

INSPECTION REPORT

BLACKBROOK PRIMARY SCHOOL

Taunton

LEA area: Somerset

Unique reference number: 123737

Acting headteacher: Hugh Taunton

Lead inspector: Raymond Jardine

Dates of inspection: 7 - 9 June 2004

Inspection number: 269013

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	235
School address:	Ashbourne Crescent Taunton Somerset
Postcode:	TA1 2RA
Telephone number:	01823 338138
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Graham Strang

Date of previous inspection: 2 November 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school opened in 1989 and serves the district of Blackbrook on the eastern side of Taunton. It is about average in size compared to other primary schools and is a popular choice among parents; the school is oversubscribed. There are 235 boys and girls on roll in eight classes. Of these pupils, 225 are of white UK heritage but a small number are of white European, Bangladeshi or Chinese origin; four of these have English as an additional language but none of them are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils joining or leaving the school other than at the usual times is about average. Most pupils come from the immediate area of mainly private housing estates, but some live in rented housing association accommodation. Although only five per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, their families' socio-economic circumstances are wide ranging; overall they broadly reflect the national picture. There are 17 pupils on the register of special educational needs; nine of them receive additional support from outside agencies and of these, five have statements of special educational need. Their needs vary and include severe learning, social, emotional and behavioural needs, visual impairment and physical disabilities. Four pupils have autistic tendencies. Pupils' attainment on entry to school varies; it is most typically about average, but the Year 6 cohort of 2003 was well below. In 2002, the school won a National Achievement Award.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
7428	Raymond Jardine	Lead inspector	Science Information and communication technology
12775	Judith Goodchild	Lay inspector	
8864	Peter Clifton	Team inspector	Mathematics Physical education Religious education
32142	Beryl Richmond	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Geography History Special educational needs
27990	Margaret Sanger	Team inspector	English English as an additional language Music Art Design and technology

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Blackbrook is a reasonably effective school that provides satisfactory value for money. The school's caring and encouraging ethos and climate foster good attitudes among pupils so that they are willing learners. The teaching is at least satisfactory and a considerable amount is good.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- In Years 1 and 2, pupils achieve good standards in reading and science, and very good standards in mathematics
- Teachers create an encouraging climate for learning. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is good. In Years 3 to 6 the more able are not challenged enough in some lessons
- Relationships throughout the school are good. Pupils like coming to school; their attendance is above average. They have good attitudes to learning and behave well
- Pupils are not using information and communication technology (ICT) enough to help raise standards because there are too few computers
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Arrangements for them are well managed and good support is provided in lessons by well trained learning support assistants
- The role of some curriculum leaders in monitoring the curriculum and its effects on pupils' progress is not developed enough
- Links with parents are very good and they make a good contribution to children's learning

The key weaknesses in Year 2 pupils' standards in writing, mathematics and science identified at the time of the last inspection have been addressed well and standards by Year 2 are much improved. However, not enough progress has been made in the school's use of assessment to guide its planning in later years and consequently, overall improvement is insufficient.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	C	A	D	B
mathematics	C	C	E	D
science	B	D	E	C

*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.*

Overall achievement is satisfactory. In 2003, Year 6 standards were well below the national average in mathematics and science and below in English. However, when compared with schools whose pupils attained similarly to these pupils in Year 2, pupils' overall achievement was satisfactory. Their standards were above the similar schools' average in English but below in mathematics. Inspection findings show Year 6 standards are now about average in English and science. In mathematics they are now a little above and achievement has improved. Pupils make satisfactory progress. In Year 2, standards in 2003 were above the national average in reading and well above in mathematics, but writing standards were about average. Current standards have improved and pupils achieve well. Children in Reception make at least satisfactory progress in all the areas of learning inspected and good progress in their creative and physical development. Most will reach the goals they are expected to reach by the end of Reception in communication,

language and literacy, personal, social and emotional development and physical and creative development. Pupils attain satisfactory skills in ICT but do not apply them enough within subjects.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. They enjoy school, have good attitudes, relate well to others and behave well. Attendance is good and punctuality, very good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory.

Teaching quality overall is satisfactory. There is some good teaching throughout the school and consistently so in Years 1 and 2. Pupils respond well to the positive and encouraging learning environment in lessons. The good lessons are planned well to meet the needs of all pupils. Those with special educational needs are supported and guided well by teachers and very effective learning support assistants but in some lessons in later years, the more able are not challenged enough. Extra-curricular clubs, visits and visitors enrich the curriculum well and there are good links with the community. Links with parents are very well developed.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory.

The acting headteacher has provided sound leadership. The school's development plan is soundly based on an evaluation of its performance and its aims and values are reflected in its ethos and climate. Other key staff also provide sound leadership of their areas but some curriculum co-ordinators are not monitoring the curriculum and pupils' achievements sufficiently to help focus their work. Governance is satisfactory. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and fulfil their statutory responsibilities in almost all respects, although arrangements to monitor the school's race equality policy are not yet in place.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents see the school's strengths significantly outweigh its weaknesses and are very satisfied. Almost all who responded to the inspection think their child makes good progress and like the school's caring environment. Their main concern is about incidents of bullying but they feel these are dealt with appropriately and inspectors agree. Pupils enjoy school, feel they work hard and that teachers help them to make their work better.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Ensure the level of challenge for the able pupils in Years 3 to 6 is consistently high so as to raise their achievement
- Develop further, the role of curriculum co-ordinators in monitoring the curriculum, teaching and pupils' standards
- Provide additional computers and associated resources to enable pupils to apply their ICT skills across the curriculum and so raise standards

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Monitor the effectiveness of the school's race equality policy

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement is good in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. Pupils in the Reception Year make satisfactory progress and their standards are broadly in line with those expected by the end of the Reception Year. By Year 6, standards are average in English and science and a little above in mathematics.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well throughout Years 1 and 2 and reach good standards in reading and science and very good standards in mathematics
- Writing standards at Key Stage 1 have improved as a result of the school's focus on this relative weakness
- The progress of more able pupils in Years 3 to 6 is uneven, particularly in their skills such as mathematical problem solving and scientific enquiry where they could achieve more
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because their needs are assessed accurately and support provided by learning support assistants is very effective

Commentary

1. Standards in the 2003 national tests at the end of Year 6 were below the national average in English and well below in mathematics and science. These results show a marked drop compared to previous years. However, the 2003 cohort of pupils were considerably lower attaining in their tests at the age of seven four years previously than is typical for the school. When their standards are compared with other schools of similar prior attainment, standards in 2003 were above average in English, in line in science but below average in mathematics. The proportion achieving the higher Level 5 was in line with similar schools in English and mathematics but below in science. Overall, those pupils who were at the school throughout this four year period achieved satisfactory standards in relation to their capabilities; the school met its target for mathematics and was only just short of it in English. There is no pattern of difference in the attainment of boys and girls evident in the past four years.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.0 (28.6)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	24.6 (27.2)	26.8 (26.7)
science	26.8 (27.8)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 33 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. Inspection findings show that currently in Year 6, pupils' standards in English, mathematics and science have recovered compared with the dip in 2003 and are about average. Taking account of their prior attainment in Year 2, pupils' achievements are satisfactory in all three subjects; but there are some variations within each. In English, reading is a little better than writing. In mathematics standards are above average overall, although mathematical problem solving skills are not as good because these skills are not taught consistently across

the Key Stage. In science, pupils' knowledge and understanding of facts and principles are good and almost all pupils reach at least the expected standard in their scientific enquiry skills as a result of the school's focus on them. Even so, not enough attention is given to the teaching of higher skills of enquiry to the more able pupils to help raise the proportion achieving the higher Level 5.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.7 (16.3)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	14.5 (13.7)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	17.9 (17.1)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 31 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. Standards by the end of Year 2 in reading and mathematics have been mainly above or well above average over the past four years and have improved at a rate above the national trend, but writing has not been as strong. In 2003, standards were above the national average in reading and well above in mathematics, but writing standards were about average. In relation to similar schools, standards in mathematics were above average and reading in line; however, writing was well below average. Boys have tended to achieve better than girls in writing, although no significant difference was seen during the inspection. Standards seen in the inspection show pupils' writing improved compared to 2003 and now a little above average, while reading and mathematics standards are both well above. Pupils are achieving well throughout Years 1 and 2 in reading, writing, mathematics and science because teaching is focused on clear learning objectives, well planned and consistently effective.
4. Pupils enter the Reception Year with wide ranging attainment; it is broadly average but some are below in their language and in the personal and social skills. By the end of their Reception year pupils make satisfactory progress. The teaching is at least satisfactory and some is good; consequently, most pupils are likely to achieve the goals they are expected to reach in physical and creative development, language, communication and literacy and personal, social and emotional development. There was not enough evidence to make secure judgements about mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world.
5. Pupils attain average standards in information and communication technology (ICT) although their skills in presenting information through multimedia presentations are not as good. ICT resources are old and insufficient in number; this constrains pupils' acquisition of skills and opportunities to apply them within subjects. Plans are in place to provide a new ICT suite and resources for classrooms for this autumn term that will bring the school's resources into line with national targets. In religious education, standards are a little below the expectations of the agreed syllabus by Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs and those few whose English is not their first language, make good progress throughout the school. Teachers plan well for their needs and learning support assistants are very effective in the support and guidance they provide.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes towards school and their work are good. Their attendance is good and their punctuality, very good. Pupils' behaviour is also good. Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, social, moral and cultural development, is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The attitudes that pupils display towards their learning are good and on occasions very good and these help them to achieve well.
- Good behaviour and relationships throughout the school contribute to pupils' success
- The school's conflict resolution programme helps pupils to take responsibility for managing their own behaviour

Commentary

6. Pupils' attitudes towards their learning are good and contribute much to the standards they achieve. They are very happy to come to school and involve themselves in activities. Most feel trusted to do things on their own and find other children friendly. Pupils respond well to good teaching that stimulates within them a desire to explore and learn. There is an achievement culture within the school, which is celebrated, and this fosters the good attitudes that pupils display towards their learning. The weekly Gold Book assemblies are a good example of this where success of all kinds is recognised. Most teachers encourage good learning habits and set an effective climate for learning at the beginning of the day and pupils happily respond to this.
7. Behaviour in lessons is good. Most staff have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour and appropriate behaviour is constantly reinforced. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for managing their own behaviour through the school's conflict resolution programme. On the few occasions where pupils' behaviour is less than good it is usually related to whole-class discussions on the carpet that extend for too long a period so that pupils lose concentration and interest. Pupils relate well to each other and to visitors. Working relationships between pupils and staff are good and are based on mutual respect. Effective learning partnerships have been established between pupils and staff and these are a significant feature of the school and make a contribution to the progress that pupils make. There are a few instances of harassment or bullying that parents reported. However, they feel these are dealt with promptly and effectively and inspectors agree. There has been only one temporary exclusion in the past few years.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	225	1	0
White – any other White background	4	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	3	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0

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

8. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social and cultural development is good. Daily assemblies and religious education lessons promote pupils' spiritual development. Pupils' awareness of right and wrong is reinforced through ¹circle time activities where they are encouraged to express their views and consider the effect of their actions on others. Reception pupils' personal, social and emotional development is satisfactory and they are well prepared for their next stage. A wide range of visits, from residential to a trip to the shops, supports pupils' social development. The annual musical performance and performance at other schools develop pupils' self-confidence. The culture of those few pupils from other cultural backgrounds in the school is promoted well; for example, by having Bangladeshi clothes in

¹ During 'circle time' pupils discuss a wide range of personal and general issues and listen to each other's views.

the dressing up box, and by sometimes carrying out the register in French. Very good use is made of the local community and town to ensure pupils develop a good knowledge of local culture and history. Visitors, such as an African drumming group, add other dimensions to pupils' experiences. The school is conscious of the need to raise pupils' awareness of the multicultural society they live in. It is working with the local education authority to take part in a multicultural festival and pupils have studied the cultures of China and Peru this year.

Attendance

The attendance of pupils is good. Parents fully support the school in ensuring the high attendance of their child. There are effective systems in place to follow up absences if notification has not been received from home. Pupils' punctuality is very good.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.1	School data	0.0
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. A considerable amount is good, particularly in Key Stage 1. Assessment is not used consistently across the school. The curriculum is broad and enriched well and there are strengths in the provision made for pupils with special educational needs but there are not enough computers to support the curriculum. Links with parents are very good.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. There is some good teaching throughout the school and none is unsatisfactory. Teaching quality is good throughout Key Stage 1 and is satisfactory in Reception and in Years 3 to 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The better lessons, particularly those in Years 1, 2 and 5, are focused on clear learning objectives and planned well to meet pupils' needs
- Teachers' use of assessment to guide their planning is inconsistent in Years 3 to 6 and as a result, the more able pupils are sometimes not challenged enough
- Pupils enjoy learning and respond well to the positive and encouraging climate for learning in lessons; relationships are good and pupils behave well
- Technical vocabulary is introduced and practised well but pupils do not write enough to express their learning across the curriculum
- Learning support assistants are very effective. Pupils with special educational needs and those few whose English is not their first language make good progress
- Homework effectively extends the learning in lessons

Commentary

9. Although teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, a considerable amount is good. But its quality is inconsistent, particularly in Years 3 to 6 where in some lessons the more able are not challenged as much as they could be. Teaching is most consistently good in Years 1 and 2 and there are also strengths in Year 5. This pattern is also evident within the subjects inspected. Pupils enjoy lessons and respond and behave well because teachers provide a positive and encouraging environment for learning. Relationships are good and pupils are keen to learn. The teaching of Reception pupils is satisfactory overall, with some good teaching in all the areas of learning observed. Almost all parents who responded to the inspection survey think the teaching good and that their children work hard.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 38 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0%)	1 (3%)	19 (50%)	18 (47%)	0 (0%)	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.

10. The contexts for pupils' learning are often stimulating and engage pupils' interest and involvement, particularly in the better lessons. Teachers use questioning to good effect to help pupils recall their learning from previous lessons and to encourage them to reason and explain. This helps pupils become aware of their own reasoning and to compare it with others; for example, during mental and oral mathematics sessions. Resources are planned for well and are much used to provide pupils with first-hand experiences that aid their learning. Pupils in a Year 5 science lesson examined a good range of flowering plants to identify key features of their structures which helped them understand the role of each in reproduction. A strong feature of teaching is the way new technical vocabulary is drawn to pupils' attention and regularly referred to so that pupils quickly assimilate it. However, although extended writing tasks are set weekly, not enough emphasis is given to enabling pupils to express their learning through written tasks within other subjects such as religious education and geography.
11. There is a direct link between teachers' use of their assessments to guide their planning and pupils' achievements. In the better lessons, teachers plan effectively for the full range of pupils' abilities, sometimes organising pupils into groups where they can provide appropriate levels of support and challenge for each. In these lessons, teachers use their assessments well and the activities provided are appropriately matched to pupils' capabilities so that all make good progress. However, in some weaker lessons in Years 3 to 6, work tends to be pitched at the level of the majority and additional support given to the less able. As a result, more able, gifted and talented pupils sometimes do not achieve as much as they could. This gives rise to uneven achievement across the Key Stage. For example, pupils' achievements tend to be good in Year 5 where the quality of planning is consistently good, but inconsistent in other years, especially in relation to building up problem solving and enquiry skills.
12. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. This is because their needs have been accurately assessed, using outside agency support if necessary, and their individual education plans are targeted carefully to help them learn. Most teachers use a wide range of successful strategies to motivate, involve and challenge pupils, and regularly monitor the progress pupils are making towards achieving their targets. Records are well maintained and regularly updated. Learning support assistants work very effectively with individuals, groups and the whole class. Teachers and their assistants work together well as teams. Consequently, pupils benefit from effective teaching that enables them to achieve well. Teachers who have pupils whose English is not their first language in their classes have a good knowledge of their individual needs and provide specific support in the development and extension of vocabulary across the curriculum. As a result, these pupils make good progress.
13. Pupils are generally managed effectively and behave well, although occasionally, when class discussions extend for too long a period, they become restless and concentration is lost. Homework is set regularly and used well to extend the learning in lessons. Pupils' work is

marked regularly and feedback given; much of it is praise and there are good examples of constructive feedback to help pupils improve their work. Pupils are set targets based on their attainment in national tests. Their standards are assessed through term progress checks. These, and annual standardised assessments, enable teachers to track pupils' progress in literacy, numeracy and science. Teachers use colour codes to denote pupils doing well and those causing concern and the school uses these to focus its support through the work of additional support classes.

The curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory, providing a breadth of experience that meets statutory requirements. It is enriched well through lunchtime clubs, visits and special events. Accommodation and most resources are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Overall, the curriculum is broad and balanced but time is not always used efficiently
- The provision for pupils' special educational needs is based on a thorough assessment of their needs and is effective throughout the school
- Pupils' personal and social development is well planned and central to the school's aims and ethos
- Skills such as problem solving are not taught consistently across the school
- Visits and visiting speakers enrich pupils' experiences and there is a good range of extra-curricular clubs covering the arts and sport that are well attended
- ICT resources are inadequate for curriculum needs and this adversely affects pupils' standards

Commentary

14. The curriculum provides a broad range of worthwhile activities and experiences which satisfactorily meets the needs of pupils and meets all statutory requirements. The school has made some progress in developing the curriculum since the time of the previous inspection. For example, writing standards and mathematics have improved in Years 1 and 2. But there are some areas where curriculum time is not used efficiently. Time allocated to quiet reading each day does not include enough planned guidance from the teacher. Pupils are also given a dedicated time each week to develop their writing skills but writing is not used enough within some subjects to enable pupils to express and consolidate their learning and apply their literacy skills.
15. The curriculum is planned and adapted from national schemes and strategies and key ideas and concepts are built on systematically. For example, pupils acquire good standards in their knowledge of science. However, pupils' skills such as those for mathematical problem solving and scientific enquiry do not develop as systematically from year to year, particularly in Years 3 to 6 and this affects the pace of achievement of some more able pupils.
16. The provision for pupils with special educational needs meets well the various needs of individual pupils so that they are fully involved in lessons. This is because the extra adult support they receive enables them to succeed. In addition, teachers plan specific tasks for these pupils so that they can complete them on their own and consequently improve their ability to work independently. The provision outlined in statements of special educational need is fully in place and reviewed annually in line with the Code of Practice guidance. Good systems ensure that these pupils are fully included in all aspects of school life. The school also reviews annually the provision for other pupils who are given additional support from outside agencies.
17. On a day-to-day basis the curriculum provides strong support for pupils' personal and social development. Pupils are very confident in sharing their views, taking part in discussions and asking questions. The success of the good personal and social provision is evident in the way pupils relate to each other and to adults both in and outside of the classroom. These skills are particularly evident in Year 2 and this prepares the pupils well for Years 3 to 6. The school promotes healthy eating appropriately and the curriculum includes sex and relationship education, and attention to alcohol and drugs misuse.

18. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities to support the arts and sport. During the inspection, the after-school gym and lunchtime country dance clubs were well attended. The gym club, led by a parent, reinforced and developed pupils' skills well. There are many opportunities for pupils to compete with other schools; football and netball feature strongly. The school has won the 2004 local football league. The success of individual pupils is celebrated well through certificates and special occasion assemblies. Residential and other visits and visiting speakers also enrich pupils' experiences, especially in the humanities curriculum.
19. The accommodation is clean and in very good order. The outside area includes a spacious field that is well marked out to support athletic activities. The outdoor play area for the under-fives supports their learning very well. However, there is limited space within the school for storage and quiet meetings. Resources to support learning are generally satisfactory, although inadequate ICT resources constrain pupils from applying their skills within subjects and limit their achievement in some areas. The library is also inadequate. The school has sufficient teaching staff with the necessary breadth of expertise. Some, who are young and relatively inexperienced, joined the school within the past two years and have now taken up additional responsibilities. There are a good number of well-trained learning support assistants who very effectively support pupils with special educational needs.

Care, guidance and support

The steps taken to ensure the pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are satisfactory. The provision of support, advice and guidance based on monitoring is satisfactory. The involvement of pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The personal knowledge that staff have of their pupils is a strength
- Pupils experiencing difficulties are identified at weekly staff meetings
- Procedures to ensure the health, safety and welfare of pupils are good
- Child protection procedures are secure but need to be updated through training
- The school council's role in influencing the school's work needs developing further

Commentary

20. Pupils joining the school are sensitively introduced and staff create good, trusting working relationships with them and their families that are supportive and promote good learning. Pupils from the Opportunity Playgroup, for example, have a phased induction to ease their transition into mainstream education. During the summer term prior to starting school, play-days are run for children to help them become familiar with the school. There is an 'open door' policy to support parents settling their child into school.
21. The use of assessment data for tracking progress is satisfactory. Teachers keep accurate records of levels that pupils have attained in reading, writing, mathematics and science and use these to track their progress over time. Analysis of these helps to identify pupils in need of booster classes and other additional support. However, the use of assessment in foundation subjects is much less developed or effective. Staff have a good knowledge of pupils' personal circumstances and their background. Weekly staff meetings quickly identify pupils who might be experiencing difficulties and support strategies put in place if appropriate. Parents are always contacted.
22. The school cares well for pupils with special educational needs. Their work is regularly monitored to ensure that they are making progress towards the targets set for them. Outside agencies are involved, as required, to help meet their specific targets. The school uses a

wide range of assessment tools that are used diagnostically to ensure that pupils' needs are met.

23. Procedures to ensure the health, safety and welfare of pupils are good. Medical conditions and allergies are identified and clear guidance is given to staff on how to deal with them. Arrangements for child protection are securely in place but need to be reviewed and updated through training to ensure that all staff are aware of the current procedures.
24. The involvement of pupils in the school's work and development is satisfactory. Almost all pupils responded to the questionnaire seeking their views of the school prior to the inspection; the great majority were satisfied that teachers listened to their views and felt they were trusted to do things on their own. However, the school could do more to involve them in its development. The school council has class representatives from Year 2 upwards, who are elected by their peers. The council representatives elect the chair and secretary and representatives inform their class about decisions made. Council members were involved in the setting up the Year 6 peer mediator scheme last year; even so, more could be done through the school council and other routes to enable pupils to influence aspects of school life. Pupils are not involved enough in the assessment of their own work and setting personal and academic targets for improvement.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The effectiveness of the school's links with its parents is very good. The quality of the school's links with the community is good. The school's links with other schools are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school's partnership with its parents is very well developed and they are much involved with school life
- Good use is made of the local community to enrich the work of the classroom
- Links with pre-school providers and other primary schools are good

Commentary

25. The school's partnership with its parents is very good. An effective working partnership has been established with parents that supports children's learning and also the daily life of the school. The school has open days where parents are encouraged to share class activities with their child. A termly consultation meeting with staff keeps them updated on the progress their child is making. Annual reports to parents are good and give a clear indication of what their child has studied and how they have progressed. Targets for improvement are often of a pastoral rather than academic nature. Workshops are held for parents on a range of topics. Currently 12 parents are following the conflict resolution programme. Parents who attended the meeting prior to the inspection and completed the questionnaire were very happy with the school and the education it provides for their child.
26. The school informs parents at an early stage in the process of planning work for pupils with special educational needs. Teachers invite parents into school to discuss pupils' individual education plans. Most parents come into school for a discussion about the support planned for their child. The school invites parents to all reviews and they can make an appointment at any time. Links between home and school are regular and constructive so that parents are aware of what they can also do to help their child make good progress.
27. The support that parents give to the school is very good. A group of parents are following up issues raised in a recent parental survey and monitoring progress towards resolving them. Parents volunteer to help in many capacities. For example, a group are currently being

trained to run cycling proficiency courses and another parent runs an after-school gymnastics club. The Friends group is active in both fund-raising and providing support to the school.

28. Links with the community are good. Very good use is made of the local community and town to support the work of the classroom and encourage pupils to understand local history and culture. Speakers from the local community lead assemblies. Recently a community group planned an orienteering course around the school. The local museum is used effectively by the school both for visits and borrowing artefacts.
29. Links with other schools are good. Relationships with local playgroups are good and play leaders are invited to attend play-days and settling-in meetings. Good links with the Opportunities Playgroup ensure that appropriate transition arrangements are made. The arrangements for the transfer of pupils into secondary education are satisfactory. Pupils attend inductions days and there is effective liaison with pastoral staff prior to transfer. Pupils take part in Mathematics Challenge competitions each term with other primary schools. Students from a local sixth form college help with sports clubs and links are also being established under the Sports Co-ordinator scheme with another secondary school, resulting in pupils' involvement in inter-primary school competitions.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The acting headteacher's leadership and the leadership of other key staff are satisfactory. However, there are some weaknesses in the effectiveness of management. The governance of the school is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The role of some curriculum co-ordinators in monitoring pupils' standards and teaching is underdeveloped and this results in inconsistent achievement
- The acting headteacher has provided direction for the school through a development plan that is soundly based on an evaluation of its performance
- Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and manage the school's finances well but their monitoring role needs developing further
- The school's aims and values are reflected well in its caring and supportive climate for learning

Commentary

30. The then deputy headteacher became acting headteacher in 2003 following the secondment of the headteacher by the local education authority to work in another school, initially for a period of two terms. The period of secondment was longer than expected and ultimately the headteacher resigned his headship of Blackbrook. A new headteacher has now been appointed to take up her post from this September. The acting headteacher has provided satisfactory leadership during this period and has maintained the confidence of parents. The school's aim to provide a caring and well ordered environment where pupils can learn and develop respect for others is reflected in its climate and ethos. Management responsibilities are clear and the school's special educational needs and literacy co-ordinators in particular provide good leadership.
31. Day-to-day management is effective and the school runs smoothly. The school has appointed a number of new staff in the past two years, most of them newly qualified. They have settled well and have since taken on extra responsibilities. The school's performance management arrangements are fully established. Objectives for staff and arrangements for their professional development are linked mainly to school priorities; for example, to improve

pupils' writing and science standards. The school's development plan focuses on appropriate priorities for improvement that were based on a sound review in relation to national performance benchmarks and involved staff and governors. Many of the issues highlighted in the school's self-evaluation for this inspection are similar to inspectors' findings.

32. Pupils are tracked towards their targets by class teachers through regular assessments in literacy, numeracy and science. The assessments are retained centrally and form the basis of actions such as targeting pupils through booster classes and additional adult support. However, a weakness in the school's management is the monitoring role of curriculum co-ordinators, some of whom are not using assessment rigorously to monitor strengths and weaknesses in the curriculum and teaching and so guide their planning. This undermines their effectiveness in dealing with inconsistent teaching and achievement. Some are inexperienced and need training to develop their expertise in this respect. The school has recently established a computerised central database of standardised assessments for all pupils that potentially provides curriculum co-ordinators and the management team with a very powerful tool for analysing patterns in the school's performance to guide their work.
33. The governing body has a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have set clear aims and policies and, in almost all respects, fulfil their statutory responsibilities. However, there are, as yet, no formal arrangements in place for monitoring the impact of the school's race equality policy because governors felt the new headteacher should be involved in approving them. These are now to be put in place. Governors receive regular reports from the acting headteacher and other key staff, including information on the school's performance compared to other schools. They are involved in drafting the school development plan and receive some reports on progress in its priorities; even so, their monitoring role needs developing further to make it more systematic and to ensure good progress is maintained. Governors are committed to inclusion; for example, they have directed additional funding to employing more learning support assistants to support pupils with special educational needs. Inspection evidence shows they are receiving good value for money in this respect.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	521,098	Balance from previous year	19,585
Total expenditure	538,676	Balance carried forward to the next	2,007
Expenditure per pupil	2,448		

34. The school's budget is managed well. The finance committee regularly reviews spending patterns and reports recommendations to the full governing body. Carry forwards from year to year have been relatively low. Governors have coped well with unexpected changes such as considerably more pupils entering the school this year and they have planned carefully to address weaknesses in ICT resources with a new suite and classroom based resources expected for the autumn term of this year. The school's expenditure per pupil is below average; governors and staff work hard to make effective use of it, based on best value principles. Taking account of pupils' academic and personal achievements, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Four of the six areas of learning were inspected in full. There was insufficient evidence to make judgements about overall provision in mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world.

When children enter the school, their levels of attainment are average overall, but there is a wide range. Some children have below average language and personal and social development. Provision for children in the Reception classes is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall with some good teaching and learning and there is close liaison between the teachers. Consequently, children make satisfactory progress and the majority of children will reach the expected levels in personal and social development and communication, language and literacy. Most will reach the expected levels in their creative development and their physical development by the end of their Reception year.

Children enter the Reception classes full time in the September of the academic year in which they become five. Almost all children have benefited from being at a nursery or playgroup. Children's induction is good. This is because the school adopts a flexible approach so that children settle in well according to their needs. Teachers invite parents into school before the school year starts so that they can explain fully about the classes and answer parents' questions. They provide parents with a useful range of written information at this time. Children also come into school before the school year starts to get to know the staff and the surroundings. The teaching team operate an 'open door' approach to parents and work very effectively with them because they value them as key partners in their children's education. The accommodation and resources are good and children have access to a covered outside area so that outside activities can take place whatever the weather. They also have access to extensive school grounds for a range of activities.

The curriculum is satisfactory. A mixed age class for Reception and Year 1 pupils has been introduced to assimilate larger numbers of pupils. The school has planned the curriculum for the Foundation Stage children and pupils in Year 1 and 2 as part of one overall plan. Current planning is not rigorous enough; it does not show clearly enough how the six areas of learning in the Foundation Stage will be covered progressively and short term plans do not always express learning objectives and outcomes clearly. However, this weakness is understood and being worked on. The activities that teachers provide are interesting and relevant to meet Foundation Stage children's needs. Teachers use a national standard framework to guide their assessments of children's progress but they recognise that more on-going recording of their assessments is necessary to inform their planning of teaching and learning.

Leadership is satisfactory but procedures for monitoring and developing the Foundation Stage curriculum are inadequate. The co-ordinator works well with her colleague. She has a clear vision about the development of this stage of learning, but there is no written action plan to guide improvements. There is a good ratio of adults to children. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good; children's needs are identified early and they are given the support they need. Overall progress since the last inspection is satisfactory.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The majority of children are in line to attain the expected goals by the end of the Reception year but a significant proportion will not
- Children are happy and want to come to school because staff work hard at establishing good relationships with them
- Staff are good role models
- Children are encouraged to choose activities, share and co-operate

Commentary

35. The school places a high priority on this area of learning. Children settle into the classes satisfactorily. The teachers are responsive to the children's needs and amend routines to help the children learn and settle in. There is generally a consistent approach to behaviour management. However, the start of the day was not calm enough in one class. An opportunity to develop speaking, listening, personal and social skills was lost when the teacher checked children off against the register and did not encourage their participation in an important part of the day. A good resource on display in the classroom to enable the children to self-register was not used. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and children achieve satisfactorily. There are plenty of activities that encourage children to play and co-operate. Most children are friendly and share equipment without making a fuss but some are still finding it difficult to co-operate with each other. They usually choose activities well for themselves. Most children listen well, speak to each other and adults in an appropriate way, enjoy playing together in the outside area with enthusiasm, curiosity and imagination and participate well in activities that their teachers have planned for them. Most children change independently for physical education but very few were wearing hats on a hot summer's day for physical activities on the field.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Phonics are not taught often enough
- Children are encouraged to develop their speaking and listening skills well through role play
- There is no identification of key vocabulary on planning
- There are good links with parents to develop reading and phonics skills

Commentary

36. Children's language skills are below average overall when they enter these classes. The majority will achieve the standards expected in this area of learning by the end of their Reception year. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and children are achieving satisfactorily. The school uses the Jolly Phonics system and children progress through this according to their needs with good support from parents at home. There were some phonics taught to individual pupils during the inspection although not for the whole class and it is not clear from planning how regularly teachers teach phonics over time. Children's listening skills develop quickly as adults talk to them and use simple questioning techniques, which encourage the children to respond. Teachers work to extend children's thinking, speech and imagination during role-play sessions is good. Children have access to a good range of picture books. Teachers read with individuals weekly to develop children's reading skills. In a whole-class reading session, children joined in enthusiastically with the reading of 'We are going on a bear hunt' responding well to the teacher's enthusiasm.

There is a good home/school system for sharing reading and parents give good support to their children. Children have planned and chosen opportunities to learn to write and are making satisfactory progress. Most children can form letters correctly, some can write sentences and all can illustrate their work with lively pictures.

37. In **mathematical development**, there are many resources and displays to help children learn, such as number lines, puzzles and number tracks. The quality of teaching and learning in the Year R/1 class is good and children are achieving well. Children participate in good practical activities and have good opportunities to cook on a regular basis where they can apply their mathematical skills. Children regularly sing rhymes like '1, 2, 3 Little Indians' and the elephant song that contribute well to their mathematical understanding. Work is planned well in the Year R/1 to challenge all children so that by the time these children will be in Year 1, all will have attained the standard expected for their age.
38. In **knowledge and understanding of the world**, teachers plan a satisfactory range of interesting activities, both inside the classroom and in the outside area to stimulate children's interest and enhance their understanding. For example, the beans that children have planted recently are growing well in the little garden in the outside area. The tent and the cafe were favourite role-play areas during the inspection. Those children who used the computers, had keyboard and mouse skills appropriate for their age. A good emphasis was put on differences and similarities between different children in a personal, social and health education lesson in the Year R/1 class, when the teacher drew on the different experiences of the children well.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most children are likely to achieve the expected level at the end of the Reception Year
- There are good resources, like trikes, and good use is made of the outside area
- Teachers plan good opportunities for children to develop fine motor skills, such as cutting with scissors, writing with a pencil and manipulating play dough

Commentary

39. Teaching and learning are good and consequently, children achieve well. Pupils develop skills such as ball throwing through appropriate activities. There are good planned opportunities for the children to play outside, ride on trikes and to participate in activities that contribute well to their physical development. For example, they enjoyed a good session of outside activities involving a pretend train activity, which was linked well with the 'Handa's Surprise' topic and also involved activities associated with the use of the parachute resource. They use a range of outdoor equipment associated with their imaginative play. Teachers plan regular opportunities for children to develop their fine motor skills such as writing with a pencil and cutting with scissors, both in planned group activities and at other times when children can choose their own activity. Children have good opportunities to squeeze, roll and shape play dough; these are usually self-chosen rather than linked into the focus of the lesson.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most children are in line to achieve the expected level at the end of the Reception Year
- Children are learning to participate well in making music
- Role-play areas and activities are of good quality and staff model role play well
- Children participate in a good range of creative work

Commentary

40. By the end of the Reception year, most children will attain standards expected for their ages. Children's achievement is good because of good teaching and learning. Role-play areas are used well. Adults develop children's learning through entering into both classroom role play and role-play activities in the outside area. There are regular opportunities for children to participate in singing associated, for example, with their mathematical development. There is a good range of creative work on display in the classroom and children are given good opportunities to paint both inside and outside the classroom, to print, to draw and to make models.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards reached in Years 1 and 2 are rising and achievement is good
- The quality of teaching and learning is good in Years 1 and 2
- Insufficient use is made of assessment to match work to the differing needs of pupils, especially the more able in some lessons in Years 3 to 6
- Learning support staff are well used and help children with special educational needs and lower attaining pupils to make at least sound progress
- Reading and writing skills are not used well, or extended in other subjects
- Inconsistency in the provision for spelling results in slow progress overall

Commentary

41. Standards in English are rising because of the school's focus on improvement in writing. In 2003, reading standards in Year 2 were above national expectations, but in line with similar schools. Standards in writing were in line with national expectations, but well below similar schools. Standards currently in Year 2 are above average; in reading they are well above average, and a little above average in writing. This represents further improvement and good progress. There was a fall in the trend of improving standards in Year 6, in 2003, to below national expectations, and well below similar schools. This was due to the make up of the particular cohort, which whilst weaker than usual, did achieve well. This year standards are in line with national expectations, representing sound achievement. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well, as does the pupil with English as an additional language. Learning support assistants support them very well, and every effort is made to raise their attainment by carefully planned work and sensitive encouragement.
42. Overall standards in speaking and listening are average in Year 1 and 2 and broadly average in Years 3 to 6. Pupils speak confidently. In some classes pupils listen very attentively, but this is not consistent. Staff provide valuable opportunities for pupils by asking pupils to explain and justify their thinking, encouraging pupils to talk to each other through paired discussions and using opportunities for speaking and listening in all subjects.
43. Pupils achieve well in reading. Their knowledge and enjoyment of books go hand in hand with development of their reading skills in Years 1 and 2. Standards in Year 6 are average. Throughout the school, literacy lessons are well structured, but time in the additional reading session is not used effectively; there is little teaching whilst pupils read individually. All pupils are strongly encouraged to read with parents and carers at home and this strengthens their progress. Most pupils read with confidence and fluency and seek information from text. They explain and justify their findings well, but have too few opportunities to develop and apply research skills, using books.
44. Standards in writing are now a little above average in Years 1 and 2 and a little below average in Years 3 to 6. Factors instrumental in raising standards are:
 - Whole-school assessment and moderation of samples of writing, which has raised expectations and teacher knowledge
 - Well structured lessons, linking reading with writing and focusing on specific skills

- Opportunities for pupils to write across a range of genres for a range of purposes
 - Interesting and relevant tasks
 - A strong focus on sentence structure in Years 1 and 2
45. The school continues to target writing for improvement. Additional factors, which would contribute to improvement, are:
- Regular and consistent opportunities to apply skills into extended pieces of writing and more opportunities for choice
 - A consistent and focused approach to the teaching of spelling
46. Teaching is satisfactory overall. In Years 1 and 2 teaching is good, and in Years 3 to 6 satisfactory, but with some inconsistency between classes. Strong factors, which contribute to good progress, are:
- Good relationships, behaviour and classroom management, which foster positive pupil attitudes
 - Effective questioning that probes thinking, seeks explanations and helps to overcome misunderstandings
 - Effective use of teacher demonstration and techniques to actively involve pupils in learning
 - Good use of classroom assistants in helping children to access learning
47. Less effective factors that hinder progress are:
- Assessment not being used to better match learning to needs of pupils, particularly the more able
 - Over-long initial sessions when pupils are passive and become restless
 - Low expectations about the amount of work expected, which hinder pupils' productivity
 - Marking that does not explain what pupils have done well, and what they need to do to improve
 - The lack of involvement of pupils in assessing their own learning and setting targets for improvement.
48. The leadership of the subject has been positive and enthusiastic involving staff in implementing new initiatives. This has led to satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. Standards in writing are rising and more children are attaining higher standards, but this needs further improvement. However, the monitoring of the impact of new developments on standards and teaching and learning is inadequate so that inconsistencies are not addressed as quickly as they could be.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

49. In most subjects, teachers focus attention on new vocabulary and refer to it regularly and this helps pupils assimilate new terms quickly. However, pupils do not express their learning through extended writing within subjects such as geography and religious education enough.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average in Year 2 and above average in Year 6
- Pupils' overall achievement is satisfactory; it is good in Years 1 and 2
- Teaching and learning are mainly satisfactory and good in Years 1 and 2
- Pupils with special educational needs are effectively supported by teachers and learning support assistants and make good progress

- The level of challenge for more able pupils in Years 3 to 6 is inconsistent
- The role of the co-ordinator in monitoring patterns in pupils' achievements to guide the focus of support and guidance needs developing further

Commentary

50. Standards are well above average in Year 2, and a little above average in Year 6. Over the past four years, results at the end of Year 2 have been consistently above or well above average. In Year 6, the trend in standards has typically been about the average except in 2003 when pupils did not achieve as well. At the time of the previous inspection standards were above average in Year 2 and Year 6.
51. Pupils are making good progress and achieving well in Years 1 and 2. In Years 3 to 6, achievement in most areas of mathematics is satisfactory. The school provides many opportunities for pupils to develop problem solving skills as this has been a focus for development through the school. Even so, pupils' skills in using and applying mathematics are not yet planned and developed systematically enough from year to year. There are however, some examples of good practice on which to build. In one Year 4 class, pupils were challenged to explore the patterns when successive numbers such as 16, 17 and 18 are added together and to devise short cut methods that can generally be applied. Pupils of all abilities progressed well with the task. The most able deduced that a short cut way of adding is to multiply the middle number by the total number in the sequence and that this will only work with three, five or seven sequenced numbers. They tested their ideas and confidently confirmed them. However, skills such as these are not planned for and developed consistently across Years three to six or the effect of the school's work in this area monitored closely enough.
52. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory. In Years 1 and 2 it is good. In Years 3 to 6 teaching is mainly satisfactory. Throughout the school, teachers expect high standards of behaviour and pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. Pupils with special educational needs are supported and guided well by teachers and their learning support assistants. Relationships are good and pupils keen to do well. Teachers' planning varies in quality. In the better lessons such as those in Year 2, the planning meets the needs of all pupils well; higher attaining pupils are consistently challenged by the work given. Year 2 pupils used their mathematical skills to try to prove a number of statements. They did this confidently even though many found the work difficult. Skilful questioning by the teacher drew out some good explanations by the pupils such as, 'there are three multiples of three between one and ten, two are odd and one is even because 6 is double three.' However, teachers' planning for the more able pupils is inconsistent in Years 3 to 6. Work set for them is sometimes insufficiently challenging and time not used efficiently in class; for example, where they listen to explanations which they already understand or wait for suitably challenging tasks. This affects their progress and achievement.
53. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The key weaknesses in pupils' standards by Year 2 reported at the time of the last inspection have been addressed well; standards in Year 6 are similar and overall progress since then, satisfactory. The current co-ordinator has made a sound start over the past year; she has begun to monitor teaching and standards across the school and identified the areas that need to be improved. Her monitoring role needs developing further to help guide the focus of her support and guidance.

Mathematics across the curriculum

54. Pupils use their numeracy skills across the curriculum satisfactorily. There are many opportunities for measuring and recording results and presenting them graphically in science. Pupils estimate and measure within the many projects they undertake in their

design and technology and Year 6 pupils use formulae to derive information from data using spreadsheets. Mental mathematics skills are satisfactory.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils acquire a good grasp of scientific facts and principles by Year 6 but the most able could achieve better in their scientific enquiry skills
- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 attain good standards because the teaching is consistently good
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because they are very well supported by teachers and learning support assistants
- Pupil assessments are not used enough to monitor the effectiveness of the curriculum and to guide the co-ordinator's work
- Technical vocabulary is introduced and emphasised effectively in most lessons
- Most resources are used well to help pupils learn through first-hand experience but ICT is not used enough to help raise standards

Commentary

55. In 2003, standards in Year 6 were well below the national average. However, these pupils' achievements were in line with other schools when compared with their standards in Year 2. Improving science standards has been a school focus because it has lagged behind those of other core subjects. Inspection findings show standards have recovered since last year and are now about average by the end of Year 6. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory overall, but they are good in Years 1, 2 and 5. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of scientific facts and principles are good and their scientific enquiry skills are sound.
56. Pupils achieve well throughout Years 1 and 2 and attain good standards because lessons are focused sharply on clear learning objectives and the teaching is consistently good. Pupils learn to observe, compare and to predict and gather information by making fair comparisons. For example, Year 2 pupils exploring the effects of forces on moving cars, compared the effect of large and small pushes by making sure the conditions for their experiments were the same each time before measuring the distance each travelled. In (later) Years 3 to 6 pupils build on their knowledge, understanding and skills from year to year but this progress is uneven. Pupils in Year 5 for example, make good progress because the work is matched well to pupils' different abilities and the more able pupils move quickly onto more challenging work. By Year 6, pupils have a good grasp of some key concepts such as explaining the formation of shadows and how reflected light from objects enters the eye to enable us to see them.
57. Much work has been done by the subject co-ordinator to improve the teaching of practical and investigative skills and the effect of this is particularly noticeable in Years 1 and 2. Throughout the school, pupils undertake much practical and exploratory work and resources, including the school grounds, are used well to help pupils learn through practical experiences. Consequently, they learn to predict, observe and measure and to draw conclusions from their evidence. By year 6 virtually all pupils are secure in their ability to plan and carry out fair tests. However, there is not enough emphasis placed on teaching pupils higher skills such as explaining variations and anomalies in experimental results and suggesting improvements to their working methods. As a result, the most able pupils are not achieving as much as they could. While pupils use ICT to process and present information from experiments, sensors and data-loggers are not yet being used to gather data; such equipment is shortly to be introduced.

58. Teaching and learning are good in Years 1 and 2 and mainly satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. Pupils of all abilities respond well to the interesting contexts for learning and the positive and supportive climate in lessons. In almost all lessons, new technical vocabulary is introduced and highlighted well so that pupils quickly assimilate it. Learning support assistants work very effectively with pupils who have special educational needs so that they make consistently good progress. In the better lessons teachers use their assessments well to ensure all pupils are challenged but in some, not enough thought is given to how very able pupils could be extended further. Homework is used effectively to extend the learning in lessons. Marking is regular and the best provides helpful feedback to pupils on how to improve.
59. Satisfactory progress has been made since the last inspection when science was a key area for improvement. The subject's leadership and management are satisfactory. The co-ordinator has monitored teaching in all classes since taking up the responsibility at the beginning of this year and provided training to staff that is having an impact on the teaching of scientific enquiry skills. Pupils' assessments are soundly based on standardised tests but they are not being used effectively to gain insights into strengths and weaknesses in the curriculum to guide improvements. The monitoring role of the co-ordinator needs developing further in this respect.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are not enough computers and associated ICT resources and this affects pupils' acquisition of basic skills and their application within subjects
- Teachers are competent in their own ICT knowledge and skills and this shows in the quality of their teaching
- Effective support is provided by a well trained learning support assistant in the ICT suite and consequently problems are quickly resolved to enable pupils to progress

Commentary

60. Standards and pupils' achievements by Year 2 are satisfactory. By Year 6, pupils achieve satisfactory standards in most aspects of ICT; for example, in their use and understanding of control technology and their ability to analyse and present information using databases and spreadsheets. They also learn to use the Internet to research. However, pupils' skills in combining text, graphics and other media to present information for their intended audience are under developed. The main reason is that the school has a small and quite old ICT suite with only seven networked computers in a small room. This constrains the pace at which pupils consolidate their skills and apply them in their topic and subject work. While each classroom also has a computer, some of these are not linked to the school's network. The school is well aware of this weakness and strategic plans and the necessary finances are in place to provide a new ICT suite as well as computers, white boards and projectors for classrooms in the autumn term of this year.
61. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 explore a range of everyday devices that are controlled and learn to give instructions to floor robots to follow a plan. They use computers to enter, save and retrieve their work involving text and graphics and acquire some good basic skills to

communicate and present information. In (later) Years 3 to 6 pupils build on their skills; for example, to sequence the necessary instructions for lights at a patrol crossing in Year 5. They use databases and spreadsheets to store and analyse data. By Year 6, pupils can use simple formulae in spreadsheets to derive information and to display data graphically such as patterns in scientific experiments. Pupils also learn to use graphics, pictures and text to illustrate and to communicate information in posters and slide presentations but this aspect of their ICT skills is weaker. Year 6 pupils learned some new skills in making slide presentations that combined text, sound and pictures to support their themed talks to the class as a result of a well presented and demonstrated session with their teacher in the classroom. But only seven pupils at one time were subsequently able to practise and consolidate these skills in the ICT suite by working on their own presentations; this constraint slows their achievement.

62. Teaching and learning in the lessons seen are mainly good. Teachers are confident in their own skills and have good knowledge as a result of training. In one Year 6 lesson, the teacher achieved a good balance between demonstrating new skills and inviting comments and suggestions from pupils when introducing a new task. In Years 1 and 2, appropriate activities were planned around some very clear objectives to help pupils learn about control technology. A skilled learning support assistant provides effective support for pupils working in the ICT suite and is well briefed by teachers. As a result, problems are quickly resolved as they arise and pupils are able to progress with their work.
63. Overall progress since the last inspection is satisfactory. The school has successfully addressed weaknesses in the teaching of control technology reported at the time of the last inspection but resource levels have not kept pace with the school's needs. The co-ordinator provides good leadership; management is satisfactory. She effectively supports and guides colleagues, sometimes working alongside them in class to help develop their skills and competence. Training provided through national projects and other sources has been effective in ensuring teachers' own skills are adequate. The curriculum is planned and adapted from a national scheme. However, assessment is not yet used enough to monitor standards. The co-ordinator is well aware of the weaknesses and has a clear vision for the subject's development once new resources are in place.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

64. Pupils do not use ICT enough within subjects to help raise standards. The main reason is inadequate access to resources, but teachers also miss some opportunities to link the tasks pupils undertake when learning new skills in the ICT suite to their learning within topics. However, there are examples of its use; for example, to display data graphically in a number of subjects and in design and technology, pupils in Year 3 use ICT to design the best arrangement for furniture in a room.

HUMANITIES

Geography and religious education were inspected in full and are reported below. History was not inspected.

Geography

Provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The level of challenge in Years 3 to 6 is uneven and this affects pupils' achievements; there are strengths in Years 4 and 5 but achievement is not as good in Year 6
- Resources are used well to illustrate and to enrich pupils' learning, including visits to the local and wider community and visiting speakers
- Not enough emphasis is given to pupils' extended writing to help them express and consolidate what they have learned
- The subject is not monitored closely enough to guide the focus of the co-ordinator's work

Commentary

65. Standards in geography are broadly in line with those expected in Year 2 and Year 6. Although there is little recorded work in Year 2, it was evident in discussion with pupils that their knowledge and understanding and their geography skills develop satisfactorily. For example, pupils explained the work they have done on routes to school and their work on comparing life in other communities with their own lives. They also describe 'Harry, the ted's' travels and the places that he has been to.
66. Overall achievement by Year 6 is satisfactory, but uneven. Year 5 pupils made good progress in their understanding of Ordnance Survey maps and the symbols used as they explored mapping of the Somerset Levels with some more able pupils achieving good standards. However, in Year 6, the level of challenge was not as high and pupils made less progress in their introductory work on mountains. The school makes good use of the wider community and relevant localities to develop pupils' geographical knowledge and understanding. Pupils in Year 6 take part in a residential visit in the summer term that has many cross-curricular opportunities, including geography. Other pupils have good opportunities to develop their geographical knowledge and skills through, for example, visits to Peat Moors Visitor Centre, the Wessex Water Works and Lyme Regis. Visitors, such as a quarryman, also enrich the curriculum. However, there is not enough recorded work in pupils' books. Too little time is given to enabling pupils to express their learning and understanding through writing and this affects their consolidation and recall of key facts and principles.
67. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Some teaching observed, in Years 4 and 5, is good. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour, and relationships are good in all lessons and they are managed well. In the better lessons, the level of challenge is high, questioning effective and resources used well to illustrate and develop key ideas. Technical vocabulary is also emphasised well. However, in the weaker lesson, there was insufficient challenge.
68. The subject's leadership is satisfactory. The curriculum is planned around national guidelines and resources planned appropriately for it, including the use of the wider community. However, management is unsatisfactory because there is too little effective monitoring being undertaken by the co-ordinator. Pupils' standards are not formally assessed although samples of pupils' work are reviewed. However, such reviews are not being used enough to guide the focus of support, guidance and improvement. Insufficient progress has been made since the last inspection when standards reported were good.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are in line with the expectations of the agreed syllabus in Year 2
- By Year 6, pupils have a secure understanding of features of the Christian faith such as the significance of festivals but their knowledge of other faiths is more limited
- Resources are used well to bring the learning in lessons to life
- There is not enough monitoring of the curriculum and pupils' standards to guide the co-ordinator's work

Commentary

69. Evidence from lessons observed, assemblies, talking to pupils and looking at their work indicate that standards are in line with the expectations of the agreed syllabus in Year 2 and a little below in Year 6. Pupils achieve satisfactorily by Year 2 and in most areas of the agreed syllabus by Year 6. Discussion with older pupils in Years 5 and 6 shows they have a secure understanding of features of the Christian faith and of festivals and celebrations but limited knowledge of other religions. Their understanding about what can be learned from religion is better. The pupils recall stories told during assemblies and the message that these give, such as respect for others and 'standing up for yourself'. Visiting speakers to the school make these occasions enjoyable. However, pupils do not write enough to express and consolidate their learning and understanding and this affects the progress they make and their recall over time.
70. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. That seen in Year 2 was satisfactory. In Year 4 it was good. Year 2 pupils talk about things which are special to them and listen to each other well. The lesson was planned well so that pupils could bring in their own special things and talk about them and pictures of pupils as babies further enhanced the discussion. Pupils' comments were used effectively to introduce the difference between things that are 'made' and those 'created'. Year 4 pupils made good progress in their understanding of Judaism when they learned about the significance of the Shabbat and the Feast of the Passover. The lesson was well planned. The teacher showed good subject knowledge and used questioning effectively and pupils were keen to respond. The teaching was memorable because a good range of resources was used to illustrate the symbolism of artefacts and rituals such as the food eaten at Passover and to link these to the key points of the lesson.
71. Leadership of the subject is satisfactory. The co-ordinator provides a clear direction for the subject and has developed and implemented schemes of work and associated resources which meet the requirements of the agreed syllabus. However, management is unsatisfactory; not enough monitoring of standards and teaching is undertaken to enable the co-ordinator to be well informed about the curriculum's impact from year to year and so help identify where the strengths and weaknesses lie. Standards by Year 6 are not as good as those reported at the time of the last inspection and progress has been insufficient.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

72. Design and technology was inspected in full and is reported below. Samples of pupils' work in art were reviewed and in music, one lesson in Year 2 was observed and pupils' singing heard in practices and in assemblies. No lessons were seen in physical education but a discussion was held with the subject's co-ordinator.
73. From looking at display and a very small sample of pupils' work, the **Art** curriculum is broad, balanced and effective in supporting teaching and learning. Standards in art reached by pupils of the age of seven are above those expected nationally. Their work shows a good understanding of line, colour, pattern and shape. Through the exploration of a range of materials and the use of a variety of tools and techniques, pupils develop good manipulative skills and their work shows lively imagination and close attention to detail, and exhibits good progress. The large-scale sculpture using natural materials based on the work of *Andrew*

Goldsworth, and the pastel and watercolour images based on Chinese art are good examples of the way pupils explore the work of artists from their own and other cultures. By the age of 11, standards reached by pupils are in line with those expected nationally. Pupils exhibit good observational skills and have developed increased precision within a variety of techniques through drawing, painting, printing and tapestry. They make satisfactory progress and develop a sound understanding of colour, pattern, texture and shape. Insufficient use is made of sketchbooks for experimenting, planning or evaluating. Similarly, there is too little use made of ICT. Pupils throughout the school take care and show pride in their work.

74. The provision for **music** is well organised, and the new scheme of work is effective in supporting the teaching of both specialist and non-specialist staff. The school has successfully focused on improving the provision for music outside lesson time, through increasing the range of peripatetic teaching and of clubs. Assemblies, and performances within school and the local cluster of schools, provide pupils with good opportunities to listen to music, and to sing and play to a range of audiences. From the limited evidence gathered during the inspection, standards in Years 1 and 2 are good. Pupils sing in tune and have developed a good sense of rhythm. They are beginning to respond to pictorial notation, and can order and identify sounds. Teaching is purposeful and confident, with good pace and so pupils participate fully with enjoyment and enthusiasm.
75. In **physical education** there is a good range of sporting activities to support the curriculum. Partnerships with other schools are effective and these are promoting good standards. The school ensures that all pupils are included in sporting activities. The curriculum includes swimming throughout the year for older pupils; the local pool is used well. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable about the subject and has up-to-date skills. The school grounds provide a good resource to support athletics and games.

Design and Technology

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

Main strengths and Weaknesses

- The new scheme of work and revised policy have ensured a well balanced and full curriculum, that is well adapted for the mixed age classes in Years 1 and 2
- Pupils enjoy their work and take pride in it
- Good links are made with science

Commentary

76. Pupils' standards of work throughout the school are in line with those expected nationally and their achievement is satisfactory. Pupils develop a clear understanding of the process of identifying the purpose for making an item, planning, amending, designing, making and then evaluating its success. They progressively learn basic skills, such as making frames and fixing wheels to axles. Similarly, their understanding of the properties and suitability of different materials develops hand-in-hand with their use of a variety of tools. Good links are made with science to strengthen pupils' understanding of structures and movement and pupils have taken part in an inter-school competition to make 'bridges'. There is a good balance achieved between designing and making, with annotated diagrams showing more detail and rigour from year group to year group. By Year 6, pupils are confident in explaining the purpose of their completed item, what has worked and what has not. All pupils show pride in their work, which is completed with care. Less able pupils are well supported by learning support staff and achieve well, but the more able do not have sufficient opportunities to extend and apply their work.
77. Teaching and learning are satisfactory throughout the school. Teachers have good subject knowledge and through demonstration, explanation of new technical language and effective questioning, pupils strengthen their understanding. This was seen in a lesson where pupils gained a good understanding of single and multiple cams. Motivating tasks and effective behaviour management ensure that pupils are fully engaged in their work and develop a range of manipulative skills using tools. For example, some young pupils developed increasing control of knives when preparing fruit for a jelly. In some lessons the pace is sedentary and pupils are able to work more quickly than is expected.
78. The leadership is satisfactory. This has ensured that reasonable progress has been made since the last inspection through the implementation of a new scheme of work, improving teachers' subject knowledge and strengthening their understanding; for example, of structures and moving parts. Increasing use is being made of the newly formed kitchen area, to enhance work on food technology. However, management, particularly the co-ordinator's role in monitoring standards, is unsatisfactory. Assessment has not been developed sufficiently, and there is insufficient time or priority given for the co-ordinator to develop her role effectively.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

79. Personal, social and health education was sampled. Two 'circle time' lessons were observed, elements of this area of learning observed in other lessons and a discussion held with the co-ordinator.
80. Personal, social and health education is effectively planned through all curriculum areas. Health aspects are covered in science and physical education and there is separate

provision for alcohol and drugs education, and sex and relationships education. A strong feature of the provision is the emphasis placed on personal and social education. Pupils are given a wide range of opportunities to discuss ideas, and feelings in an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect. The staff provide a good role model and are skilled in leading sessions. Assemblies are used well to explore environmental issues. The co-ordinator has a clear understanding of the current strengths of the subject and areas for development. The school is successful in promoting respect, co-operation, tolerance, compassion and care for others.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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