunities for investigative work. Across the school, standards in ICT are broadly average and pupils are achieving satisfactorily. The ICT curriculum is not as well developed as that in English, mathematics and science. The school is aware of this and is taking effective action to embed ICT across the curriculum.
7. Pupils with special educational needs are achieving well overall. They are achieving very well in English and in mathematics in Years 3 and 4. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support from teachers and teaching assistants. Targeted support for reading, spelling and numeracy is effective.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils have positive attitudes to learning, and their behaviour is good. Their spiritual, moral and cultural development is good, and their social development is very good. Attendance is good and punctuality is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have very good relationships with others.
- Pupils behave well in the classroom and around the school.
- The school has been effective in promoting good attendance.
- The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development and promotes social development very well.
- Pupils like school and have good attitudes to learning.

Commentary

8. In this small school community all pupils know each other very well and have harmonious and co-operative relationships. There is no reported bullying in school, and playtimes are lively but friendly and purposeful, with older pupils playing happily with younger ones. The ethos of the school is inclusive and boys and girls take part in the same activities well. Pupils are confident that members of staff will deal with any incidents of misbehaviour promptly and effectively. As a result, most pupils have positive attitudes, both to each other and to their learning. They respond well to challenge and participate in all school activities.
9. Since the last inspection the school has been successful in maintaining consistently good behaviour throughout the school day. This is because teachers know the pupils very well and have high expectations of their conduct. Pupils understand what is required of them and are proud of their school's good reputation. In the classroom the behaviour of a few younger pupils can deteriorate when expectations are not firmly reinforced, and this can slow the rate of their learning. However, behaviour is more consistent in Years 3 and 4 and is often very good. There have been no exclusions in recent years.
10. The school has been successful in maintaining an improving trend in attendance as a result of rigorous adherence to a comprehensive attendance policy and well-developed monitoring systems. Parents are well aware of the school's requirements and support them. The school's close contact with parents also means that absences are promptly followed up. Where there is cause for concern about an individual's record, there is an effective system, using outside agencies, to address the problem. While most pupils arrive at school on time and start their activities promptly, there are incidents of lateness. The systems to monitor and record lateness are not sufficiently rigorous.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 2003/2004 (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.5	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.

11. The school has made good provision for the development of pupils' spiritual and moral education with an emphasis on Christian community values and close contact with the Church. Assemblies provide a regular opportunity for pupils to reflect and to think about themselves and their relationships with others. They are encouraged to engage with and have had the opportunity to raise funds for, major charities. The school has links with a school in Zambia and support it with fund-raising activities. They make a generous contribution towards life in the local community by entertaining residents of a local home for the elderly and sharing their harvest gifts with them.
12. Pupils are actively encouraged to take part in cultural activities, especially music. The school is keen to give the pupils opportunities to attend concerts, theatres and local festivals and has invited writers, artists and story tellers to talk about their work. Pupils' preparation for life in a multicultural society is satisfactory. For example, pupils have taken part in an informative Hindu Day, and participated in a visit from the Kathakali Dance Group. Older pupils have been studying the Jewish faith and its traditions. The school recognises the need to develop this provision further.
13. There is very good provision to promote pupils' social development. The 'family' atmosphere in school means that pupils have close relationships with each other and with members of staff. However, it is recognised that pupils need stimulating opportunities to interact with children from outside the school and the village. The school has therefore collaborated very successfully with others in the surrounding area to ensure good social contacts between pupils during residential visits and in music and sporting activities. Within school, older pupils have good opportunities to undertake duties and act as role models for the younger ones. These develop self-confidence and maturity. All pupils are encouraged to participate fully in school activities. They report that they enjoy school. They are keen to learn and are proud of their achievements.

Exclusions

There were no exclusions recorded during the school year.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided is good overall. Teaching and learning are good. The curriculum is satisfactory, with good enrichment opportunities. Pupils' care, welfare and safety are good. There are good partnerships with parents and the community. The school's links with other schools are very good.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good overall. Assessment procedures and the use of assessment are satisfactory overall. Assessment in English and mathematics is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning in English and mathematics are very good in Years 3 and 4.
- Teaching and learning are good in science throughout the school and in English and mathematics in Years 1 and 2.
- Teaching assistants make an effective contribution to pupils' learning.
- Some lessons lack sufficient variety, pace and challenge.
- ICT is underused to support teaching and learning.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 13 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	3	6	4	0	0	0

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

14. The school has maintained the good quality teaching and learning reported at the last inspection.
15. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in reception. Lessons are soundly planned and there is effective support provided by a teaching assistant. Activities are not always sufficiently varied and there are insufficient opportunities for children to choose and initiate activities.
16. In Years 1 and 2, teaching and learning are good in English and mathematics. Lessons are well planned and structured with clearly identified learning objectives. For the main tasks, pupils are usually organised into groups of similar attainment. Work is well matched to pupils' different needs so they are suitably challenged. Teaching assistants are well deployed and make a significant contribution to pupils' learning, particularly to those pupils with special educational needs.
17. Teaching and learning are very good in English and mathematics in Years 3 and 4. Expectations and levels of challenge are high. This high quality teaching contributes to pupils' very good achievement in these subjects. In a very good English lesson, pupils were writing character sketches. The teacher was particularly effective in demonstrating on the board how to begin a character sketch to make the writing lively with the use of interesting adjectives. Pupils were highly productive and produced interesting sketches. The end of the lesson was used well for pupils to share and review their work. In a very good mathematics lesson, the learning objectives and tasks were very well matched to pupils' attainment and needs. The teacher provided very good demonstrations, instructions and explanations on how to estimate and weigh different objects. The teacher used questioning effectively to check pupils' understanding.
18. The teaching of science is good throughout the school. Lessons have a clear purpose and pupils know what they are to learn. Pupils have good opportunities to carry out practical investigations and as a result they make good gains in acquiring and applying scientific skills such as observing, measuring, recording data and interpreting results. Pupils competently explain their findings. Some tasks in science are not sufficiently well matched to pupils' different levels of attainment. As a result, some pupils are not suitably challenged, slowing their progress.
19. During the inspection, very little direct teaching of ICT was seen and only in a few lessons did pupils use it to support their learning. The scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with pupils indicate that there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to acquire and apply a range of ICT skills. While the ICT work that was seen was of an average standard, standards were generally lower than those in English, mathematics and science.

20. Where teaching was satisfactory rather than good, expectations and the levels of challenge were lower, the pace of the lesson was less brisk, pupils were not as motivated and productive, and they made satisfactory gains in their learning rather than good gains.
21. Assessment is satisfactory overall. The school has good systems for assessing pupils' attainment in English and mathematics. Good use is made of National Curriculum test data and non-statutory tests. Pupils' attainment is effectively tracked as they progress through the school. This data is used well to guide planning. Assessment procedures are less well established and developed in other subjects.

The curriculum

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum, with good opportunities for enrichment, which enables most pupils to achieve well. Accommodation and resources are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curricula for English, mathematics and science are well planned.
- A good range of extra-curricular activities enriches the curriculum.
- Accommodation and resources are good.
- The Foundation Stage curriculum lacks variety.
- The curriculum for ICT is not as well developed as that for English, mathematics and science.

Commentary

22. The Foundation Stage curriculum is satisfactory and based on the six areas of learning, but it is limited in the scope and range of activities, particularly the opportunities for activities initiated by the children. The breadth and balance of the curriculum for Years 1 and 2 are satisfactory and provide many worthwhile learning opportunities. All National Curriculum subjects are taught, plus religious education and personal, social, health education and citizenship. The curricula are good in English, mathematics and science and have a positive effect on pupils' achievement in these subjects. ICT is not taught as a separate subject and pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to use ICT to support their learning in other subjects. The school is aware of this and has made it a priority in the school improvement plan.
23. The school provides good enrichment opportunities and these contribute well to pupils' social development and enhance their learning. Pupils enjoy a good range of visits and visitors to the school. All pupils in Years 3 and 4 learn the recorder, and about three quarters learn another instrument such as the piano or guitar. They are taught to ring hand bells and perform in the local church and on other occasions. Country dancing and Maypole dancing are other activities which pupils enjoy. The school participates well in local sporting competitions. Links with local schools and the middle school to which pupils transfer are very good; these contribute very effectively to pupils' wider experiences. Residential visits are also arranged for pupils in Years 3 and 4.
24. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The curriculum is well planned to meet their needs, and effective support is provided. Pupils have full access to the activities provided. The clear planning and good support contribute to their good achievement.
25. A good range of learning resources strengthens curriculum provision. The accommodation is generally good and well maintained. New additional accommodation for children in reception has improved facilities to meet the demands of the Foundation Stage curriculum. Indoor work in physical education is restricted by the lack of apparatus in the adjacent village hall, but there is a field and a small swimming pool for work out of doors.

Care, guidance and support

The provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is good throughout the school. Adults provide good support and guidance and monitor pupils' personal development well. There are good procedures for helping new pupils settle in quickly. Pupils play a satisfactory part in the school's work and development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Members of staff have developed good, close, supportive relationships with the pupils.
- Pupils receive good support for their personal development based on systematic monitoring.
- Induction arrangements for new pupils are good.
- The school takes good care of pupils and provides them with a safe environment for learning.

Commentary

26. Members of staff know the pupils well, supervise and support them well and are in close contact with pupils in all their activities. The school has fostered a strong team spirit in which all celebrate the achievements of individuals. This is an aspect of the school's provision that parents greatly value. The majority of parents whole-heartedly agree that the school has a caring ethos.
27. The school is able to give well-targeted support to each pupil according to need, and can be flexible in its teaching arrangements to ensure that pupils are given the most appropriate opportunities to develop their learning. For example, individual pupils can work with different year groups for particular subjects where necessary. A sound and systematic approach to assessment, together with the maintenance of individual portfolios, means that pupils' progress and personal development are closely monitored throughout their school career.
28. The school has close links with the local playgroup and an effective comprehensive induction programme which ensure a smooth introduction to school life. Pupils have produced a simple welcoming booklet illustrating some of the routines for the youngest newcomers. Pupils reported that they had all settled in quickly when they joined the school, whether that was into the reception class or into later years.
29. The school is well maintained and there is a thorough approach to health and safety issues. Parents are confident that their children are well cared for in the school. There are sensible and proportionate measures to ensure children's safety while outside the premises. Accident records show that there have been few serious incidents and that pupils are well supervised. Members of staff are alert to child protection issues and there are good links with outside agencies to follow up any causes for concern.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has maintained its good links with parents and the local community since the last inspection. Its very good partnerships with other schools make a positive contribution to provision.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has fostered very strong links with other schools.
- Parents hold very positive views about the school.
- The school provides good information to parents about its activities and their children's progress.
- Close links with the local community enhance provision and contribute to pupils' social development.

Commentary

30. The school has made very effective use of its collaborative relationships with partnership schools. This has extended pupils' opportunities to participate in many different areas, especially in competitive sport and music outside school. The school has links with Petauke Primary School in Zambia, and pupils have learned much about life in that country by understanding how their contributions of money and equipment have been used.
31. By regularly linking with other schools, pupils have been able to socialise and work co-operatively with other local pupils in a range of activities and ventures. By the time they transfer to their new school, pupils have already spent time with many of the new school's intake. The school recognises the particular adjustments that their pupils will have to make when they transfer to a much larger middle school. It has developed very good procedures to ensure that all pupils transfer with the confidence of knowing that they will be well supported by staff who have a great deal of both social and academic information about them when they arrive.
32. Parents hold the school in high regard. A very good proportion of parents completed the pre-inspection questionnaires. All aspects of the school were responded to very favourably. In particular, parents liked the homework arrangements. They felt their children liked school, they thought the school was approachable, they liked the range of activities on offer and they felt that the staff encouraged the pupils to do well. Parents expressed very few areas of concern. The meeting held with parents was also very positive. The inspection team agreed with the many strengths identified by the parents.
33. The school provides good, regular information to parents in its newsletters, and both the school prospectus and annual governors' report to parents are informative and of high quality. Parents support the school well by attending events, especially parents and curriculum evenings, and by successful fundraising. However, few parents come into school to support teaching and learning in the classroom.
34. Annual written reports are comprehensive and personalised. They give parents a good indication of their children's progress, both academically and in terms of personal development. However, they do not always give a clear indication of the standards they attain. Pupils are aware of their own personal targets to help them improve their work, but some do not always understand clearly the strategies to achieve them.
35. The school provides an important focus for the village. It has developed strong links with the community, drawing on support from local residents and the parish to support learning. The vicar and some members of the governing body visit the school regularly to support learning activities. Pupils take part in an annual pilgrimage, which visits all the local churches. Pupils have made good use of the beautiful and historic surroundings to enhance their learning. For example, they spend a day with the Exmoor National Park Education Officer to explore the River Aville from its source in Timberscombe. The school makes good use of the enhanced sports provision organised by the local authority. Pupils have also taken part in local country and music festivals and visited nearby residential homes to ring hand bells. The school's swimming pool is open to the village during the summer. Pupils have learnt about fire hazards during visits from the Fire Brigade. They have raised funds for their school in conjunction with the local Rotary Club.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good overall. The headteacher provides good leadership and direction. Co-ordinators of key areas provide effective support. The governance of the school is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides clear leadership and direction.
- There is a positive school ethos.
- Strategic planning and marketing are underdeveloped.

Commentary

36. The governors are effective, supportive and very much involved in the day-to-day life of the school. They are well led by a committed and enthusiastic chair. The governing body has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and development needs. All statutory requirements are met.
37. The headteacher has a good vision for the school which is firmly focused on pupils' learning. In her teaching, she leads by example by providing very good lessons, particularly in English and mathematics. The headteacher and staff have successfully created a school where all pupils are valued and fully participate in the range of activities provided. The school has successfully gained the confidence of its parents. These factors contribute significantly to pupils' good achievement.
38. The leadership of English, mathematics, science and special educational needs is good. Co-ordinators have clear visions for their subjects, and teamwork amongst staff is good. Teaching in these subjects is consistently good and pupils achieve well.
39. The day-to-day management of the school is effective. Procedures for monitoring and evaluating the school's performance are good overall. The headteacher and local education authority advisers have monitored and evaluated teaching. However, there are few opportunities for other co-ordinators within the school to observe and monitor teaching. National Curriculum test results and other assessments are effectively analysed.
40. School development planning is sound, with appropriate priorities such as to further improve speaking and listening, writing and ICT across the curriculum. However, the targets and success criteria in the plan are not always sufficiently focused on outcomes for pupils that can be measured. The school has been less effective in planning strategically in order to address falling rolls, and to prepare for the possibility of the reorganisation of schools. However, the governors have the clear intention to improve their approach to strategic planning and marketing.
41. Financial planning and management are good. Inevitably, the school's expenditure per pupil is such that as a small school is considerably higher than the national average. The school has a larger than usual carry forward but this is earmarked for the new building extension. The school is providing a good quality of education and pupils are achieving well. However, because of the school's high expenditure per pupil, value for money can only be satisfactory.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	152,815	Balance from previous year	28,682
Total expenditure	154,915	Balance carried forward to the next	26,582
Expenditure per pupil	4,426		

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for children in the Foundation stage is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well in their mathematical development.
- Children's personal and social development is good.
- There are insufficient opportunities for children to make choices, initiate their own activities and develop their independence.
- A limited range of activities constrains the breadth and rate of children's learning.

Commentary

42. The five children in reception are given a sound start to their education. They have the advantage of small class numbers. The additional accommodation, very recently built, which opens onto a secure but small outdoor area has improved the provision since the last inspection. However, although the needs of the reception children are planned for, the curriculum is based mainly on the National Curriculum needs of the Years 1 and 2 pupils and, particularly where there is little adult support, activities are limited in their scope and insufficiently interrelated and interesting. In children's reading, writing and number work, which takes place mainly in the morning, they are more consistently supported by a teaching assistant who works effectively to develop their skills. Children's attainment on entry to the school in the current reception class is above average. Their achievement is satisfactory and they all attain or exceed the expected early learning goals. Their overall standards are above average for entry into Year 1. Assessment procedures are sound. The teaching assistant maintains good records of the language and mathematical achievements of the children, and the individual Foundation Stage profiles are well maintained by the class teacher, who provides overall sound management of the Foundation Stage. Strong links exist with the local pre-school so that continuous progress is assured.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

43. Children's achievement is sound in personal, social and emotional development, and the teaching is satisfactory. Children have all had pre-school experience and are confident about leaving parents and carers when they start school. They settle quickly into class routines and are confident in the way they listen and speak to each other in small groups and to adults, although they are not as attentive in whole-class lessons with the older pupils. Children behave well, show good attitudes to their work and know the importance of sharing and taking turns. They are encouraged to work independently and to tidy up afterwards. However, their work is largely directed by the teacher, and there are no regular planned opportunities for them to initiate activities or to make choices. This inhibits their development of independence.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

44. In communication, language and literacy, children's achievement is satisfactory. Sound teaching and the use of a well-qualified teaching assistant contribute to children's satisfactory development of literacy skills. Speaking and listening skills are above average. Children speak clearly, use extended sentences and express ideas confidently. Many have an extensive vocabulary. Children listen well and respond to the ideas of others appropriately. Children have good opportunities to browse and share books particularly early in the morning with their parents. They also share their books with pupils from other year groups. There is a strong partnership with parents in hearing their children read at home, and this contributes

significantly to the above average standards in children's reading. All children write legibly, and the more able write sentences independently and use their knowledge of letter sounds to spell words. However, the language environment lacks vibrancy. There is a corner for spontaneous writing in the main classroom and writing materials are available in the role play area. However, both of these areas were under used during the inspection. .

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

45. Children achieve well in their mathematical development as a result of good teaching and the structured support given by the teaching assistant who works with them on a regular basis. All children are able to count reliably beyond ten and add or take away one from a given number. They know the names of shapes and use mathematical language such as 'more' and 'less'. The higher attaining children are confident with numbers beyond 20 and show quick mental agility when adding and subtracting. In a lesson observed, children worked with coins, using them to purchase items.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

46. Children make satisfactory progress in the area of knowledge and understanding of the world. Planning is based mainly on the topics for the older pupils, with some activities appropriate for the younger children. For example, in a lesson exploring magnets, the reception children were given the task of 'fishing' for different items and grouping them according to whether or not they stuck to the magnet, and then looked at different toy magnets. Both activities were limited in scope and there was no opportunity to choose activities. Children have explored the past, through the Great Fire of London, the life of Florence Nightingale and by looking at buildings in the locality. ICT skills are developed well. However, activities are not sufficiently varied and inter-related so as to develop children's creative and language skills in addition to their knowledge of the world.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

47. Children have access to a range of materials so that they can explore colour, shape and texture in a variety of ways. From the work displayed, where children had used pastels and created collages, their achievement in creative development is satisfactory. There are some links with other areas of learning. For example, they use paints to practise the starting letter of a word. Music, which is taught by a specialist teacher, was not timetabled during the inspection.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

48. Opportunities for physical development are restricted. The village hall has no apparatus for children to participate in more robust activities, and the small, secure outdoor area in the playground has a sloping surface that makes it difficult for children to play on wheeled vehicles. However, in the summer term, children have access to a large climbing apparatus outside and to a swimming pool. No lessons were observed during the inspection. There are sound opportunities to develop finer skills, such as cutting and shaping dough. Children learn to handle small implements safely. They hold pencils and brushes correctly so that they make a good start in their writing skills.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are achieving very well overall in English.
- Teaching and learning are good, with very good examples in Years 3 and 4.
- Assessment and target setting are effective.
- Leadership and management are good.

Commentary

49. In the current Year 2, standards are above average in speaking and listening, reading and writing. Pupils are achieving well from their prior attainment on entry to the school. In the current Year 4, standards are well above average in all areas of English. Pupils' achieve very well in Years 3 and 4 and very well overall. The very good teaching in Years 3 and 4 accounts for the better achievement in these years. Standards have improved significantly since the last inspection when they were reported to be average in all areas of English in Year 2 and in Year 4. The school's recent priorities for improvement have been to further develop language skills across the curriculum and writing. Good progress has been made in these areas.
50. Teaching and learning are good overall. Teaching and learning in Years 3 and 4 are very good. Lessons are well planned and have a clear purpose. Teachers' instructions, demonstrations and explanations are clear and informative. For example, in a good Years 1 and 2 lesson, the teacher used the 'big book dictionary' to show pupils how to use a dictionary. Pupils worked well, finding a range of words in a dictionary and writing definitions. They made good gains in vocabulary and in sentence construction. The teacher's expectations and the pace of lessons are high in the Years 3 and 4 class. In a very good lesson for Years 3 and 4, the teacher demonstrated very well how to begin a character introduction. She used questioning effectively and encouraged pupils to express their ideas. Pupils were motivated and productive in writing character sketches of their own. They made very good gains in their learning and produced writing which was well structured, imaginative and clear. Work is well matched to pupils' different attainment and needs, so that pupils are suitably challenged. Teaching assistants are well deployed and make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning, particularly those pupils with special educational needs.
51. The school has effective systems for assessing pupils' attainment. Attainment and progress are tracked effectively as pupils move through the school. Assessment data is used well to plan teaching and learning. As a result, activities and tasks are generally well matched to pupils' attainment and needs.
52. English is well led and managed and this contributes to the pupils' very good achievement. The co-ordinator has a clear overview of standards and provision across the school. The headteacher and local education advisers effectively monitor teaching and provide constructive feedback. National Curriculum test results and other assessments are carefully analysed and the findings are used well to inform development planning. Overall, the school has made good improvements since the last inspection.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

53. Other lessons are used well for pupils to develop and apply language skills. For example, in science, pupils express their ideas and report back the findings of their investigations. Pupils use their writing skills well across the curriculum. For example, in history, pupils in Year 2 write clear factual accounts about the work of Florence Nightingale. Pupils produce a series of questions to ask in order to find out about the past.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average at the end of Year 2 and well above average in Year 4.
- Teaching and learning are good overall and there is very good teaching in Years 3 and 4.
- Leadership and management of the subject are good.

Commentary

54. In the current Year 2, standards are above average and pupils' achievement is good. In Year 4, pupils' achievement is very good and standards seen were well above average. Pupils benefit from very small classes and effective teaching assistant support. The few pupils with special educational needs are well supported and achieve well. Teachers and teaching assistants are very sensitive to individual difficulties and their step-by-step approaches are effective at helping pupils to learn basic skills.
55. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and consistently very good in the Years 3 and 4 class. Teaching of high quality contributes significantly to pupils' high standards and very good achievement. Teachers' subject knowledge is very secure; consequently, planning is very well focused and expectations are high. There is sufficient challenge in lessons to engage all pupils at the right level. Very good relationships between pupils, and between pupils and adults, contribute effectively to pupils' well-developed collaborative working. For example, in a lesson on measuring mass, pupils worked in groups of similar attainment estimating the mass of objects; all were appropriately challenged and their achievement was very good. In the Years 1 and 2 class, teaching is good and the teaching assistants are used well. A lesson where pupils worked on adding two-digit numbers was well managed in small ability groups with good individual questioning. The end of the lesson was used well to review learning.
56. Good teaching of the basic numeracy skills to pupils in Years 1 and 2 provides a solid base for further mathematical work. In Years 3 and 4, oral and mental work is both brisk and rigorous so that pupils know their tables and show good mental agility. Learning and achievement are underpinned by the very positive relationships established in class. Pupils develop positive attitudes because teachers value the contributions they make to lessons. Behaviour is very good and pupils work hard. There are effective systems for assessing and marking pupils' work.
57. The subject is led and managed well. Standards and provision are effectively monitored and National Curriculum test results are carefully analysed. The good quality leadership and management contribute to the overall good teaching and good pupil achievement.

Mathematics across the curriculum

58. Pupils apply and develop numeracy skills satisfactorily in a number of subjects. For example, in science, pupils apply measuring skills when investigating parts of the body. Numerical data is clearly presented in graphs or bar charts and competently interpreted.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are achieving well.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- Occasionally tasks are not sufficiently well matched to pupils' attainment.

Commentary

59. Standards are above average in the current Year 2 and Year 4. Most pupils, including higher attainers and those with special educational needs, are achieving well because of good teaching and support. Standards have improved since the last inspection when they were reported to be average in Years 2 and 4.
60. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Lessons are well planned, with clear learning objectives identified. Objectives are shared effectively with the class so pupils know what they are to learn. Pupils are provided with good opportunities for practical investigations, and they make good gains in acquiring and applying scientific skills. In a good lesson for Years 1 and 2, pupils were given good opportunities to predict and test which materials were magnetic. Pupils classified a range of materials and the teacher recorded their results in a chart. The teaching assistant supported a group of pupils well. However, pupils were not given sufficient opportunity to explore their own methods of testing and recording. Most pupils concluded that some metal objects were magnetic while non-metallic objects were not. The teacher used the end of the lesson well to reinforce and extend the pupils' learning. By testing a soft drinks can and a piece of gold jewellery, pupils discovered that aluminium and gold are not magnetic.
61. In a good lesson in the Years 3 and 4 class, the teacher recapped effectively on pupils' previous learning by good questioning. The teacher used a model skeleton well. Pupils responded well as they recognised common bones and identified the function of the skeleton. The pupils, with the teacher's help, then recorded the results of a survey during which they had measured the length of forearms of pupils from different year groups. Pupils used a computer program well to record their results and to produce a bar graph. Pupils interpreted their results and discovered that pupils' forearms grow longer as they get older. All pupils then answered a similar set of questions about the results. Some of the early questions were not sufficiently challenging for higher attainers.
62. The leadership and management of science are good. The co-ordinator leads by example in her teaching and she has increased opportunities for investigative science. She is increasing the use of ICT to support teaching and learning. An adviser from the local education authority has observed teaching and provided feedback; but the co-ordinator has had limited opportunities to do this. Overall, the school has made good improvements since the last inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

63. ICT was only sampled, as there were insufficient direct examples of teaching and learning during the inspection to make a full report.
64. ICT is not taught as a separate subject. Pupils are taught skills and given opportunities to apply these through a range of subjects across the curriculum. There was very little direct

teaching of ICT seen during the inspection and the computers in the two main classrooms were underused. Whilst the examples of ICT work seen from Years 2 and 4 were generally average, the quantity of work was low and much of it was undated.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

65. The use of ICT to support teaching and learning in other subjects is only satisfactory. Whilst there are some good examples of this, ICT is not used consistently well across the school. In science in Years 3 and 4, pupils use a basic spreadsheet to record the results of a survey in which they measure the length of pupils' forearms. They converted the data into a bar graph. In history, pupils in Years 3 and 4 used the Internet competently to find information about the Aztecs. They copied and pasted useful illustrations.

HUMANITIES

66. Geography and history were sampled. Religious education was evaluated by a separate Section 23 inspection.
67. In **geography**, no lessons were seen but pupils' work was examined. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 learn about other countries through the travels of 'Monty Mouse', and also study their own locality. In Years 3 and 4, pupils walk to the source of their local river as part of a study of rivers; they also explore the environment of Exmoor. All pupils make use of, and appreciate, their rich local environment.
68. One lesson was seen in **history**. The lesson, for Years 3 and 4, was well planned, and pupils had good opportunities to find out information about the Aztecs from books and from the Internet. Pupils answered questions about food, homes, clothes and religion. They applied research skills well and made good gains in acquiring new knowledge. The standards seen in this lesson were above average. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 study the work of Florence Nightingale. They devise questions to ask in order to find more information. Pupils produce clear, factual written accounts, applying and developing their language and literacy skills well.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

69. Art and design, design and technology, music and physical education were sampled.
70. In **art and design**, there was evidence of a satisfactory range of work. From pupils in Years 1 and 2 there were examples of collages, paint mixing of primary colours and observational painting of local trees in winter. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 had made colourful gargoyles out of clay, with an accompanying book of poems and sketched portraits. A visit from an artist is planned.
71. In **design and technology**, scrutiny of work indicates that pupils cover a sound range of projects in order to develop skills for designing, making and evaluating products. Pupils in Year 2 design and make board games from card. They decide on the number of players, the materials needed and they make up the rules. Pupils' evaluation of the product is limited by mainly 'closed questions' which only encourage one-word responses, for example 'Was the game easy to make?' 'Is it a good game?' Last year pupils in Year 2 produced simple moving mechanisms with levers from card. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 use and apply their knowledge of electrical circuits to develop games and make them more exciting.
72. Pupils have good opportunities to perform and sing in **music**. All pupils in Years 3 and 4 learn the recorder and about three quarters have piano or guitar lessons. A group of 12 pupils learn to ring hand bells and perform in the local church and on other occasions. Specialist class teaching and a wide range of extra-curricular tuition ensure that the subject maintains a high profile in the school. Pupils attend an annual performance by the Wells Cathedral School.

73. In **physical education**, only one lesson was seen. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 had sound opportunities to practise and develop football skills such as controlling, passing and receiving a ball. Whilst the teacher's instructions were generally clear, and the class was well managed, the pace and level of challenge were not sufficient to promote good progress and high levels of physical effort. The school participates well in a range of inter-school sports competitions and has experienced considerable success recently in football, tennis and swimming.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

74. This area of the curriculum was sampled.
75. The school provides numerous opportunities to promote pupils' personal development. The positive school ethos and the good systems of care contribute significantly to this area. 'Circle time' provides good opportunities for pupils to explore feelings and consider the views of others. Assemblies are used well to promote personal development. Visitors to the school, such as a representative from an international charity raised pupils understanding about the 'Rights of the Child'. The school's links with Zambia give pupils an awareness of the lives of children in other countries and cultures.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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

