

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **Dulverton Middle and Community School**

Dulverton, Somerset

LEA area: Somerset

Unique reference number: 123871

Headteacher: Steve Ford

Lead inspector: Michael Miller

Dates of inspection: 24<sup>th</sup> - 27<sup>th</sup> January 2005

Inspection number: 268378

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive, Middle (deemed Secondary).
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	9 - 13
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	160
School address:	Barns Close West Dulverton Somerset
Postcode:	TA22 9EE
Telephone number:	01398 323223
Fax number:	01398 324071
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Chris White
Date of previous inspection:	April 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Dulverton Middle and Community School is situated in the town of Dulverton on the southern edge of the Exmoor National Park, in Somerset. It is a community comprehensive middle school, for pupils aged 9 to 13 (Years 5 to 8). It is very much smaller in size than most other middle deemed secondary schools. There are 160 pupils on roll, 80 boys and 80 girls. The school is now larger than at the time of the previous inspection, and is currently fully subscribed. The numbers entering the school after Year 5, and leaving the school before Year 8, are above average. The school's catchment area is a large one, covering rural areas of Exmoor, and many pupils have long journeys to get to school. Most pupils live within the catchment area but, with increasing numbers, some 14 per cent come from outside the official area. The majority of pupils travel to school by public transport or private car. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school is below average, and the area is one of recognised rural deprivation. All the school's pupils are from white ethnic backgrounds. There are currently no pupils who are at an early stage of learning English. Employment and unemployment rates in the area are both below the national average, as the area has a well above average proportion of retired residents. At just 2 per cent, the proportion of pupils currently registered for free school meals is well below average. Some 19 per cent of pupils are on the register of special educational needs, which is average. Most pupils on this register have moderate learning difficulties, social, emotional or behavioural difficulties, or specific learning difficulties. At just over 2 per cent, the proportion of students having full Statements of Special Educational Need is average. The school holds an Activities Adventure Licence, as part of its work for the Exmoor Curriculum<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> See Paragraphs 103 to 105.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
17556	Michael Miller	Lead inspector	Citizenship Music
9052	Helen Barter	Lay inspector	
31441	Maggie King	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology
32919	Sue Hartropp	Team inspector	English Modern foreign languages
12890	Thomas Jardine	Team inspector	Science
17156	Ted Graham	Team inspector	Art and design Design and technology Physical education Special educational needs English as an additional language
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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

Dulverton Middle and Community School is a **good, effective** school. It has particular strengths in the range of curriculum opportunities it provides for its pupils, and in its good provision for their personal development. Overall, it provides a good quality of education for pupils and gives satisfactory value for money. The headteacher and governors are focused well on raising standards and achievement.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards in Year 6 English and mathematics tests are low in comparison with other schools.
- Overall, good teaching enables all groups of pupils to learn well and achieve well by Year 8.
- The good personal development of the pupils is underpinned by very good care and welfare.
- The use of assessment to set targets for improvement is inconsistent across the school.
- Some subject leaders are new to their roles and have not yet had time to influence standards.
- The curriculum is good, and offers more than the National Curriculum requires.
- Provision, standards and pupils' achievement are unsatisfactory in religious education.
- Pupils' good attitudes to their work have a good impact on their learning and development.
- The very good community links are a strong feature of the school's life and work.
- The headteacher, staff and governors are working together well to secure school improvement.

Improvement since the previous inspection, in June 1998, has been satisfactory overall. There have been good improvements in behaviour management, the school's curriculum, financial planning, and in the management of the school. However, although attainment in English and mathematics improved significantly between 1998 and 2002, they remain areas for further improvement.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Because this is a much smaller than average middle school, national guidance recommends caution when interpreting the data in the following table. This shows that in 2004 attainment in the Year 6 national tests was well below average overall when compared with all schools nationally, and with similar schools. Attainment was well below average in English and mathematics and below average in science. Inspectors judge the overall standards and achievement of the pupils who took the tests in 2004, and who are now in Year 7 at the school, to be better than that indicated in the table.

#### Year 6 results

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

Key: A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average  
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.

Pupils make good progress through Years 5 to 8. Their achievement is **good** overall. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school in Year 5 is below average. It is well below average in English and mathematics, and below average in most other subjects. Pupils' English language and literacy skills are below average by Year 6 but meet expectations in Year 8. Their competency in mathematics is well below average by Year 6, and below expectations in Year 8. However, pupils' use of information and communication technology (ICT) meets expectations by Years 6 and 8. The achievement of pupils with a special educational need, including those identified as gifted or talented, is good. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. Attendance and punctuality are

satisfactory. Their personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is **good**.

By Year 6, pupils' achievement is very good in art and design. It is good in most other subjects. Achievement is satisfactory in English, mathematics, and geography. However, achievement is unsatisfactory, and standards are below expectations in religious education. Standards by Year 6 are well below average in English and mathematics, but average in science. Attainment is in line with national expectations in most other subjects, but above expectations in art and design, design and technology, and physical education. By Year 8, pupils' achievement is very good in art and design. It is good in most other subjects. It is satisfactory in geography. Achievement is unsatisfactory, and attainment is below expectations in religious education. Standards by Year 8 are below expectations in mathematics. They meet expectations in English, and in most other subjects. Standards are above expectations in science, art and design, design and technology, and physical education.

### **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

Overall, the quality of education provided by the school is **good**. Teaching and learning are **good** overall. The curriculum is good. Opportunities for curriculum enrichment are good. Resources for learning are satisfactory, but accommodation is unsatisfactory overall. The support, advice and guidance provided for pupils are good. Partnership links with parents are good, other links through the community are very good, and educational links with other partner schools are good.

### **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The leadership, management and governance of the school are **good** overall. Leadership, including that of the headteacher and other key staff, is good. Management is satisfactory. The quality of governance is good overall. However, the governing body does not fully meet its statutory requirements concerning some information for parents regarding test results for both girls and boys. Plans for the support of ethnic minority, traveller and refugee pupils are not in place.

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

Parents' responses to the questionnaire were positive in all respects. However, a minority of parents expressed some concern relating to the information they receive about pupils' progress, and the inconsistent provision of homework. Inspectors support parents' good views of the school. However, targets for pupils vary in quality and are not always helpful enough. They do not agree, however, with a few parents' criticisms about homework, which inspectors judge to be satisfactory. Inspectors find the headteacher has introduced good opportunities for consultation with parents. Pupils are positive about the school's family atmosphere, which they say helps them to learn to get on well with others. Pupils greatly appreciate the school's location, and make the most of it. The pupils' involvement in school life has a good impact on their learning and development.

### **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- raise further pupils' standards of literacy, and particularly numeracy, to improve their achievement in the national Year 6 tests in English and mathematics;
- develop further the school's work on assessment, and ensure the more effective use of assessment information to set targets for raising standards and pupils' achievement;
- further develop the roles of subject leaders, particularly their skills in using performance data;
- improve provision in religious education;

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- ensure the full publication of school and national test results for both boys and girls;
- ensure full planning is in place for the support of ethnic minority, traveller and refugee pupils.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

#### Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement<sup>2</sup> is **good** overall. It is satisfactory in Years 5 and 6, and good in Years 7 and 8. Standards<sup>3</sup> in work and lessons seen are **average** overall, when compared with expectations for all schools nationally. Attainment is below average overall by Year 6, but meets expectations by Year 8.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils make good progress overall as they move through the school from year to year.
- Pupils' competency in and their use of mathematics are unsatisfactory across the school.
- Pupils' use of literacy across all subjects is under-developed in Years 5 and 6.
- Standards and achievement in religious education are too low.
- Overall, groups of pupils with a special educational need achieve well.

#### Commentary

1. The school's main intake area is one of recognised rural deprivation. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school in Year 5 is below average overall. It is well below average in English and mathematics, and below average in science and most other subjects. The pupils' use of literacy and numeracy is well below national expectations at the start of Year 5. Pupils' English language and literacy skills are below average by Year 6 but in line with expectations by Year 8. Their competency in mathematics is well below average by Year 6, and below expectations by Year 8. However, pupils' competency in the use of ICT is average, meeting expectations by Years 6 and 8. Overall, it is a school which enables its pupils to make good progress across the range of national curriculum subjects by the time they leave in Year 8. This is because teaching and learning are good overall, particularly in Years 7 and 8.
2. Pupils with learning difficulties, and those identified as gifted or talented, make good progress. Their achievement is good because of the school's careful identification of pupils' learning needs. Consequently, the level of support provided by teachers and learning support assistants in the classroom, and through planned withdrawal lessons, is good.

#### Key Stage 2 (Pupils in Years 5 and 6)

3. In 2004, attainment in the Year 6 national tests was well below average overall when compared with all schools nationally, and with similar schools<sup>4</sup>. Attainment was well below average in English and mathematics and below average in science. However, comparisons with similar schools is difficult as Dulverton Middle School is one of the smallest middle schools, classified as a secondary school, in the country. Because it is a small school, national guidelines state its performance data, set against national and similar schools, should be viewed with caution. This is because the performance of a very small percentage of its Year 6 pupils in the tests can make a significant difference between, for example, a well below average, and an average judgement. In recent years, the difference between the school's and the national test point scores<sup>5</sup> has been well below that considered statistically significant for a school the size of Dulverton.

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<sup>2</sup> Achievement refers to the progress students make in terms of where they started when they entered the school. Thus, good achievement does not necessarily mean that standards are above average, but that students do well and make better than expected progress.

<sup>3</sup> Attainment refers to the standards students achieve compared with national averages.

<sup>4</sup> Similar schools are those with a similar proportion of students entitled to free school meals.

<sup>5</sup> The average points score provides schools with a single statistic to compare the overall grades attained by their pupils with the grades attained by pupils in another school. At Key Stage 2, the Level attained by each pupil in English, mathematics and science, is given a score. A Level 3 = 21 points, a Level 4 = 27 points and so on. Therefore the average points score in the subject is worked out by: adding up all of the points based on the Level attained by pupils and then dividing by the number of pupils who took the test.



4. There are few schools nationally which now take their pupils at the start of Year 5, as is the case with Dulverton, rather than two years earlier at the start of Year 3. Although national data indicates the progress of pupils from Years 2 to 6 is well below average in the core subjects<sup>6</sup>, this too must be viewed with caution. In addition, the school appears to fail to meet the targets set by the local authority for the attainment of its pupils by the end of Year 6. However, these targets are set on the basis of the national tests taken two years before the pupils enter the school. From their examination of pupils' work, inspectors agree with the school's own overall evaluation and analysis of their pupils' attainment on entry in Year 5. The inspection therefore judges the progress of pupils to be satisfactory in Years 5 and 6, and good in Years 7 and 8. Furthermore, the school shows satisfactory success in meeting its own predicted targets, based on pupils' performance at the start of Year 5. Overall, this is a school which is focused well on raising pupils' achievement.
  
5. Information on the school, published by the Department for Education and Skills, shows the school's overall rate of improvement has been better than that seen nationally between 1998, the time of its previous inspection, and 2004. There was very significant improvement between 1998 and 2002, which was over twice the improvement seen nationally for pupils in Year 6. Nevertheless, the apparent fall in performance in national tests in 2004 has been a matter of concern for the staff, governors and some parents alike. Whilst there were very significant staffing difficulties, involving long-term absences during the 2003-04 academic year, the group of pupils concerned was a less able one overall. Furthermore, nearly two-thirds of the year group were boys, whose performance was well below the national average, compared with that of the girls, which was below average. In partnership with the teachers, the governors have established a Standards Committee, which is now closely, and successfully, monitoring the school's performance. In line with national strategies, the school is therefore well focused in its approach to raising standards and achievement in numeracy and literacy, particularly for its average, and below average, attaining pupils.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	24.3 (25.0)	26.9 (26.8)
Mathematics	23.8 (25.8)	27.0 (26.8)
Science	27.5 (29.5)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 45 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

6. Inspection judgements are that, by Year 6, pupils' achievement is very good in art and design. It is good in science, ICT, design and technology, history, modern languages, music, physical education, and in the personal, social, health and citizenship education course. Achievement is satisfactory in English, mathematics, and geography. However, achievement is unsatisfactory, and standards below the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus in religious education. Standards by Year 6 are well below average in English and mathematics, but average in science. Attainment is in line with expectations in ICT, geography, history, modern languages, music, and in the personal, social, health and citizenship education course. It is above expectations in art and design, design and technology, and in physical education.

### **Key Stage 3 (Pupils in Years 7 and 8)**

7. Inspection judgements show that, by Year 8, pupils' achievement is very good in art and design. It is good in English, mathematics, science, ICT, design and technology, history, modern languages, music, physical education, and in the personal, social, health and

<sup>6</sup> The core subjects are English, mathematics and science. Other National Curriculum subjects are known as foundation subjects. These are: art; design and technology; geography; history; information and communication technology; modern foreign languages; music; physical education. In addition, religious education is taught to the requirements of a locally agreed syllabus.

citizenship education course. It is satisfactory in geography. Achievement is unsatisfactory, and attainment below the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus in religious education. Standards by Year 8 are below national expectations in mathematics. They are average in English, and attainment meets national expectations in ICT, geography, history, modern languages, music, and the personal, social, health and citizenship education course. Standards are above expectations in science, art and design, design and technology, and in physical education.

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

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **good**. Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is **good**. Attendance and punctuality are **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils like their school and the range of opportunities it offers them.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good.
- The school promotes pupils' personal development well, particularly their social development.

### **Commentary**

8. Pupils' good attitudes to their work, and to school life, have a good impact on their learning and personal development. They are motivated well in lessons and participate fully in the good range of extra-curricular activities on offer to them during and after the school day. In discussion with pupils, they are positive about the school's family atmosphere, which they say helps them to learn to get on well with others. They like the small classes because teachers have time to help them with their work and to listen to their ideas. Pupils greatly appreciate the school's location and the ability, through their studies in the Exmoor Curriculum<sup>7</sup>, to make the most of their environment. Pupils with learning difficulties are motivated well because of the very good level of support and care provided by teachers and learning support assistants.
9. Pupils know how to behave well. Although some are occasionally immature, in almost all the lessons observed behaviour was good. In the playground, pupils play together well, and there is little anti-social behaviour. Pupils report very little bullying and say staff deal quickly with any problems. The school council has been careful to help others who are troubled by setting up a 'problem club' at lunchtimes and enabling them to report concerns through the 'bully box'<sup>8</sup>. One pupil succinctly summed up behaviour by saying, "Although there are sometimes badly behaved pupils, this is not a badly behaved school". The rewards and sanctions system is understood well by pupils, and most feel that this is fair. However, the school is reviewing the system, involving pupils and staff, to ensure its more consistent use across the school.
10. There has been good improvement in pupils' overall personal development. Pupils' social development is very good. They are learning to be independent, help others and play an active part in the community. They are keen to take responsibility, to make decisions about school life through their school council, and to contribute to their community through the West Somerset Pupil Parliament. They work together successfully in lessons in paired discussions, giving feedback on others' performances in physical education and working collaboratively in drama. Assemblies make a good contribution to pupils' spiritual development. They reflect seriously on moral issues such as the Holocaust or the importance of telling the truth. Opportunities to develop pupils' personal qualities in lessons are good. In art and design, for example, they reflect on their feelings as they listen to Native American music and discuss life in a different culture. In ICT, pupils examine the moral concerns relating to information available on the Internet. The school is aware of pupils' mono-cultural background and has

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<sup>7</sup> See Paragraphs 103 to 105.

<sup>8</sup> This is a 'letterbox' in the school where pupils may post any written comments or concerns they may have concerning bullying. They may do this anonymously if they wish. The headteacher and staff act very promptly concerning any issues which may be brought to their attention through this facility.

made good improvement in introducing pupils to different cultures through work in the curriculum and through links with other schools in Poland, Spain and Ghana.

## Attendance

### Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%) 2003-04

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	6.5	School data:	0.4
National data:	6.0	National data:	0.3

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

11. Pupils' attendance and punctuality continue to be satisfactory. The school reacted well to a declining trend in attendance by introducing a more stringent approach to authorising absences and by rewarding pupils for good and improved attendance. Attendance, as a result, is now average compared with other schools. Pupils' punctuality is satisfactory but can be affected by transport and the long distances many pupils travel to school each day. Exclusion levels are very low with no permanent exclusions. Fixed-term exclusions are used effectively to indicate the school's non-acceptance of aggressive behaviour towards others.

## Exclusions

### Ethnic background of pupils

### Exclusions in the last school year: 2003-04

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	160	1	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	1	0	0

The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

Overall, the quality of education provided by the school is **good**. Teaching and learning are good overall. The curriculum and curriculum enrichment are good. Resources for learning are satisfactory, but accommodation is unsatisfactory overall. The support, advice and guidance provided for pupils are good. Partnership links with parents are good, other links through the community are very good, and educational links with other schools and colleges are good.

### Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **good** overall. They are satisfactory in Years 5 and 6, and good in Years 7 and 8. The assessment of pupils' work is **satisfactory** overall.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is insufficient monitoring and evaluation of assessment procedures across the school.

- The use of data and target setting across the school is inconsistent.
- Specialist teaching supports pupils' learning and progress particularly well in Years 7 and 8.
- Overall, good levels of challenge, and the use of resources, stimulate well pupils learning.
- There is good practice in some subjects in the use of different forms of assessment.
- Pupils have firm expectations about learning because teachers make the aims of lessons clear.
- Teaching and learning are not currently effective enough in religious education.
- Subject leaders work well with other schools to ensure pupils' work is assessed accurately.

**Commentary**

12. In Years 5 and 6, teaching and learning are very good in art and design. They are good in science, ICT, design and technology, history, modern languages, music, physical education, and in the personal, social, health and citizenship education course. They are satisfactory in English, mathematics, and geography. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory overall in religious education.
13. In Years 7 and 8 teaching and learning are very good in art and design. In other subjects, they are good in English, mathematics, science, ICT, design and technology, history, modern languages, music, physical education, and in the personal, social, health and citizenship education course. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in geography. They are unsatisfactory overall in religious education.

**Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 50 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0%)	7 (14%)	28 (56%)	14 (28%)	1 (2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

14. Whilst the teaching and learning in religious education lessons seen during the inspection was satisfactory, they are unsatisfactory overall because for some time teaching has been by non-subject specialists and inexperienced staff. Consequently, a scrutiny of the pupils' work shows it has not met the standards, or coverage, required by the locally agreed syllabus. During the inspection, only one unsatisfactory lesson was seen. This was in English where learning and achievement were unsatisfactory because the teaching offered insufficient challenge, and the teacher's questioning was not directed sharply or well enough. Overall, specialist subject teaching was seen to be more effective in Years 7 and 8 than in the earlier years. However, the teachers' subject specialist knowledge is of good benefit to pupils across all year groups. Increasingly important is the fact pupils expect, and demand, that teachers make it clear at the start of lessons what it is they are to learn. This helps significantly in the regular reviews of learning at the end of lessons.
15. Examples of good or better teaching and learning were seen across a range of subjects and year groups. Very good teaching and learning were seen in English, mathematics, art and design, history, and in music. In such lessons, pupils are challenged very well through good use of questioning to stimulate their thinking, as well as enabling the teacher to assess effectively their learning and progress. Resources, which involve pupils fully in their learning, are used well, such as the visual material employed in art and design and history. The school often makes very good use of its local environment to develop learning, such as in the environmental poetry workshop, with a visiting poet, which also made good use of video and multi-media presentations. In the very best lessons, there is often a brisk pace because the teachers' good command of their subjects has enabled them to plan their lessons particularly well to ensure all groups of pupils are involved fully in the work. Consequently, pupils learn well when working together in pairs or small groups.

16. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by a good team of learning support assistants. Consequently, pupils receive good support in the classroom, and through withdrawal sessions, which focuses well on their specific learning difficulties. In the classroom, teachers make good use of individual action plans to plan lessons which meet the learning needs of all pupils, including those identified as gifted and talented. Consequently, pupils make good progress with their learning because teachers plan their lessons well and provide the individual support required to ensure successful outcomes. There is good use of tailored workbooks and worksheets to meet specific learning needs. Pupils identified as being gifted or talented are provided with challenging work to extend their learning in lessons and also through a well-planned programme of additional subject based projects.
17. The school has a wealth of data on pupil assessment. Targets are set for each year group based on pupils' prior attainment and a wide range of optional national and individual tests. However, this information is not used consistently across the school. This is because the plans to monitor and evaluate its use are not yet fully in place. Nevertheless, senior management is very clear about what needs to be done to ensure assessment information is used more effectively. This is in order that groups of pupils who are making insufficient progress can be more clearly identified and supported. Regular formal testing is undertaken in most subjects, but the information gathered from these tests is not always used well enough to support teachers' planning. Nevertheless, subject leaders work well with those from other schools to ensure pupils' work is assessed accurately against national standards. Consequently, teachers use assessment information well for individual meetings with pupils, and with parents on a termly basis.
18. Assessment overall is satisfactory or better in most subjects. It is used very thoroughly and constructively in art and design and history where pupils are involved well in the assessment of their own work. In English and in citizenship there is effective use of assessment criteria, which have been rewritten so that pupils can understand clearly their current level of attainment and how they can improve. The use of assessment in physical education does not improve pupils' progress. In mathematics, science and ICT marking is not used consistently across all year groups. Therefore, pupils in these subjects do not understand clearly enough what they need to do to improve. In geography, and in religious education in Years 5 and 6, assessment is unsatisfactory. Marking is inconsistent and there is limited use of National Curriculum levels, and pupils do not know how to improve their work.
19. Assessment of pupils with special educational needs is very good. This is because there is good monitoring and regular diagnostic testing of pupils with learning difficulties. Record keeping is good. Reviews are undertaken effectively, involving parents, school staff and the relevant agencies to ensure learning needs are catered for fully and future strategies agreed. Gifted or talented pupils are identified effectively through the analysis of performance data, and on the recommendation of subject teachers. Pupils identified with specific social or emotional difficulties are assessed and then included in the Nurture Group<sup>9</sup> for specialist attention by two trained learning support assistants.

## The curriculum

The curriculum is **good**. The school provides a **good** range of opportunities to enrich pupils' learning outside the formal curriculum. The school's accommodation is **unsatisfactory** but other resources for learning are **satisfactory** overall.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school offers its pupils a wider than normal range of curriculum opportunities.
- The Exmoor Curriculum enhances very well the other subjects the school offers.
- The school is able to offer a wide range of extra-curricular activities for its pupils.
- The school's curriculum provides good opportunities for the pupils' personal development.

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<sup>9</sup> A specialist facility within the school for the support of pupils who find it difficult to interact socially with others.

- There is a good team of learning support assistants, and good use of individual action plans.
- The amount and suitability of the accommodation for the teaching of parts of the secondary curriculum are unsatisfactory.

## Commentary

20. The curriculum offers more than the National Curriculum requires due to the inclusion of French from Year 6, German from Year 8, and the Exmoor Curriculum from Year 5. The curriculum in art and design and the Exmoor Curriculum are very good. A further strength of the curriculum is its contribution to pupils' personal development. The provision for pupils' personal social and health education is good. Careers education, sex, relationships, and alcohol and drug misuse are taught well in citizenship or science. The arrangements for careers education are satisfactory, but the school does not have a common core curriculum for careers with its partner secondary school to avoid gaps or undue overlap. The Exmoor Curriculum contributes very well to work-related learning by fostering initiative, teamwork and problem solving skills. A federation of local schools, including the partner secondary school, ensures good liaison and minimises the disruption to pupils' learning when they change schools. A common curriculum has been established for Years 7 and 8 and standards of work are agreed jointly. All criticisms involving the curriculum from the previous report have been satisfactorily resolved.
21. Pupils with special educational needs have equal access to the school's curriculum. Except for a few pupils, who have been disapplied from modern foreign languages, all pupils follow the requirements of the National Curriculum. Individual action plans are planned well and contain details of the learning difficulty and classroom strategies for use by the teacher. Some teachers have extended individual learning plans in order to provide a more specific subject focus catering for pupils at all levels of ability including the gifted or talented.
22. There is very good provision for gifted or talented pupils not only in lessons but also through a rolling programme of extension activities planned and prepared by each subject. In some instances, subjects plan a joint project. For example, science together with design and technology developed a challenging control technology project to extend learning effectively. The co-ordinator for the gifted and talented pupils also provides a wide range of additional opportunities for these pupils within school and beyond, including residential courses.
23. The school provides many opportunities for enrichment beyond the normal curriculum. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities in sport, music, drama and some other subjects. Sporting activities include team games and individual sports for both boys and girls, which include inter-school competitions and county events. Some sporting activities, such as yachting, canoeing and cycling, lead to qualifications. Musical activities include a 30 strong choir and a string group. Pupils are encouraged to learn a musical instrument and can borrow musical instruments from the school. There is a school drama production every two years and pupils are encouraged to participate. A good range of visits to places of interest, such as theatres and museums, and visitors into school, enhance learning in many subjects. Residential visits to London and abroad contribute well to pupils' personal development. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to study outside lesson time.
24. The school has a satisfactory number of properly qualified and experienced teachers, an improvement since the previous inspection. The curriculum now is predominately staffed by subject specialists, so pupils benefit well from their high level of subject expertise. However, there is an absence of technical support staff in some subjects such as science, which places a burden on teachers. Nevertheless, the learning support assistants are deployed well across the curriculum to provide the maximum support for teachers and guidance for pupils. The introduction of the 'Nurture Group' last year is a very good initiative to meet the needs of pupils who have problems relating to attachment and have social or behavioural difficulties.
25. The accommodation for science, modern foreign languages and outdoor facilities for physical education are good. However, the school experiences a number of problems relating to its

accommodation. There is a lack of space for ICT. The sharing of accommodation between art and design and design and technology, and religious education and food technology, causes difficulties. Physical education is restricted by the use of the hall for assemblies and dining. There are problems of access to the building, upper floors and playground for pupils with physical disabilities, and wheelchair users in particular. The library is small and its use as a classroom restricts access for about a third of the week. Furthermore, the accommodation for special educational needs is not ideal. The co-ordinator for special educational needs has a small office and there are two teaching areas shared with other subjects. Staff cope very well with this situation but at times there is a lack of privacy and access to teaching resources.

26. Learning resources in history, geography, art and design, physical education and the Exmoor Curriculum are good. Most classrooms have computer-linked projectors, which are well used to enliven lessons, as is the interactive whiteboard in science. However, shortcomings include the lack of ICT for modern foreign languages, and data logging equipment in science. The library has a good selection of fiction but the non-fiction stock is unsatisfactory because it is mainly topic based in a school which emphasises subject teaching. There is a good level of resources to meet the learning needs of pupils with a special educational need. However, there is very limited provision for ICT to extend and enhance the learning of pupils with specific learning difficulties through a suitable range of software programmes.

### Care, guidance and support

Provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is **very good**. They receive **good** quality support, advice and guidance. There are **very good** opportunities for pupils to give their views on school life.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school cares very well for all its pupils.
- The day-to-day guidance and support offered to pupils are good.
- Pupils are not given clear enough guidance on how to improve their work.
- All pupils' views are heard and valued very well.
- There is a high level of care for pupils with a special educational need.

### Commentary

27. This is a very caring school. Very good attention is paid to pupils' health and safety, both in school and when taking part in outdoor activities. Through the Exmoor Curriculum, pupils learn to be safe when cycling and sailing and when out-and-about in their rural environment. Procedures for safeguarding children are good. The school is pro-active in its liaison with outside agencies involved in pupils' welfare. Good improvement has been made since the previous inspection, and minor health and safety issues have been resolved. The monitoring and promotion of pupils' behaviour is now good and pupils say they feel safe and well supported by staff, who listen to any concerns they may have.
28. There is a high level of care and support for pupils with learning difficulties. Pupils have a very good rapport with staff and feel secure. The 'Nurture Group' is a very good example of the high level of care provided by the school. The pupils in this group attend a daily breakfast session with staff and meet at the end of each day. This approach enables staff not only to monitor pupils well but also to develop pupils' social skills and confidence.
29. Pupils are given good support and guidance as they move through the school. Inspectors agree with pupils' views when they say staff are friendly and approachable, and that there is always an adult to whom they can go if they have any worries. In discussions with inspectors, the pupils confirmed they are treated fairly by all their teachers, and this helps them to feel safe and secure. They are very positive about the help they give each other and support systems such as 'playground buddies' and 'the problem club'. Pupils in Year 5 settle quickly into the school because there are good procedures for induction and transfer from their

primary schools. Pupils in Year 8 feel well prepared and confident for their move to the next stage of their education.

30. Pupils are positive that teachers help them in lessons because classes are small and they have time to explain things to them. However, they have mixed views about how well they are informed about which National Curriculum levels they are working, and what they need to do next to improve. They say that when there is detailed marking of their work, and they are given targets to work towards, this helps them to achieve well. Inspectors support pupils' views that day-to-day guidance in lessons is good. However, the way in which teachers use the data available to them to set targets and to help pupils improve their work lesson-by-lesson is under-developed and inconsistent.
31. Through their class representatives, and the school council, pupils have very good opportunities to make suggestions about improvements to school life and to discuss their views together. They decide which charities to support and organise fundraising activities for them. Feedback to their classes in tutor time ensures all pupils contribute to these discussions and know what has been decided. Pupils' participation in the regional youth parliament furthers their opportunities to participate in debate, and to make a useful contribution to community life. Pupils and staff have very good working relationships with one another and the supportive, caring nature of the school results in pupils being confident to talk to adults and to express their views with confidence.

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

The school has a **good** partnership with parents. Links with other schools and colleges are **good**. Links with the community are **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents have positive views about all areas of the school's work.
- Targets in pupils' reports are not as helpful as they could be for parents.
- Very good use is made of the school's community links to extend pupils' learning.
- The school has very good links with its partner middle and secondary schools.

### **Commentary**

32. The school has made good improvement in its partnerships with parents and the community since the previous inspection. Parents' responses to the questionnaire were positive in all respects. However, a minority of parents expressed some concern relating to the information they receive about pupils' progress, and the inconsistent provision of homework. Inspectors support parents' good views of the school. The school is a friendly place, which values the partnership it has with parents, and the contribution they make to their children's learning. The headteacher has introduced good opportunities for consultation with parents and seeks their views as the school develops and faces change. In spite of the distance from the school for some families, there is good attendance at meetings, active support from the Friends Association, and good volunteer help for individual projects and visits outside school.
33. Very good links have been established with the parents of pupils with special educational needs. Review meetings are very caring and supportive towards parents, and this enables staff to develop a constructive partnership to meet the needs of pupils. Regular coffee mornings are arranged for the parents of pupils with learning difficulties. These are well attended and enable informal links to be developed.
34. The quality of written information for parents is satisfactory. The format for reporting pupils' progress in interim and end-of-year reports is good. Work covered, levels achieved and comments on progress are clear. However, targets for pupils' improvement vary in quality, and are not helpful to parents who wish to support their children at home. In this respect, inspectors agree with some parents' concerns. They do not agree, however, with a few



parents' criticisms about homework, which inspectors judge to be satisfactory. Parents are provided with good termly study guides. Teachers encourage pupils to record homework set in their diaries, and check these regularly in tutor periods. Pupils say they find homework helpful to their learning.

35. The very good community links are a strong feature of the school and make a very good contribution to pupils' learning and personal development. Through its work in the Exmoor Curriculum, the school has developed very positive links with the National Park and the Exmoor Society. Pupils have contributed very well to local projects such as the planning and marking of tourist footpaths. There is very good support for pupils' achievement awards from local businesses. The school continues to plan further use of its facilities for use by the community through its license for outdoor activities, and in the development of a rural sports consortium.
36. Links with partner middle and secondary schools through the West Somerset Initiative are very well developed. Subject leaders have regular opportunities to meet with colleagues and to plan a joint curriculum linking Years 7 to 9. Pupils in Year 8 transfer well to their next school because they have been prepared well and have had the same access to subjects of the curriculum as their peers. Links with feeder first schools are satisfactory, and transition arrangements for pupils into Year 5 work well.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The leadership, management and governance of the school are **good** overall. Leadership, including that of the headteacher and other key staff, is **good**. Management is **satisfactory**. The quality of governance is **good** overall, but the governing body does not fully meet its statutory requirements concerning some information for parents regarding test results for both girls and boys. Plans for the support of ethnic minority, traveller and refugee pupils are not in place.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher has a clear focus for leading the school and bringing about improvement.
- All staff work together as an effective team and support the headteacher well.
- The role of subject leaders is under-developed.
- Governors support the school well and are aware of what needs to be done to improve.
- The governing body does not fully meet all its statutory requirements.
- Strategic financial management of the school is good.
- There is very good leadership and management for special educational needs provision.

### **Commentary**

37. The headteacher, and his assistants, have a clear vision and commitment to providing a good, all-round education for pupils. This includes raising standards as well as encouraging the pupils' personal development. All the staff, who form a hardworking team, support this philosophy. They provide a strong base for the further development of the school, and the improvement of pupils' standards and achievement. The school provides a caring environment and is liked by both pupils and parents. Improvement in leadership since the previous inspection has been good, particularly with regard to the development of the curriculum.
38. The previous key issue to improve the effectiveness of management has been partially resolved. Teaching and learning are now monitored carefully. Teachers have job descriptions and are appraised regularly through procedures for performance management. Arrangements for the continuing professional development of staff are good. There is now a satisfactory school improvement plan, which includes success criteria, persons responsible and costings. Raising standards in English and mathematics is at the heart of the plan although the impact of this has yet to be borne out in the standards achieved by pupils. However, some subject leaders are new to their roles and have not yet had time to influence standards. Whilst the school has improved its analysis of test data, subject leaders are not yet using this information

sufficiently well to assess pupils' learning and to set them clear and accurate targets for improvement.

39. Although only in school for two days a week, the co-ordinator for special educational needs is providing very good leadership. The very good team of experienced and capable learning support assistants cope very well when the co-ordinator is not in school. The management and organisation of special educational needs are very good. Learning support assistants are deployed well to meet the needs of all pupils. Assessment, testing and record keeping are managed very well. There is good liaison with the local authority and agencies to meet the needs of pupils. However, with only two days in school the co-ordinator has little time for monitoring provision and training. There is a thorough, all-inclusive school policy for special education needs and governors fully meet their statutory requirements by informing parents about the provision for pupils with learning difficulties.
40. The overall quality of governance is good. Governors take their roles and responsibilities seriously and have pride in the school, its role in the local community, and the way in which it promotes an all-round education to the benefit of its pupils. Governors share the vision of the headteacher and are committed to the school's development and improvement, for example, through the system of link governors attached to subjects. They have worked hard to support the school and have begun, through the standards committee, to challenge the school about its performance particularly in English and mathematics. However, the governing body does not fully meet the statutory requirements for information in the prospectus, and its annual report to parents, concerning national test results. Whilst giving overall results, this does not provide specific information on the performance of girls and boys. In addition, contingency planning is not fully in place for the support of ethnic minority, traveller and refugee pupils, should any join the school.

## Financial information

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

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	619,987	Balance from previous year	44,954 <sup>10</sup>
Total expenditure	655,788	Balance carried forward to the next	9,153
Expenditure per pupil	4,073		

41. The school gives overall satisfactory value for money. Financial management is good and has improved well since the previous inspection. Budgets are carefully set and controlled and are linked to school development priorities. Administrative support has improved and there is better financial control through the school's decision to pay for the local authority's bursary service. The principles of best value are understood and applied well. However, standards in English and mathematics are below expectations by the end of Year 6. Nevertheless, the school has committed spending to providing specialist teaching which although costly is having a good impact on pupils' achievement, particularly in Years 7 and 8.

<sup>10</sup> This figure includes funding for building projects carried forward into 2004-05 financial year.

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

### **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 2 AND 3**

#### **ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

##### **English**

Provision in English is **good**.

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

- The good leadership of the department is gradually securing improvements in standards.
- The writing skills of higher ability pupils in Years 5 and 6 are insufficiently developed.
- Pupils develop good skills in creative writing, and reading for enjoyment is promoted well.
- The use of performance information to support teachers' planning is under-developed.
- Good achievement is supported well by the pupils' good attitudes to the subject.
- There is insufficient time for the co-ordinator to monitor the use of literacy in other subjects.

##### **Commentary**

42. Pupils enter the school in Year 5 with well below average attainment in English. Results in the 2004 national tests at the end of Year 6 were well below average, and similar to those in mathematics, but below those in science. Boys did not perform as well as girls. This was because of a high number of boys who had very low literacy skills when they entered the school. The overall trend for improvement has been below the national trend for the last three years, but this was from the school's highest performance in national tests in 2002. Overall, girls have attained slightly better results than boys. Standards seen during the inspection for all aspects of English were below average in Year 6, but average in Year 8. Standards in reading, speaking and listening have improved satisfactorily since the previous inspection. All pupils listen well, and speak confidently, in both formal and informal situations in English and drama lessons. Most pupils read fluently and with expression, using satisfactory strategies to read unfamiliar words. However, writing skills are weaker.
43. Pupils' achievement is good overall. It is satisfactory in Years 5 and 6, and good in Years 7 and 8. Boys achieve equally as well as girls in all year groups. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because they are supported well by teaching assistants in lessons. Higher ability pupils do not achieve as well as expected in the national tests at the end of Year 6. This is because they do not have sufficient practice in writing in a wide enough range of styles, and for different readers. However, overall, pupils in Years 7 and 8 who are identified as having a gift or talent in the subject achieve well.
44. Teaching and learning are good overall. They are satisfactory in Years 5 and 6, and good in Years 7 and 8. Only one unsatisfactory lesson was seen during the inspection, in Year 6. Here, the tasks given to the pupils did not challenge them or develop sufficiently well their literacy skills. However, the best lessons in these year groups are planned well in order to provide different levels of challenge for individual ability and learning need. This was seen in a very good lesson on report writing with a Year 5 class of lower ability pupils. Here, pupils were challenged well, individual learning styles were promoted well, and good use was made of ICT. However, pupils do not have enough practice in writing longer pieces of work. Furthermore, pupils of all abilities in Years 5 and 6 are not always sufficiently well aware of their targets, or how to improve their work. Nevertheless, pupils in Years 7 and 8 do know their targets and how to improve. Enhancement of the curriculum, often using the local environment, is particularly good for these pupils. A very successful poetry workshop was seen, supported well by the expertise of a local poet. Pupils responded sensitively and imaginatively, structuring their work well to produce powerful writing.

45. Across all year groups, lessons are planned well and relate to clear learning objectives. There is some effective use of assessment criteria where it has been re-written specifically for pupils. However, this is under-developed across all years and teaching staff. Work is marked well, but pupils do not always correct their work or, as a result, learn sufficiently from their mistakes. Learning is not reviewed consistently well enough, for example, through the use of questions to challenge pupils, or assess and develop their learning. However, pupils in all years support each other's learning well by collaboration and discussion. Pupils' attitudes to English are good across all year groups. Pupils enjoy drama, which is used well to reinforce their knowledge and understanding of literature. In lessons, pupils regularly read independently and for enjoyment. Good use is made of a range of literature from different cultures. Pupils make good use of the library, which is well stocked to support independent reading. Good opportunities for creative and imaginative writing are provided for all pupils. They enjoy and profit well from the range of experiences offered to them.
46. The subject is led and managed well. The subject leader's active approach has resulted in the maintaining of good achievement in Years 7 and 8, despite the varying academic ability of pupils from year-to-year. Development plans are constructed well, and focus clearly on the improvement of literacy for all pupils. However, there is insufficient time for the subject leader to monitor teaching and assessment in lessons. As a result, the necessary skills for the teaching of basic literacy are under-developed with some teachers. Although there is some developing good practice in the analysis of individual pupil performance, the information is not used effectively enough in planning lesson and units of work, for either individual pupils or classes. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory overall. Work seen during the inspection shows an improvement in standards in Years 5 and 6. However, this is a slow process because there are fewer specialist teachers in these year groups.

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

47. Standards of literacy in the school are average, and the use of literacy is good overall. Nevertheless, the development of language and literacy across all subjects is a school priority. There are well-constructed plans in place, which reflect current and future development. Consequently, all subjects, with the exception of religious education, are making an improved contribution to the teaching of literacy. Literacy objectives are clearly identified in lesson plans. The whole school focus on words, especially with the use and definitions of specialist key words, has helped to improve accuracy of vocabulary. However, the marking and correcting of the basic skills of spelling and punctuation is insufficiently systematic across all subjects to achieve better accuracy in writing. There is good practice in writing for different purposes and audiences in citizenship and science, but this is not consistently used or developed sufficiently well across other subjects. The below average skills in reading for meaning, and writing, in Years 5 and 6 sometimes prevent pupils from making adequate progress in subjects such as mathematics. Nevertheless, pupils are more confident when speaking in formal situations, and practise this skill regularly in lessons in most subjects. However, there is insufficient time for the literacy co-ordinator to monitor and evaluate closely enough the teaching of literacy across the curriculum in order to improve standards further.

### **Modern foreign languages**

Provision in modern foreign languages is **good**.

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

- Achievement is good in both French and German.
- Teaching and learning are consistently good in both languages.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning modern languages are good.
- The marking of pupils' work does not always help them know how to improve.
- The use of ICT to support learning is an area for development.
- Good leadership and management have led to good improvement.

#### **Commentary**

48. Pupils make a good start to French and attain expected standards by the end of the Year 6. This good achievement is a result of good quality teaching, which engages pupils' interests and motivates them to learn well. Good progress is maintained through Years 7 and 8 so that by the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 8, they are achieving standards securely in line with national expectations and have been well prepared for their languages work in Year 9. Pupils who choose to take German in Year 8 also attain average standards. Their good achievement reflects pupils' ability to apply well to a second language the skills acquired through their good learning in French.
49. Teaching in both French and German is good. The teacher's good subject knowledge and linguistic skills provide pupils with a good model for learning. This is well reflected in their good pronunciation and willingness to try vocabulary and sentences with confidence. In both languages, pupils of all abilities are included and motivated by well-paced and structured lessons using a variety of activities and resources. Learning is good in both languages because pupils benefit from effective methods used to practise language orally. Consequently, they learn well in pairs when practising dialogue. Good quality displays provide pupils with good prompts and reminders as they practise the languages. The curriculum is good and enriched by lunchtime clubs where pupils, including those in Year 5, learn songs, play games and extend their vocabulary.
50. Lessons provide pupils with good opportunities to develop their general literacy as they learn sentence construction and name the tense of verbs being used. However, currently there is limited use of ICT to enhance learning apart from some word-processing. This is as a result of a change of classroom and resulting lack of access to ICT hardware for both pupils and teacher. This weakness has already been identified in the subject action plan.
51. The teacher has good working relationships with pupils and they respond well to this by trying hard with their work and behaving well. Although some boys' behaviour in Year 6 is a little immature, pupils quickly become accustomed to speaking in another language and gain confidence in speaking in front of others. The good pace of lessons and tasks set keep pupils of all abilities concentrating well. The growing numbers participating in residential and day visits to France reflects pupils' interest in modern foreign languages.
52. Assessment in French and German is satisfactory. Pupils' work is marked regularly, and the progress of individual pupils is recorded accurately. Pupils are given National Curriculum levels for pieces of work and are provided with descriptions of those levels in their books. However, the use of targets to help them understand the level of the work they are producing and what they must do to reach higher levels is under-developed.
53. The leadership and management of modern foreign languages are good. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good. The subject leader has worked successfully to raise the standard of teaching, learning and achievement for pupils in all year groups. Furthermore, German has been introduced successfully for Year 8 pupils, in line with partner middle schools. There is a good understanding of what can be done to improve standards further, and a good development plan in place to achieve this.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 are too low.
- Pupils achieve well in Years 7 and 8.
- Lessons are well prepared and structured well to maintain pupils' interest.
- The recently appointed subject co-ordinator has a clear vision and well-focussed priorities.
- The pitch and pace of lessons are not always well matched to the range of pupils' abilities.

- Pupils' competence in mathematics is not systematically developed across the curriculum.

## Commentary

54. Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2004 were well below average. They were similar to results in English, but not as good as those in science. Analysis presented by the school shows achievement for these pupils was unsatisfactory. Standards on entry to the school at the start of Year 5 are well below average. Standards of work seen during the inspection were well below average in Year 6 and below national expectations in Year 8. In all years, there are higher than average numbers of pupils working below the expected levels. Many pupils have poor basic number skills, for example, some do not know their three times table. However, pupils' progress is satisfactory in the present Years 5 and 6, and good in Years 7 and 8. Achievement is satisfactory overall.
55. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and good in Years 7 and 8. Teachers have made very good use of the National Key Stage 3 Strategy<sup>11</sup> to prepare and plan well-structured sequences of lessons. They design lessons with a satisfactory variety of activities, including games and puzzles, to maintain well pupils' interest. They have a good range of classroom management strategies and effective working relationships with pupils, which secure good attitudes and behaviour. Good use of homework extends pupils' learning. However, some teachers are less knowledgeable and confident in teaching mathematics, so they cannot readily adjust the activities to meet the needs of pupils. For example, in upper sets, work is highly challenging and some pupils find it hard to keep up. In lower sets, considerable attention is paid to less able pupils and those with special educational needs who make good progress, whilst other pupils are not challenged sufficiently well. Assessment practices are good, although there are some inconsistencies in the quantity and quality of marking.
56. Leadership is good and management is satisfactory. The recently appointed subject co-ordinator has a clear vision for the development of the subject. The work in the subject is monitored satisfactorily through book sampling and lesson observation, leading to a sound knowledge of strengths and weaknesses. Suitable priorities, and a focused plan of action, have been established, although this has not yet had sufficient time to have a significant impact on pupils' achievement. There is a great deal of assessment data from optional end of year examinations and topic tests. However, this is not yet fully used to target pupils and secure improvements in their standards of work.
57. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory. There was significant improvement from 1998 until 2002, but standards in national tests have dropped in 2003 and 2004. Reasons for this include some poor attendance, test refusal, non-specialist teaching, lack of attention to test preparation and changes in leadership. However, systems are in place to reverse this recent decline.

## Mathematics across the curriculum

58. Provision for the use of mathematics across the curriculum is satisfactory overall. Nevertheless, there are some examples of good practice. In music, mental arithmetic skills are developed well through musical notation and working with intervals and time signatures. In the Exmoor Curriculum<sup>12</sup>, pupils' map reading skills enhance well their use of mathematics. However, the development of pupils' mathematical competence is not systematically planned across all subjects. There are many missed opportunities to enhance their skills, for example, in physical education, science, religious education and history.

## SCIENCE

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<sup>11</sup> The National Key Stage 3 Strategy aims to raise the standards achieved by 11 to 14-year-olds by transforming approaches to teaching and learning.

<sup>12</sup> See Paragraphs 103 to 105

Provision in science is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils are motivated well by the emphasis on practical work.
- A focus on improving literacy has helped well to raise standards.
- Standards in the Year 6 tests have been above average over time.
- Assessment information is not used well enough to help pupils know how to improve.
- Schemes of work do include work for pupils of differing abilities, or opportunities to develop literacy, numeracy or ICT.

### **Commentary**

59. Results in the national tests for Year 6 in 2004 were below the national average. This was in contrast to the previous four years when they were above average. Overall, results in science tests have been better than those in English and mathematics. The decline in standards was due to the lower ability of the group and staffing difficulties in the school. Nevertheless, the trend over time has been upwards. Girls attained better than boys because they were more conscientious and had better standards of literacy.
60. Current standards in Year 6 are average, and in Year 8 they are above national expectations. Pupils achieve well during Years 5 and 6 because of the good teaching. Consequently, they make good progress and standards improve from below expectations on entry to the school to average by the end of Year 6. Year 8 pupils have maintained the above average standards they achieved in the Year 6 tests. Pupils in Year 7 show clear signs of improvement due to the attention given to improving their literacy skills. Pupils achieve well in Years 7 and 8. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because of the support they receive from teaching assistants and teachers. Girls' written work is better than boys' whereas their practical skills and ability to explain their work orally are similar.
61. Teaching and learning are good throughout all year groups. Lessons are planned well, and include considerable practical work. The practical work interests and motivates pupils well because many of them learn better through doing experiments. A good emphasis on improving pupils' literacy skills, involving the use of key science vocabulary, reading for understanding and, on occasion, creative writing, has helped well to improve standards. Discussions with pupils shows electronic whiteboards are used well to provide interesting explanations and illustrations, although they were out of order during the inspection. Pupils display positive attitudes to science and behave well. The tasks set provide a realistic challenge and include opportunities for pupils to work independently and co-operatively. Pupils with special educational needs and those who are gifted or talented are given work suited to their particular abilities. Assessment is satisfactory. Unit tests and scientific investigations are marked well, and National Curriculum levels are identified. However, the marking of pupils' books does not identify targets for improvement, and pupils are unsure about what to concentrate on in order to do better.
62. Science is led well. Teachers work together well, and close links with the partner secondary school ensure subject continuity is good. Management is satisfactory overall. An analysis of the test results, and the monitoring of teaching and pupils' work, have identified well the strengths and weaknesses of the subject. Underachieving pupils are identified and action is taken to help them improve. However, no use is made of performance data to measure pupils' progress effectively. Schemes of work do not consistently provide alternative tasks for pupils of differing abilities, or identify opportunities to improve key skills.
63. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory. Standards in Years 7 and 8 are higher and teaching is better. Learning resources have improved, but pupils are still unable to carry out data logging due to lack of equipment. However, as there is now no

technician, teachers have to prepare their own apparatus, which takes away time from their own teaching preparations.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in ICT is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Well-planned lessons and interesting activities result in very good levels of pupils' motivation.
- Pupils' progress is monitored very well.
- Pupils' skills in reviewing and evaluating their work are lower than in other aspects of ICT.
- Good leadership ensures standards and achievement are being raised.
- Pupils' ICT skills are not systematically developed across other subjects of the curriculum.

### **Commentary**

64. Pupils' standards are in line with national expectations at the end of Years 6 and 8. A scrutiny of pupils' work shows most pupils have below expected standards on entry to the school in Year 5. Pupils make good progress as they move through the school, and overall achievement is good. Achievement is particularly good when pupils are exchanging and sharing information and when finding things out. In Year 6, pupils make satisfactory use of simple programmes to control events, and text and images to present work. By Year 8, pupils use the Internet with confidence, and are selective in what they use. They have a good sense of audience when preparing information, for example, designing leaflets for first school pupils and videos for parents. However, pupils are less good in reviewing, modifying and evaluating work, because they are sometimes accepting of partly completed or inaccurate work, and this is unsatisfactory.
65. Pupils' good progress and good learning are a result of good teaching throughout all year groups. This is because the teacher has good subject knowledge and is enthusiastic and committed. Sequences of lessons are very well planned, and an interesting and relevant range of resources engages pupils well. Classroom management is very good and the inadequacies of the small room are overcome by good use of group work. Real life examples, such as the storyboard for a popular, contemporary film, are used well to motivate pupils. Working relationships are very good, and pupils have very good attitudes to the subject. Pupils are involved well in assessing the standards they have reached through well-designed self-assessment sheets, and peer assessment. Such assessments are shared with, and agreed by, the teacher. However, other than this, pupils receive little written feedback from their teacher on how to improve, and therefore do not routinely annotate and improve their work. Nevertheless, there is good oral feedback, and support from the teacher, in lessons.
66. Leadership and management are good. The subject co-ordinator has a clear vision and knows well the strengths and weaknesses of the subject. There is comprehensive monitoring of pupils' progress through regular assessments against national standards. Good, detailed schemes of work have been put in place, especially for Years 7 and 8. There are very good partnerships with other schools which promote continuity of learning. The room for teaching ICT is too small for many of the classes taught and pupils have to share computers. On these occasions, pupils learn less well.
67. There has been excellent improvement since the previous inspection as a result of good leadership. The subject was heavily criticised as there was almost no provision or resources, standards were poor and there was little leadership. These weaknesses have now been successfully resolved. Provision is now good and standards have risen substantially.



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

68. The use of ICT across other subjects is satisfactory. Overall, teachers make good use of computer-linked projectors to improve their presentation and to access the high quality resources, which are available electronically. There are some good examples of pupils carrying out Internet research in science, music and the Exmoor Curriculum. In English, pupils use word processors and desktop publishers well for redrafting and refining their work. In citizenship, they use computer presentations well for explaining their ideas and research. However, pupils' use of ICT is not systematically planned and co-ordinated across the curriculum. In subjects, such as modern foreign languages, mathematics and science, pupils' use of ICT is inhibited by lack of access to suitable hardware or software.

## **HUMANITIES**

### **History**

Provision in history is **good**.

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

- Learning is fun and purposeful.
- Very good use is made of resources and artefacts.
- Assessment and marking are very good.
- Pupils' descriptive writing is satisfactory, but their ability to explain events is weaker.

#### **Commentary**

69. By the end of Year 6, standards are at expected levels. Pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of ancient Greece, the Anglo-Saxons, the Victorian era and Britain in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Writing is satisfactory with good descriptions of events, but understanding is weaker. In Years 5 and 6, pupils develop historical skills to a satisfactory level. By the end of Year 8, standards in history are at expected levels. Pupils develop a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of topics such as the Romans and Britain 1500 to 1750. Their skills with the analysis and interpretation of sources are good. However, the higher order skills of evaluation and comparison are weaker. Pupils enter the school with standards below expectations. Achievement across Years 5 to 8 is good because of good teaching. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is good. Boys and girls, and pupils of all abilities, achieve equally well.
70. Teaching and learning are good. This is because across Years 5 to 8 all teaching is by a specialist whose good subject knowledge makes learning fun and purposeful. Good quality explanations and questions successfully challenge pupils to think about the topics. The very good use of artefacts, textbooks, photographs and video successfully engage pupils' in their work, and enables them to learn well. Assessment of pupils' work is very good. Work is marked carefully and pupils have very good guidance on how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. Good management of pupils' behaviour helps them to concentrate and work hard. Good working relationships motivate pupils to respond well to the subject.
71. Leadership and management of the subject are good. History is now led and managed well by a full-time teacher. The quality of documentation is good and provides clear direction for the work of the subject. Planning has identified a good set of priorities and activities aimed well at further improvement. Procedures for reviewing the work of the subject are good. There are good, formal programmes for scrutinising work and for observing teaching and learning. The curriculum is good. Across Years 5 to 8 pupils study a broad range of topics and there is sufficient attention to the development of their historical skills. Learning resources and accommodation are good and meet the needs of the curriculum well. Improvement since the previous inspection is good. Teaching has improved and there are effective strategies to support the learning needs of all pupils.

## Geography

Provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Learning is supported well through the good use of resources and fieldwork.
- There is insufficient development of pupils' enquiry skills.
- Assessment procedures give insufficient guidance to pupils as to how to improve.
- There is insufficient use of performance and assessment data to guide further improvement.

### Commentary

72. By the end of Year 6, standards are in line with expectations. In Years 5 and 6, pupils develop a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of rivers, tourism in the local area and Brazil. Map skills are good, as pupils use atlases and Ordnance Survey maps accurately to locate and describe places. By the end of Year 8, standards are in line with expectations. Pupils have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of Italy and its location within Europe. They use maps well. In Year 7 pupils have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of river systems and flooding. Although fieldwork aids pupils' understanding, there is insufficient development of their enquiry skills. Writing is satisfactory, with pupils using a satisfactory range of styles. Descriptive writing is good, but explanation is weaker.
73. Pupils enter the school with below expected standards. Achievement across Years 5 to 8 is satisfactory. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Boys and girls of all capabilities achieve equally well. A new subject co-ordinator has recently taken up post. Previously, non-specialists and supply teachers had taught lessons. Although there has been a lack of continuity, achievement is satisfactory because of satisfactory teaching and the selection of interesting topics.
74. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In Years 5 to 8, specialist teaching makes good use of subject knowledge in the planning of lessons. Explanations and questioning are satisfactory and a good range of activities is used to develop pupils' learning. However, effectiveness is reduced because behaviour management strategies are limited, and some pupils are easily distracted. Across all years, teachers use a good range of resources, textbooks and video to support learning. However, pupils make insufficient use of ICT to support their work. Assessment procedures are unsatisfactory. Marking is unsatisfactory with insufficient guidance as to how pupils can improve. Pupils do not know how well they are doing compared with national standards. However, working relationships between teachers and pupils are positive, and pupils display satisfactory attitudes to their work.
75. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The new subject co-ordinator is establishing priorities for improvement, but these have not, as yet, been built into the planning. Schemes of work have yet to be satisfactorily revised, to include more guidance on what pupils are expected to learn. Procedures for reviewing pupils' work, and the monitoring and evaluation of teaching, are satisfactory, although they have not yet been implemented fully. However, the use of assessment data to monitor and track pupils' performance is unsatisfactory. A good range of educational visits enhances the curriculum. Pupils undertake fieldwork in all year groups, which supports their learning well by improving their understanding.
76. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory. Leadership and management have been strengthened by the appointment of a subject specialist, fieldwork has been developed and accommodation has improved. However, there is still insufficient use of ICT and assessment procedures are not yet good enough.

## Religious education

Provision in religious education is **unsatisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Staff absence has had a detrimental effect upon pupils' achievement.
- There is good use of visiting speakers.
- There are good working relationships with pupils.
- The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development.
- There is no specialist teaching room for the subject.
- The use of performance data is unsatisfactory, and assessment procedures give insufficient guidance to pupils as to how to improve their work.

### **Commentary**

77. A new subject co-ordinator was appointed at the start of the school year. A prolonged period of ill health, and a continuing phased return to school, has had an adverse effect on provision and improvement in the subject. During this time, non-specialist teachers and inexperienced supply staff have covered the teaching.
78. By the end of Year 6, standards are below those which are expected by the locally agreed syllabus. However, in Years 5 and 6 pupils develop a satisfactory knowledge of the Bible and have a basic knowledge of the major world religions. By the end of Year 8, standards remain below those expected by the locally agreed syllabus. Nevertheless, in Years 7 and 8 pupils develop a satisfactory knowledge of celebrations, pilgrimage and the environment in the Christian, Islamic and Jewish faiths. However, their ability to apply their knowledge to evaluate and reflect on religious issues is weak. Pupils enter the school with standards below expectations. Achievement across Years 5 to 8 is unsatisfactory because of the effects of staff absence. Lack of continuity in planning and teaching has had a detrimental effect upon pupils' learning and their achievement. This applies to pupils of all abilities and needs.
79. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory. For some months, the absence of a specialist teacher has resulted in poor coverage of the subject matter. Consequently, teaching has failed to provide sufficient challenge. However, the return of the subject co-ordinator after a prolonged absence is having a good effect, with given good guidance and support being given to non-specialist teachers. Lesson planning is identifying good activities and resources, which are now enabling pupils to make satisfactory progress with their learning. Assessment is unsatisfactory. Marking has been irregular and failed to give sufficient guidance as to how well pupils were doing, and what they need to do to improve. Despite the shortcomings, working relationships between teachers and pupils are good, and pupils display good attitudes to the subject. Across Years 5 to 8, pupils' learning in religious education makes a good contribution to their social, moral, cultural and spiritual development.
80. Leadership of the subject, particularly by the new subject co-ordinator, is satisfactory. However, because of the subject leader's prolonged absence, management of the subject has been unsatisfactory. Nevertheless, planning has identified a good set of priorities for improvement. Procedures to review the work of the subject have been established, but because of the co-ordinator's absence, they have not been implemented. Schemes of work are being revised and now give better coverage of the subject. The use of visiting speakers is a good feature and makes learning interesting for the pupils. The use of assessment data is unsatisfactory. This is because it is not used to help teachers' planning or to track pupils' progress. Accommodation is unsatisfactory, as the subject has no specialist room, and is taught in art and technology rooms. This inhibits learning through the lack of display space, and the inability to create a subject specific environment. Improvement since the previous inspection is unsatisfactory. Standards have fallen because of the unsatisfactory learning of pupils. Weaknesses with marking and assessment have not been dealt with. However, following the new co-ordinator's recent return to school, leadership is demonstrating the capacity to improve the subject and resolve the current weaknesses.

## **TECHNOLOGY**

### **Design and technology**

Provision in design and technology is **good**.

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

- The good teaching enables the pupils to achieve well.
- Good leadership and management of the subject ensure effective planning.
- Work in the various aspects of the subject is well balanced.
- Good use of assessment helps pupils to make good progress.
- The sharing of accommodation for the subject is unsatisfactory.
- Opportunities for using ICT in the subject are limited.

#### **Commentary**

81. Standards at the end of Years 6 and 8 are above expectations. Overall, achievement is good, and pupils make good progress in the subject throughout Years 5 to 8. In the lessons seen, there is a good balance between designing and making. Pupils are gaining a good experience of design and technology through working in resistant materials, textiles and food. Some projects are technologically challenging involving structures, mechanisms and basic control systems. Pupils are motivated well and enjoy the work. Good use is made of well-structured workbooks, prepared by the teacher, to develop designs and promote well the use of graphical skills.
82. The quality of teaching is good. Lessons are prepared well and, when possible, good use is made of ICT for teaching, and to support learning. Furthermore, activities in lessons are organised well, and are challenging of the pupils. Learning is good for pupils at all levels of ability and they enjoy the subject. Good use is made of existing products for research and to understand design concepts. Practical skills are developed well and pupils show a good understanding of assembly methods, and in the use of a range of different materials. This was clearly evident in a lesson where pupils were investigating and developing designs for shoes. There is good use of assessment in lessons to monitor progress and to inform pupils as to how to improve. Pupils discuss their work with confidence, and demonstrate knowledge and understanding of both designing and making.
83. There are good resources to meet the practical requirements of the projects undertaken. However, the accommodation is unsatisfactory because it is a shared room with art and design. Nevertheless, the room is well organised and good use is made of the space available. Nonetheless, it is restrictive for using larger tools and machinery, and sometimes limits the type of work which can be undertaken.
84. The leadership of the subject is good with a clear plan for future development. Management is good because planning effectively meets the requirements of the programme of study for the National Curriculum. Planning shows good progression in the development of knowledge and skills for both designing and making. Cross-curricular aspects, for example, literacy, numeracy and citizenship, are included well in planning. However, there are limited opportunities in using ICT for both designing and making, but this concern has been identified already in the subject development plan. Assessment is established well, and is understood well by pupils because it is linked effectively to National Curriculum levels. There has been satisfactory progress since the previous inspection. Standards have been maintained and there is now good use of assessment.

## **VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS**

### **Art and design**

Provision in art and design is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very good teaching enhances learning very well through the good use of resources.
- Good leadership ensures good improvement in the subject.
- Very good management makes sure that planning in art and design is thorough.
- Very good assessment fully involves the pupils, and helps them understand how to improve.
- Accommodation is unsatisfactory because it is a shared area.

### **Commentary**

85. Standards at the end of Years 6 and 8 are above expectations, and pupils' progress and achievement are very good. In the lessons seen, activities are stimulating, well structured and challenging. Pupils are motivated well and enthusiastic about their work. Their attitudes and behaviour are good. They make good use of a wide range of media in their two and three-dimensional work. There is very good use of sketchbooks by pupils to record and develop their studies.
86. Teaching is very good with lessons which are planned well, and through which pupils develop and explore a wide range of skills and techniques. The teacher enhances lessons well by using ICT presentations. Music is used well as a stimulus, for example, in a lesson where pupils studied the culture of native North American art. Furthermore, this contributed well to the pupils' cultural development. In lessons there is very good use of pupil self-assessment, and sometimes peer assessment, within activities. Learning is very good with pupils, at all levels of ability, progressing very well and enjoying the subject. Gifted or talented pupils have good opportunities for further development in lessons and through specially planned projects, for example, in working with a local artist to produce a willow stag sculpture.
87. Although there are good resources to meet the practical requirements of the work planned, the accommodation is unsatisfactory because it is a shared room with design and technology. However, the room is well organised and maximum use is made of space to display pupils' work. Although the best use is made of the room, it is restrictive for teaching and sometimes limits the type of work which can be undertaken.
88. The leadership of the subject is very good with a clear vision for future development. Management is very good because curriculum planning is very thorough in meeting the requirements of the National Curriculum. Projects are planned in detail and supported very well by the extensive use of resource material relating to a wide range of artists, cultures and techniques. Planning shows good progression in the development of pupils' knowledge and skills. Cross-curricular aspects are well covered, for example, those of literacy, numeracy and citizenship. Assessment is established very well and used on a regular basis to enable pupils to be fully aware of their level of attainment and how to improve. There is good recording of assessment by pupils in their sketchbooks. There has been good progress and improvement since the previous inspection in curriculum planning and in meeting well the learning needs of all pupils.

### **Music**

Provision in music is **good**.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' experiences in music challenge them well.
- The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' practical use of literacy and numeracy.
- Learning and achievement are supported well through good assessment in the subject.
- Library resources are unsatisfactory, and some musical instruments require renewal.
- Whilst liaison with other secondary schools is good, that with first schools is under-developed.

## **Commentary**

89. The majority of pupils enter the school in Year 5 with standards and understanding of the subject which are well below expectations. However, a few pupils take private instrumental tuition, and have standards meeting or above expectations. Good, specialist teaching enables pupils of all abilities to make good progress. Consequently, by Year 6, attainment meets national expectations and these standards are maintained through to Year 8. Pupils' achievement is good overall in all year groups, and supported well through good working relationships.
90. In lessons, pupils are challenged well to think for themselves and become actively involved in music making. Recordings of work are comprehensive and show the wide range of opportunities pupils have for improvisation, composition and performance. Pupils are enabled to experience a good range of musical traditions, from the Samba in Year 5 to the Blues in Year 8, taking in successfully African music in Year 6 and Gamelan in Year 7. Pupils' work shows good coverage of traditional and contemporary styles. During the inspection, a good contribution was made to Year 7 pupils' musical development through a visiting Turkish music group and a French-African singer.
91. In a good Year 6 lesson, work in literacy was supported well through pupils' work in exploring the lyrics of traditional folk songs. Numeracy development was enhanced well in a Year 8 lesson on irregular time signatures. Furthermore, there is a good emphasis on the use of conventional musical notation from the start of Year 5. Both teacher and pupils are making good use of relatively new ICT resources to enhance learning in the subject. However, library resources for the subject are insufficient to support pupils in their independent research.
92. Teaching is good in all year groups because it is aimed well at raising standards and pupils' achievement. Planning for learning is thorough, detailed and focused well on National Curriculum requirements. The teacher's very good, personal command of the subject means there is a good appreciation of pupils' individual and collective skills, and what they need to do to improve. Lessons are therefore interesting, providing a good variety of activities for all groups of pupils. Consequently, pupils arrive in lessons eager to learn and become involved in music making. Their attitudes to music and their behaviour in lessons are good because the teacher shares the aim of each lesson well with the pupils. They know what it is they must do to make the necessary progress, and consequently, pupils throughout the school learn well in the subject.
93. Assessment of pupils' work is good. Clear records track pupils' achievements, which substantiate well the reporting to parents. Marking is good, informative and evaluative, and day-to-day assessment in lessons is supportive. Questioning of pupils in lessons is good, open, and encouraging of pupils to be self-critical and evaluative of their work. Good work on improving assessment further is being undertaken with partner secondary schools. However, work with partner first schools on assessing standards and achievement at the start of Year 5 is at an early stage of development.
94. The music co-ordinator, who has been in post for less than two years, is leading and managing the subject well. Improvement since the previous inspection, when the subject was criticised for a range of weaknesses, has been good. Development planning in particular is now good, and has properly identified areas for further improvement. These include the replacement of ageing instruments, and the further development of the use of ICT.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good, experienced teaching is well focused on the development of key physical education skills.
- Pupils benefit well from good resources and facilities for physical education.
- The Exmoor Curriculum ensures good provision for outdoor activities.
- Extra-curricular opportunities enhance the subject's activities very well.
- Pupils' recording of their achievements and experiences in the subject is unsatisfactory.
- Weaknesses in management result from unsatisfactory documentation relating to planning.

### Commentary

95. Pupils' achievement in physical education is good throughout all year groups. Standards overall are above expectations by Years 6 and 8. In the lessons seen, the practical activities are structured well, challenging and pupils are motivated well. Pupils take full advantage of the wide range of activities provided in lessons and by extra-curricular opportunities. However, in lessons pupils do not complete any written work to record or analyse their experiences, for example, analysing the skills they have used or measuring and assessing performance. This is unsatisfactory. Neither is there any use of ICT to measure performance or collate data.
96. Teaching and learning are good, with the majority of lessons taught by an experienced specialist teacher for the subject. Lessons are planned well for the progressive development of skills and the understanding of the techniques required. Pupils at all levels of ability progress well and enjoy the subject. Talented pupils have good opportunities for further development of their physical education skills. The good resources and accommodation for physical education further enhance pupils' learning. Good use is made of the hall as a gymnasium. Outdoor facilities are good with a swimming pool, a hard surface area and extensive sports fields. Good use is made of the local area for the Exmoor Curriculum. However, drainage is a continual problem for the sports fields.
97. The leadership of the subject is satisfactory overall, and improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory. However, although standards have been maintained through good specialist teaching, planning and assessment remain areas for improvement. Nevertheless, the school provides a good range of physical education activities including, dance, gymnastics, athletics, swimming, team games, and the Exmoor Curriculum with its focus on outdoor education. Through the Exmoor Curriculum, all pupils take part in hiking, map reading, and water sports. There is good liaison with two partner middle schools in the planning of the physical education curriculum to ensure uniformity of provision in the subject. There is a very good range of extra-curricular sport in which pupils take part, and clubs are well attended. However, although there are effective links with other schools, it is difficult to develop a wide range of inter-school matches because of school location and the problems of travelling and transport.
98. The subject is managed by an experienced teacher with a good understanding of the requirements of the National Curriculum. However, the management of the subject is unsatisfactory because essential planning, whilst often being in place practically, is not recorded properly anywhere. The subject's documentation does not provide a clear overview of the activities covered. Neither does it show progression, the links to the Exmoor Curriculum nor contributions to any cross-curricular aspects covered, such as literacy, numeracy, ICT and citizenship. Assessment, although clearly evident and effective in lessons through oral discussion, is not being recorded on a regular basis for pupils to be fully aware of their level of attainment and progress.

## PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship, and personal, social and health education, are taught through a programme of specialist lessons in all year groups. Aspects of the pupils' personal development are enhanced further through the teaching of the Exmoor Curriculum, which was sampled during the inspection.

### **Personal, social, health and citizenship education**

Provision in personal, social, health and citizenship education is **good**.

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

- The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' personal development.
- The course enables pupils to make good use of literacy and ICT in their work.
- There are good, developing links with the community through citizenship work.
- Assessment in the subject is not related sharply enough to national criteria.
- The Exmoor Curriculum plays an important role in the pupils' citizenship and personal education.

#### **Commentary**

99. Standards of attainment by Years 6 and 8 are in line with expectations for pupils' personal, social and health education, and citizenship education. Samples of early Year 5 work show pupils' attainment on entry to the school is below national expectations for the subject. Overall, standards and achievement in Years 5 and 6 tend to be affected by below average literacy skills. Nevertheless, pupils make good progress as they move through the school, and achievement overall is good by Years 6 and 8.
100. In the work and lessons seen, pupils of all abilities clearly responded well to the challenges offered by the subject. By Year 6, they show a good understanding of their rights and responsibilities as young citizens. They marshal good, short summaries of arguments and discussions in their notebooks, which are used well to record their work in lessons. Pupils show good consideration of the values and beliefs of others on moral and social issues, such as theft, drug taking, and vandalism. The intentions of lessons are presented clearly to pupils at the start of each lesson, and the pupils note these as effective reminders, which guide well their work and revision. By Year 8, there is good achievement in respect of pupils' depth of research into, and understanding of, human rights and organisations. There was good challenge in one lesson where pupils used computer slide shows to present their findings. Furthermore, the opportunity was taken well for the class to assess each other's work. Consequently, there was open, sensible and mature reflection by the pupils on difficult subjects such as child abuse, slavery, child labour, and bullying.
101. Teaching is good across all year groups. This is because the course has been planned well. In addition, good opportunities are offered to the pupils through visiting speakers. For example, good contacts have been developed with the local council, which are enhancing well Year 6 work on government. However, the assessment of pupils' work is not linked sufficiently well to the national criteria for the subject. Work is currently being undertaken with partner secondary schools to sharpen assessment and marking schemes. Nevertheless, pupils are given satisfactory guidance, on a day-to-day basis, so they know how to improve. Consequently, learning is good overall. Literacy skills in letter writing are being supported well through work involving planned correspondence with the Clerk to the Council on matters of local concern. In their group debates, the pupils showed good learning in their awareness of issues affecting tourism and their environment. Discussion with Year 7 pupils showed there are good opportunities for them to be involved in democratic processes through citizenship and the developing work of the school council.
102. There has been good improvement in the subject since the previous inspection. This is a result of good leadership and effective management. There is a good focus on national initiatives for the subject, particularly the development of citizenship elements. Consequently,



this is a well-integrated course, which pays good attention to all the required aspects of personal, social, health and citizenship education. The course meets well the needs of the pupils.

### **The Exmoor Curriculum**

103. Dulverton Middle School is the only middle or secondary school situated within the Exmoor National Park and is therefore unique. The Exmoor Curriculum is about the development of the pupils' life skills, and their understanding of their environmental and cultural heritage. The school's provision through this aspect of its work, as an enhancement and enrichment of its curriculum, is very good. The course is a strength of the school, not only in terms of the personal development of the pupils, but also in their development as good citizens as part of the community. For example, in the recent past pupils at the school have been involved in the restoration of a local footpath in the area. Some 80 per cent of pupils completing the course by summer 2004 successfully gained qualifications as Exmoor Junior Rangers. All other pupils gained some recognition of their achievements through a system of graded certification. The course is successful in raising the self-esteem of pupils throughout the school, all of whom are given very good opportunity to take full advantage of its activities. Furthermore, the course contributes very well to careers education as its practical elements meet well the aspirations of many of its pupils.
104. Two lessons were sampled, a Year 5 lesson in cycling proficiency, and some fieldwork in Year 7. Teaching, learning and pupils' achievements were good in both lessons. Standards met the expectations of the course. The cycling training was a particularly good example of the school's preparation of its pupils for everyday life. The fieldwork was a good practical exercise as part of the pupils' work on preparing guided walks along the local river. Furthermore, the approach of the pupils to this work, and their socially responsible behaviour when out in public, was very good.
105. As a subject, the Exmoor Curriculum is led and managed well. This is because planning is good, as are the opportunities included to enable the development of important skills across the whole range of subjects. This includes not only key geographical skills and the understanding of the history of the area, but also important literacy, numeracy, design and physical education skills. The attainment and achievement of pupils in such respects are good overall.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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