

INSPECTION REPORT

MEARE VILLAGE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Meare, near Glastonbury

LEA area: Somerset

Unique reference number: 123653

Headteacher: Mrs Kay Guy

Lead inspector: Mrs Stephanie Lacey

Dates of inspection: 14th - 16th September 2004

Inspection number: 270652

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

© Crown copyright 2004

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	126
School address:	St Mary's Road Meare Glastonbury Somerset
Postcode:	BA6 9SP
Telephone number:	(01458) 860 228
Fax number:	(01458) 860 448
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Leslie Keen
Date of previous inspection:	23 rd November 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Meare Village Primary is a small village school near Glastonbury. It has four classes. Pupils come from a wide range of social, economic and academic backgrounds. Thirteen per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is below the national average and reflects the advantaged background of many of the pupils. Some pupils come from the village itself and others from local villages and Glastonbury. Most pupils are White British, with nine per cent from other ethnic backgrounds. There are eight pupils from traveller families. No children speak English as an additional language. When children start school, their skills, knowledge and understanding are very wide-ranging, most children have reached the levels expected for their age, with some doing much better and some a little behind. Twenty-six per cent of pupils have been identified as having special educational needs, which is above average. These pupils have a range of learning difficulties. The school has gained many accolades. These include a School Achievement Award, a 'Healthy Schools' award and Investor in People reassessment in 2002, Artsmark gold in 2003 and a Basic Skills Award in 2004.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
3764	Mrs Stephanie Lacey	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage English Art and design Music Religious education Special educational needs
32676	Mr Nick Power	Lay inspector	
30618	Mr Paul Story	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Information and communication technology Design and technology Geography History Physical education

The inspection contractor was:

Tribal PPI
Barley House
Oakfield Grove
Clifton
Bristol
BS8 2BN

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the inspection contractor. The procedures are set out in the leaflet '*Complaining about Ofsted Inspections*', which is available from Ofsted Publications Centre (telephone 07002 637 833) or Ofsted's website (www.ofsted.gov.uk).

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	4 - 5
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	6 - 9
Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	9 - 14
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	14 - 16
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS	17 - 28
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	29

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school, with some very good features. It is an exciting place for children to learn. The very well respected headteacher enables staff and pupils to do their best. Teaching and learning are good and standards of attainment are above the levels expected. In view of the funds available and standards achieved, the school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils achieve well because the teaching is good.
- The headteacher has a very clear vision for the school and has the full support of staff, governors, pupils and parents.
- Staff are excited about learning and their enthusiasm captures pupils' hearts and minds.
- A very good range of interesting projects brings learning alive for the pupils.
- Individual pupils are valued and the school strives very successfully to provide for the needs of all pupils.
- Pupils enjoy school, behave well and are positive about learning.

The school has moved forward well since its last inspection in November 1998. It has developed the good provision noted at that time even further. The quality of teaching has improved and pupils make good progress through the school. There have been very significant improvements to the provision for teaching information and communication technology (ICT). The staff team works together very well and, with very clear direction and support from the headteacher, have successfully tackled the areas noted for improvement by the last inspection. These were related to reporting to parents, checking the effectiveness of teaching and the curriculum, raising attainment in speaking and listening, lesson planning and the marking of pupils' work.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

Key: A - very high; A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average. Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals.*

Overall, pupils achieve well. When children start school at Meare, their skills, knowledge and understanding are very wide-ranging. In most years, the overall profile of the group is broadly in line with the levels expected for their age. They achieve well in their Reception year and most make good progress. Most of the children entering the current Year 1 have attained the goals children are expected to reach by the end of the Reception year. Some are already working at a more advanced level but some, with special educational needs, are a little behind their peers in the areas of literacy, numeracy and personal, social and emotional development. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 also achieve well. Currently standards in Year 2 are slightly above expected levels in reading, writing, mathematics, science and ICT. The rise in standards in Year 2 national tests over the last few years has been above the national trend. Pupils continue to achieve well in Years 3 to 6 and, by the time they leave, often reach high standards.

The balance of higher and lower-attaining pupils in year groups accounts for fluctuations year on year in standards in national tests. In Year 6 national tests in 2003, standards in English were in the top five per cent of all schools nationally. Standards were well above average in science and above average in mathematics. Pupils did very much better than those in schools with a similar free school meal entitlement. Currently standards are above expected levels in Year 6 in English, mathematics, science and ICT. Throughout the school, all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs, gifted and talented pupils and those from ethnic minorities and those from travelling backgrounds achieve equally well.

Pupils' personal development is good and it is supported by the good provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are happy at school. They enjoy learning and behave well. Levels of attendance are average and most pupils are punctual at the start of the day.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a good quality of education. Teaching and learning are good throughout the school. Work for pupils is planned carefully and good attention is paid to the needs of individuals. Consequently, pupils are successfully engaged in learning and do their best. The planning for work in different subject areas is good, with some very exciting projects and interesting visits and visitors, which all enhance pupils' learning experiences. The accommodation is very good, but there is no enclosed outside area for children in the Reception year. Pupils are cared for well. They are given very good guidance and support in relation to their academic and personal needs. There is a good partnership with most parents, but some parents of pupils with special educational needs are not fully involved in discussions about their child's progress.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The school is led and managed well. The headteacher provides a very good lead for the whole of the school community. She is supported well by senior staff. The school is managed well and runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis. Governors are very supportive of the school and are developing the ways in which they monitor and evaluate how well the school is doing. All statutory requirements are met. Governance of the school is sound.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and pupils are positive about all that the school provides. Parents are especially pleased with the quality of teaching and learning and with the fact that their children are happy at school. A quarter of parents who returned the questionnaire were concerned about information given to them about their children's progress and almost a fifth did not feel that they were consulted about school issues. The inspection found that there are good opportunities for parents to discuss their children's progress and that written progress reports are very detailed, but do not explain whether children are reaching the levels expected for their age. There is no formal mechanism for seeking parents' views. Pupils are also very positive about their teachers, although about a half felt that other children did not behave as well as they should. The inspection found that most pupils behave well and in conversation with pupils it was clear that they were only unhappy about the behaviour of a very small minority.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

In this good school there are no significant areas for improvement. The school is working to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills further, develop the ways in which governors evaluate the work of the school and make more links between work in different subjects. This is entirely appropriate.

Minor areas for development include:

- Improving the liaison with the parents of pupils with special educational needs.
- Providing an enclosed outside area for children in the Reception year.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Pupils achieve well throughout the school. Overall, standards are above expected levels in English, mathematics, science and ICT.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, those from ethnic minorities and those from Traveller backgrounds, achieve well.
- Children make a good start in the Reception year.
- Standards of work in English, mathematics, science and ICT are above expected levels.
- Standards in national tests have risen in line with the national trend in Year 6 tests and exceeded the national trend in Year 2 tests.
- Boys have achieved very well in national tests.

COMMENTARY

Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, those from ethnic minorities and those from travelling backgrounds, achieve well.

1. Throughout the school pupils achieve well. This is because:

- Teachers plan work successfully to meet the learning needs of different groups of pupils.

Consequently, pupils with special educational needs work on appropriate tasks and higher attaining pupils are challenged effectively. Pupils from Traveller backgrounds achieve well because teachers make sure that they catch up on work that they have missed.

- Teachers and teaching assistants support pupils effectively.

Pupils with special educational needs benefit particularly from additional help from teaching assistants.

Children make a good start in the Reception year.

2. The good achievement of all pupils is founded on the good start that they make in their Reception year. When they begin school, in the September after their fourth birthday, the school's own assessments show that children's skills, knowledge and understanding are very wide-ranging. The proportions of children who are doing well for their age and those who are behind their peers varies from year to year. So, although the overall profile of the groups starting school is broadly in line with the levels expected for their age, this masks a very wide span of attainment. Children achieve well in Class 1 because:

- Very good links with the 'Meare Moles Playgroup' (the pre-school provision on the school's site) help them to settle into school easily.
- Work planned is challenging and interesting.
- The staff are very supportive.

- The work in the Foundation Stage (Reception year) is led very well by the class teacher.

Consequently, most children starting in the current Year 1 made good progress in their Reception year and met the goals expected by the end of the year in all areas of learning.¹ Some are working confidently within Level 1 of the National Curriculum. A few children, who struggle with reading, writing and mathematics, have not met all the goals expected for them in these areas of learning, and are also a little behind in their personal, social and emotional development.

Standards in work in English, mathematics, science and ICT are above expected levels.

3. Standards in English, mathematics and science are slightly above expected levels in Year 2 and above expected levels in Year 6. Factors that have underpinned pupils' good achievement and impacted positively on standards are:

- Good teaching.
- Interesting and relevant work.
- 'Setting' for mathematics.
- Introducing 'targets' for writing.
- Good support for pupils with special educational needs.

The school has worked hard and successfully to improve the provision for ICT. Consequently, pupils achieve well throughout the school and standards are above expected levels. Work in other subjects was sampled and no firm judgement can be made about standards.

Standards in national tests have risen in line with the national trend in Year 6 tests and exceeded the national trend in Year 2 tests.

4. In small schools like Meare, standards in national tests can fluctuate year on year because of the impact of small numbers on statistical data. This accounts, to some extent, for the differences in the point scores between 2003 and 2004 (*see tables below*). The key to the school's success is whether pupils are making satisfactory or better progress and, at Meare, they certainly are. Standards have risen in national tests since the last inspection. Improvements have kept pace with the national trend in Year 6 tests and exceeded the national trend in Year 2 tests.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.8 (16.5)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	15.1 (14.5)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	18.7 (16.5)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 16 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	30.0 (26.1)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	27.7 (25.7)	26.8 (26.7)

¹ There are six nationally agreed areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage: personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development.

science	31.3 (27.4)	28.6 (28.3)
---------	-------------	-------------

There were 18 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

5. National comparative data are not available yet for the 2004 tests, but, in 2003, pupils in Year 2 reached the average standards in national reading and writing tests and were in the top five per cent of all schools in mathematics tests. In Year 6, in the same year, standards were in the top five per cent of all schools nationally in English, were well above the national average in science and above the national average in mathematics. In relation to schools where a similar proportion of pupils were entitled to free school meals, Year 2 pupils at Meare did very well indeed in mathematics and matched their peers in reading and writing. In Year 6, pupils did very well indeed in English and science and better than their peers in mathematics, when compared to schools with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals.

Boys have achieved very well in national tests.

6. On average, over the last few years, boys have done better than girls in national tests, with the difference more pronounced in Year 2. Nationally, girls reach higher standards than boys in English and so boys at Meare have done very much better than boys nationally. This is because staff plan work that both boys and girls find interesting. The inspection did not find any difference in the provision for boys and girls.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

This is a strong feature of the school's work and standards have been maintained well since the last inspection. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good and so is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There have been no exclusions for inappropriate behaviour. The attendance rate at the school in 2003/4 was broadly in line with the national average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are very willing to take on responsibility and be involved in exciting projects because staff plan for pupils' personal development well.
- Pupils behave well because staff set high expectations for pupils' conduct.
- The school does not do enough to prepare pupils for life in contemporary, multicultural society.
- A few pupils do not attend school as regularly as they should.

Commentary

Pupils are very willing to take on responsibility and be involved in exciting projects because staff plan for pupils' personal development well.

7. Pupils are very keen to take part in the wide range of interesting projects and ventures planned. Older pupils are particularly well involved. Pupils' personal development is good. The school rarely misses an opportunity to help pupils' develop their personal skills and understanding. Pupils are encouraged to think about moral issues, to consider others and the effect of their actions through projects such as the Somerset Waste Action programme (a county-wide initiative dealing with recycling) and Fair Trade events. These projects also help them to develop socially because they have to work as a team. The school also strengthens pupils' social development by encouraging them to serve on the school grounds' council (which is planning and implementing improvements to the grounds), participate in team captain elections and to raise significant funds for various

charities. Good attention is paid to helping pupils to become aware of British cultural traditions, especially in relation to life on the Somerset Levels. The school has also been involved in a range of projects with local artists and has achieved an Artsmark gold award. Pupils' spiritual development is fostered well through assemblies, circle time (where pupils sit in a circle and discuss their feelings and opinions), religious education lessons and through the contributions of visitors sharing their experiences.

Pupils behave well because staff set high expectations for pupils' conduct.

8. Meare is a happy school and pupils are positive about learning. The staff's high expectations of good behaviour and the involvement of pupils in deciding class rules ensure that pupils nearly always behave well. Pupils are organised into three school teams and work hard to collect points for their team by behaving well and trying their best in lessons. Pupils whose behaviour falls short of what is expected lose the privilege of extra play and have to spend the time writing to their parents explaining why they lost their privilege. A few pupils, who have emotional and behavioural difficulties, are supported well by staff, who work hard to make sure that these pupils do not affect the learning of others.

The school does not do enough to prepare pupils for life in contemporary, multicultural society.

9. Pupils learn about other cultures through their links with a school in Kenya and religious education lessons. However, there is not an outline of what the school hopes pupils will learn and experience and how this will be accomplished. There have been several special events in recent years, which have also helped pupils to appreciate other cultures. These have included an African drummer and Indian dancers.

A few pupils do not attend school as regularly as they should.

10. Nearly all pupils have a good attendance record. However one or two pupils do not attend as regularly as they should and consequently have not made the same good progress as their peers. Most pupils are punctual at the start of the school day, but the lateness of one or two families disrupts the start of the school day for everybody.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.4	School data	0.1
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.
N.B. National data applies to 2002/2003, school data applies to 2003/2004.*

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a good quality of education. Good teaching provides a firm base for pupils' effective learning. Work planned in different subject areas is brought alive by very interesting projects and initiatives. The accommodation and grounds are well maintained, with some very good features, but there is no enclosed outside area for children in the Reception year. Pupils are given very good personal and academic guidance and support.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good throughout the school and have improved since the last inspection. The assessment of pupils' work is also good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good relationships between pupils and staff underpin pupils' learning.
- Lessons are well planned and prepared.
- Good teamwork helps staff to do their best for pupils.
- Teaching assistants and volunteers provide very good support for individuals and small groups.
- Teachers use interactive whiteboards well to explain and reinforce new ideas.
- A good start has been made in involving pupils in evaluating their own progress.
- Teachers keep track of pupils' progress well.
- Teachers do not always tell children the purpose of the lesson.

Commentary

11. Teaching is good in all classes and this ensures that pupils learn effectively. Teachers at Meare are excited about education and their enthusiasm for learning is shared by the pupils. Almost all of the teachers are very experienced and are all very well suited to the particular age groups for which they are responsible. One teacher has just become a leading literacy teacher because of her good classroom practice.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 20 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	7	8	5	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.

Good relationships between pupils and staff underpin pupils' learning.

12. Staff and pupils clearly enjoy each other's company and interchanges are friendly and positive. This provides a good foundation for learning. There is a sense of mutual trust and respect in all classes and this helps pupils to approach learning tasks with confidence. Staff set very high expectations of good behaviour, which pupils respond to well.

Lessons are well planned and prepared.

13. Teachers plan lessons carefully. They make sure that the content of lessons is interesting and relevant and this means that pupils are caught up in the excitement of learning. Teachers make sure that the tasks set for pupils challenge all pupils effectively by planning different activities for different groups. This also means that pupils in different year groups, but in the same class work on appropriate tasks. Teachers take account of pupils' different learning styles to plan a range of activities. Resources and materials are well prepared and this means that lessons flow smoothly.

Good teamwork helps staff to do their best for pupils.

14. There is a strong staff team at Meare, which functions effectively on several levels. Within individual classrooms, the teacher and support assistants work well together to support groups and individuals. Teachers also liaise successfully to plan work for pupils. This is especially important in Class 1 and Class 2, which both have Year 1 pupils.

Teaching assistants and volunteers provide very good support for individuals and small groups.

15. In all classes well-briefed assistants make a good contribution to pupils' learning. They are especially effective in work with pupils who have special educational needs. The school has enlisted the help of parents and other volunteers, who help with reading and practical activities.

Teachers use interactive whiteboards well to explain and reinforce new ideas.

16. Interactive whiteboards (whiteboards linked to a computer) have been installed in all classrooms very recently. Teachers are already making good use of these, especially in the introductions to lessons. The whole process fascinates pupils, who concentrate well and grasp new ideas quickly.

A good start has been made in involving pupils in evaluating their own progress.

17. Teachers understand that pupils need to know how well they are doing and encourage them to evaluate their work in some sessions. This helps pupils to appreciate what they have learnt. In writing, all pupils have clear targets for improvement and know what they have to achieve to reach the next level. Groups of targets broadly correspond to National Curriculum levels, and are organised into a series of 'planets'. These targets are imaginatively arranged so that pupils progress from one 'planet' to the next. They are displayed in classrooms and in pupils' books.

Teachers keep track of pupils' progress well.

18. Teachers keep very detailed records of how well pupils are doing in different subjects. They use this information effectively to plan the next step in learning and to challenge all pupils at an appropriate level. Annual test results are analysed in detail by the headteacher in order to establish whether pupils are making as much progress as they should.

Teachers do not always tell children the purpose of the lesson.

19. In some sessions teachers do not tell pupils the purpose of the lesson, and their attention is not drawn to what they are expected to learn or achieve. This makes it difficult for them to focus their efforts.

The curriculum

The curriculum is broad, well balanced and relevant to pupils' needs. Exciting activities, visits and visitors enrich it very well. This well staffed school has very good internal accommodation. Staff are developing the grounds well, but there is no secure outside area for Reception children. The school is very well resourced for ICT.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides a rich and varied curriculum with exciting opportunities for learning.
- The work planned ensures all pupils, including those with special educational needs, enjoy equal access and opportunity.
- There are some very interesting projects planned and good use is made of visits, visitors, events and out of lesson clubs.
- Internal accommodation is very good and the use of the school grounds is being developed through an exciting project.

- The school is well staffed and resources for ICT are very good.
- There is no enclosed outdoor area for Foundation Stage children and the classroom used for pupils in Year 3/4 is small.

Commentary

The school provides a rich and varied curriculum with exciting opportunities for learning.

20. Since the last inspection, national guidance and commercial schemes have been used well to develop a broad and balanced curriculum based on the requirements of the National Curriculum and the local agreed syllabus for religious education. All statutory requirements, including those related to sex and drugs education, are met.
21. Good use is made of national guidance to plan a stimulating and imaginative range of activities for children in the Foundation Stage. The National Literacy and Numeracy strategies are used well as the basis for planning work in English and mathematics in Years 1 to 6. A 'Basic Skills' award recognised the school's success in this area.
22. Careful use of the local authority's guidance on planning work in small schools, which Meare helped develop, ensure subject skills are developed progressively in all subjects. Pupils in the mixed-age classes are engaged at a level suitable for their age. Sometimes all classes work on the same theme or topic, which enables staff and pupils to share their work. This well planned curriculum prepares pupils' well for transition to the next stage of learning by encouraging pupils to enjoy work in different subjects.

The work planned ensures all pupils, including those with special educational needs, enjoy equal access and opportunity.

23. This school achieves equality of access and opportunity for all its pupils. It is very conscious of the different needs of gifted and talented pupils, those with special educational needs, Traveller children and mixed-age groups. This awareness is reflected in, for example, ability grouping in lessons and 'setting' for mathematics.

There are some very interesting projects planned and good use is made of visits, visitors, events and out of lesson clubs.

24. The school is very good at identifying opportunities that will provide pupils with purposeful and relevant activities. These projects develop a range of skills in different subjects and are a clear strength of the curriculum. For example, work on the Somerset Levels, waste recycling and grounds development have all been used very well to make learning relevant and exciting. In recognition of their achievement, the school has gained a considerable number of national and local awards for their business links, arts, creative and environmental work.
25. Practical activities are well used to provide stimulation and interest in all subjects. There is a strong programme of visits and visitors and good use is made of the locality and of community links. A good range of clubs, including sports and arts clubs all make learning relevant, capture pupils' enthusiasm and develop their understanding. The school is continuing to develop an innovative curriculum, balancing excellence with enjoyment, in line with national guidance. It is currently extending the use of ICT to support teaching.

Staffing, accommodation and resources.

26. The school is well staffed with well qualified and experienced teachers and teaching assistants who are deployed well to make best use of their specific expertise.

27. Accommodation is very good overall. The school makes very good use of its wide range of teaching areas for whole class, group and specialist work. The Year 3/4 classroom is small for the number of pupils but does have two attached work areas, which are used well. There are large, well cared for grounds, which are being developed further, with plans for an amphitheatre. However, there is no enclosed outside area for children in the Reception year. This makes it difficult for staff to develop an 'outside classroom'. They do their best by utilising the area outside next to the classroom, but equipment has to be taken in and out for each session, which takes some time.
28. There are sufficient resources to meet the needs of all subjects. The recent additions of laptop computers, a wireless network and interactive whiteboards mean resources for ICT are now very good.

Care, guidance and support

This strong area has been maintained well since the last inspection. The school gives its pupils very good support, advice and guidance, based on careful checks on their progress. The school makes good provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety. The school seeks, values and acts on pupils' views well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The relationships between all within the school are very good.
- Pupils are given very good guidance to help them to improve.
- There are very good arrangements to help children to settle into school.
- The school does not routinely review its practice to ensure it complies with current Health and Safety and Child Protection legislation.
- The school's arrangements for seeking pupils' views work well.

Commentary

The relationships between all within the school are very good.

29. The very good relationships between pupils and staff mean that pupils are confident that they can turn to their teachers or to other adults if they have any concerns or worries they wish to share. Weekly class discussions about social and moral issues (circle time), the experience of staff and the close-knit school community help to ensure that pupils are cared for well.

Pupils are given very good guidance to help them to improve.

30. Staff provide clear guidance for pupils to help them to move forward. One very good example of this is the recent work on writing targets. Teachers set these to help pupils to know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. Targets are reviewed every half term and are clearly presented within classes so that they are uppermost in the pupils' minds. Some classes present them on the front of exercise books, whilst others display them on the wall. Pupils know their targets, they are appropriate, and they help them to progress both academically and otherwise.

There are very good arrangements to help children to settle into school.

31. Children settle into school quickly and happily. This is because there are very good links with the pre-school group, which has a building on the school site. Most children attend this before starting school and so are very familiar with the school and the staff. Very good relationships are also formed between the families and the staff before children start school. Parents are very well informed about school matters and have every confidence in the staff. This confidence underpins children's positive approach to school.

The school does not always routinely review its practice to ensure it complies with current Health and Safety and Child Protection legislation.

32. Pupils are well cared for. However, the school does not regularly review its Health and Safety or Child Protection procedures and practices. Not all risk assessment performed is recorded formally. There is no regular check to consider the impact on school practices resulting from changes to the school or of new legislation.

The school's arrangements for seeking pupils' views work well.

33. The school appreciates the value of pupils' comments and opinions. During 'circle time', classes share their concerns and feelings with a teacher. Pupils feel that the teachers are approachable and do share their opinions with them. Pupils' views are also sought through the school grounds' council and at the meetings of the three school teams.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has good links with parents and with other schools. Links with the community are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has very successfully encouraged the involvement of the local community.
- The school's links with other schools enrich the curriculum and contribute to staff development.
- The school does not always involve the parents of pupils with special educational needs in discussion about their children's progress.
- Written reports to parents about their children's progress have improved, but do not always provide clear information about how well children are doing.
- The school does not routinely seek parents' views.
- Arrangements for pupils transferring to secondary school are very good.

Commentary

The school has very successfully encouraged the involvement of the local community.

34. The school values the involvement of the local community in its work and development. It has undertaken several substantial projects recently that have benefited from contributions from the community. For example, the Somerset Waste Action programme meant staging community events such as a presentation about recycling and a fashion show using recycled material. The current project of remodelling the school grounds has received input and support from the parish council and other organisations and this has contributed significantly to the development of the project. The school has won numerous prestigious awards for its involvement in various projects and initiatives.

The school's links with other schools enrich the curriculum and contribute well to staff development.

35. The school has links with other small schools and this increases pupils' experience of the world through, for example, joint drama and dance events. The school's link with Mudindi Primary School in Kenya has contributed enormously to much of the school's work. For example, the recycling project looked at how people in Kenya recycled materials, as well as providing information to the Kenyan school about recycling in the United Kingdom. This was the inspiration behind the recycling fashion show that the school held recently. The school is a member of a recently established Community Learning Partnership initiative and this has resulted in a series of staff development days with other schools.

The school does not always involve the parents of pupils with special educational needs in discussion about their children's progress.

36. The provision that the school makes for pupils with special educational needs is good. These pupils are identified early and detailed programmes of work are drawn up for them. However, parents and carers are not always kept informed about what extra provision is being made, or how their children are doing. Parents and children do not routinely take part in termly progress reviews, for example.

The school does not routinely seek parents' views.

37. The school has a good partnership with parents. Most parents feel that staff are approachable. However, almost a fifth of parents who returned the questionnaire that was sent to them before the inspection, did not feel that their views are taken into account. The inspection found that the school does not routinely seek parents' views and this means that opportunities to involve parents in the life and development of the school may be missed.

Written reports to parents about their children's progress have improved, but do not always provide clear information about how well children are doing.

38. About a quarter of the parents, who sent back a questionnaire seeking their views on the school's provision, had some concerns about the information provided about their children's progress. The school provides a good deal of information to parents about how well their children are doing and about matters concerning school life. Written reports have improved since the last inspection. They are now very detailed but do not always provide a clear picture of whether the child is doing as well as he or she should for their age.

Arrangements for pupils transferring to secondary school are very good.

39. The school takes great care to ensure that pupils' transfer to secondary school is as smooth as possible. The secondary schools are involved in the transfer process at the start of Year 6 and are well informed by the school about each pupil they will receive. Pupils visit the secondary school and special arrangements are made for those who are particularly anxious about the transfer so that they are put at ease. The school has a good working relationship with the local secondary schools.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The headteacher is a very good leader. She has developed a united and committed teaching team who all make a good contribution to the life of the school. Good management structures

and procedures ensure the school runs smoothly. The governors make a satisfactory contribution to the work of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good leadership of the headteacher provides a very clear agenda for school improvement and shapes a caring and supportive ethos.
- There is a strong and committed teaching team who work well together.
- There are good systems and structures to ensure the school runs smoothly and effectively.
- Governors are very supportive and have a good view of how well the school is doing.
- Formal procedures for governors' monitoring and evaluation of the school's work are satisfactory, but a relative weakness within the strong overall picture.
- Accurate long-term planning is seriously limited by the unpredictability of numbers entering the school each year.

Commentary

Leadership of the headteacher and a strong staff team.

40. The headteacher is an inspirational leader and has developed a strong and committed teaching team in this small school. Her very clear leadership is firmly rooted in raising standards, meeting the needs of individual pupils and providing a stimulating and interesting learning environment. All sectors of the school community have been involved in improving provision in the school since the last inspection. The headteacher works closely with colleagues as part of the teaching team. Everyone is committed to ensuring all pupils achieve equally well. Parents and pupils recognise and value this.

There are good systems and structures to ensure the school runs smoothly and effectively.

41. There are good systems to ensure the smooth day-to-day running of the school, to check how well the school is doing and to plan for the future. Good use is made of assessment data to check pupils' progress and of classroom observations to check the quality of provision. Subject co-ordinators play an important part in the development and overseeing of specific subject areas, with all the team working closely with the headteacher to ensure information is shared. This overview creates a coherent approach. Staff regularly attend training and feed back new ideas into school. The headteacher actively supports these and encourages the commitment and enthusiasm of the staff. This makes a significant contribution to the vitality of the curriculum and the opportunities offered to pupils.

Financial management.

42. The budget is planned carefully after considering needs and exploring possibilities. There are good financial controls in place. As the table below shows, the school has a healthy carry forward this year. This is because the school has taken care to ensure sufficient funds are retained to cushion the effects of the fluctuating role and set aside capital funds for the development of the school grounds.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	Balances (£)
----------------------------	--------------

Total income	381,454
Total expenditure	341,584
Expenditure per pupil	2,754.70

Balance from previous year	12,444
Balance carried forward to the next year	52,314

Governors are very supportive and have a good view of how well the school is doing.

43. Governors are very supportive of the school and rightly proud of its achievements. They play a part in the life of the school, fulfilling their role through regular visits and work on committees. Many are relatively new and all have undertaken training. The headteacher supplies them with very good information and analysis of results, which gives them a clear view of the school's strengths and areas for development. They have recognised the need to develop their monitoring responsibilities and have recently agreed a programme of classroom visits and observations. They are considering how to review the benefits of specific spending.

Formal procedures for governors' monitoring and evaluation of the school's work are satisfactory, but a relative weakness within the strong overall picture.

44. Considerable discussion between the headteacher, teachers and governors shapes the content of the school improvement plan. Initiatives are clearly detailed and teachers prepare their own individual responsibility plans for these. However, the lack of clear costing, completion dates and expected outcomes in this otherwise clear document does not help governors monitor progress. The failure to record the outcomes of the annual review of the plan means that governors do not have as clear a view as they might about the measurable impact and quality of the school's work.

Accurate long-term planning is seriously limited by the unpredictability of numbers entering the school each year.

45. In some years, the school has had to admit more than standard number of 17. These fluctuations create variations in funding and are problematic for financial planning. Uncertainty about the school's financial position in the future has made it difficult for the school to plan strategically beyond the current year. Staff and governors do have a long-term vision for the school, but have not yet developed a strategic plan which outlines the various possibilities open to them.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Children start school in the September after their fourth birthday. They join a class that also has children who are in Year 1. At the time of the inspection, children in the Reception year were in their third week at school and attending for either a morning or afternoon session. In most years when children start school, their knowledge, skills and understanding are very wide-ranging. Usually a significant group does better than most children of their age, with another group not as far advanced. Judgements are based on the standards reached by last year's Reception children, as well as on the teaching and learning observed during the inspection. Overall there is good provision for children in the Foundation Stage. However, the lack of an enclosed outside area makes it difficult for staff to provide a full range of outside learning opportunities.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children settle quickly into school life because of the very good induction arrangements.
- Staff support children very well.

Commentary

Standards of attainment	Wide-ranging, most children reach the levels expected for their age, with some doing much better and some a little behind.
Achievement	Very good.
Quality of teaching and learning	Very good.
Quality of curriculum leadership	Very good.
Other factors affecting pupils' achievement	Very good induction arrangements. Good levels of adult support. There is no enclosed outside area for children to use freely during the day.
Improvement since last inspection	Good provision has been maintained.

Children settle quickly into school life because of the very good induction arrangements.

46. Children are very confident in their new surroundings. They are already familiar with classroom routines. First thing in the morning, for example, they register by moving their photograph on the interactive whiteboard. This smooth transition from playgroup into school life is underpinned by very close links with the 'Meare Moles Playgroup', the pre-school group on the school site, and good links with parents.

Staff support children very well.

47. Children develop their personal, social and emotional skills very well because staff are very supportive. They are patient and kind and clearly enjoy the children's company. Staff make it quite clear to children what is expected of them and give them every opportunity to succeed. A few children with identified emotional and behavioural problems did not reach the goals expected of them last year, in spite of the very good support they were given.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have good opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills.
- Early reading skills are taught well.

COMMENTARY

Standards of attainment	Wide-ranging, most children reach the levels expected for their age, with some doing much better and some a little behind.
-------------------------	--

Achievement	Good.
Quality of teaching and learning	Good.
Quality of curriculum leadership	Good.
Other factors affecting pupils' achievement	Good support from parents with reading at home. There is no enclosed outside area for children to use freely during the day.
Improvement since last inspection	Good provision has been maintained.

Children have good opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills.

48. Children are encouraged to develop their speaking and listening skills through a range of activities. These include whole-class discussions, working in small groups with an adult, working with other children on structured activities and in free play. Consequently, they communicate well. Most children speak confidently, secure in the knowledge that the staff will listen to them carefully.

Early reading skills are taught well.

49. There is a good structure to help children develop early reading skills. Right from the start, children are encouraged to take books home to share with parents or carers and this helps children to enjoy reading. Staff also share stories and poems with children and this helps them to value books. Alongside this children learn the sounds represented by letters and use this knowledge to work out what words mean.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have the opportunity to work in small groups for number games.

Commentary

Standards of attainment	Wide-ranging, most children reach the levels expected for their age, with some doing much better and some a little behind.
Achievement	Good.
Quality of teaching and learning	Good.
Quality of curriculum leadership	Good.
Other factors affecting pupils' achievement	Use of the playgroup building in the afternoons for the Reception children is beneficial. There is no enclosed outside area for children to use freely during the day.
Improvement since last inspection	Good provision has been maintained.

Children have the opportunity to work in a small group for number games.

50. The school is making good use of the playgroup building, whilst it is vacant in the afternoons, to organise small group number activities for Reception children. This means that children have space to engage in a range of practical activities as well as having good support from an adult. During the day, children have opportunities to develop their mathematical understanding through a range of practical activities.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff plan a range of interesting activities.
- ICT is used well to support children's learning.

Commentary

Standards of attainment	Wide-ranging, most children reach the levels expected for their age, with some doing much better and some a little behind.
Achievement	Good.
Quality of teaching and learning	Good.
Quality of curriculum leadership	Good.
Factors affecting pupils' achievement	Interesting and relevant activities grab children's imagination. There is no enclosed outside area or for children to use freely during the day.
Improvement since last inspection	Good provision has been maintained.

Staff plan a range of interesting activities.

51. Children achieve well because the tasks planned for them are rooted in their own experience, but help them to new levels of understanding. Last year, for example, within a very rich range of activities, children visited a centre called 'Explore@Bristol', visited the church and had a teddy bears' picnic. During the inspection they learnt about 'Rosh Hashanah' the Jewish New Year. On a day-to-day basis, they learn how to care for the guinea-pigs and fish in the classroom.

ICT is used well to support children's learning.

52. The new interactive whiteboard is already being used well to focus children's attention on new ideas. Children also have the opportunity to work with it. In one session seen, for example, a child used the board to 'paint' a picture.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff plan a range of activities for children in the area outside the classroom, but these are restricted by a lack of equipment.

Commentary

Standards of attainment	Most children reach the levels expected for their age.
Achievement	Good.
Quality of teaching and learning	Good.
Quality of curriculum leadership	Good.
Factors affecting pupils' achievement	There is no enclosed outside area or large equipment for children to use freely during the day.
Improvement since last inspection	Satisfactory.

Staff plan a range of activities for children in the area outside the classroom, but these are restricted by a lack of equipment.

53. At the moment, there is no enclosed outside space for Reception children and there is no permanent large equipment for them to climb or balance on. Staff make the best use that they can of the area outside the classroom and provide wheeled toys and a range of small equipment, which has to be set up and tidied away every day. This is not ideal and detracts from the otherwise good provision for Reception children. Children also use the hall regularly for formal physical education lessons.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good opportunities are provided for children to develop their creative skills.

Commentary

Standards of attainment	Most children reach the levels expected for their age.
Achievement	Good.
Quality of teaching and learning	Good.
Quality of curriculum leadership	Good.
Factors affecting pupils' achievement	There is no enclosed outside area for children to use freely during the day.
Improvement since last inspection	Good provision has been maintained.

Good opportunities are provided for children to develop their creative skills.

54. Staff provide a wide range of interesting activities for children to develop their creative skills. These include a role-play area for children to act out their own stories, an area where children can experiment with the use of different media to make pictures and models and an area where children can create stories using small toys. Sometimes staff take a lead in the work. In one session, for example, a teaching assistant worked with children outside to make a large picture using physical education equipment and scarves. In another lesson, a visiting teacher worked with the class to help them to understand rhythm and use percussion instruments.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Standards are above expected levels by the time pupils leave school.
- Pupils achieve well because the teaching is good.
- There is good support for pupils with special educational needs.
- Pupils develop their speaking and listening skills well.
- Pupils develop their reading strategies well, but the school places less emphasis on teaching pupils about books and writers.
- Writing tasks are interesting and relevant and pupils are clear about what they need to do to improve.

Commentary

	Years 1 and 2	Years 3 to 6
Standards of attainment	Slightly above expected levels.	Very wide ranging, but above expected levels.
Achievement	Good.	Good.
Quality of teaching and learning	Good.	Good.
Quality of curriculum leadership	Good.	Good.
Other factors affecting pupils' achievement	Good support from parents and carers with reading at home has had a positive impact on learning.	
Improvement since last inspection	Good provision has been maintained.	

Standards are above average by the time pupils leave school.

55. Standards have fluctuated in Year 6 national tests in the past, largely because of a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in some year groups. In 2003, standards were in the top five per cent of all schools and although national comparative data is not yet available, standards in 2004 are likely to be well above average. Standards are above expected levels in the current Year 6, slightly lower than last year because of the number of pupils who have special educational needs.

Pupils achieve well because the teaching is good.

56. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, higher-attaining pupils and those from travelling backgrounds, achieve well because the teaching is good. In some lessons seen, the teaching and learning were very good. Particular strengths in these very good lessons included very clear planning, very clear explanations and very good use of the interactive whiteboard. Throughout the school, lessons are relevant and interesting and assistants make a valuable contribution to work in classrooms.

There is good support for pupils with special educational needs.

57. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well in English. They work on tasks that are especially tailored to their learning needs. They often work in small groups with a teacher or assistant.

Pupils develop their speaking and listening skills well in lessons, although drama sessions are not regularly timetabled.

58. The school has successfully improved the below average standards in speaking and listening highlighted by the last inspection. Pupils have many opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills in lessons. These include whole-class discussion, as well as discussion on set tasks with a partner. Older pupils, especially those in Years 5 and 6, have the experience of talking to larger audiences. Pupils have the opportunity to take part in annual school productions.

Pupils develop their reading strategies well, but the school places less emphasis on teaching pupils about books and writers.

59. Pupils learn to tackle the mechanics of reading well. Key factors in their success are:

- A good emphasis on the teaching of phonics.
- Good support from parents and carers in sharing books with children at home.
- A structured reading scheme.
- 'Catch up' programmes for pupils who find reading difficult.

In some classes, the home/school reading diary provides the means for a good dialogue between parents and teachers.

60. Most pupils enjoy reading, but there is not the same emphasis on teaching pupils about a range of books and writers and on helping them to become 'hooked on books'. Consequently, some pupils do not have a wide knowledge of different authors. The following are not routine practices in all classrooms:

- Involving pupils in selecting their reading books from the schemes.
- Reading stories and poems to pupils on a daily basis.
- Catching pupils' attention by displays about writers and books in reading areas.
- Using a good quality book as a basis for literacy work or work in the humanities.

In some classes, pupils do have the opportunity to reflect on what they have read by keeping written records.

Writing tasks are interesting and relevant and pupils are clear about what they need to do to improve.

61. In all classes, pupils are encouraged to write for a wide audience. This is a key factor in the good achievement of boys and helps them to feel that there is a purpose for their writing. Often the writing task is rooted in a real experience. In a Year 5 and 6 lesson, for example, pupils wrote play scripts based on the story of 'The Shapwick Giant'. They had previously worked with an artist in residence to make a cloak for the giant, and then laid the willow giant in a local mere. Another recent innovation, which is having a very positive impact on pupils' learning, is the introduction of individual targets for improvement. These are linked to 'planets' and in order to move from one 'planet' to the next, pupils have to achieve certain goals. Consequently, pupils know exactly what they have to do to improve.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

62. Pupils have every opportunity to use their speaking and listening skills in other subjects and they make good use of their writing skills in history and geography. However, older pupils rarely write about their work in religious education.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well and attain well above expected levels by the time they reach Year 6.
- The co-ordinator leads the subject very well.
- There is very good support for pupils of all abilities.
- Good teaching and learning enable pupils to make good progress and achieve well.
- There is a strong emphasis on pupils using their numeracy skills to solve problems.
- The introduction of interactive whiteboards has had a positive impact on provision.

Commentary

	Years 1 and 2	Years 3 to 6
Standards of attainment	Slightly above expected levels.	Very wide-ranging, but well above expected levels.
Achievement	Good.	Good.
Quality of teaching and learning	Good.	Good.
Quality of curriculum leadership	Very Good.	Very Good.
Other factors affecting pupils' achievement positively	Splitting classes into year groups for numeracy. Emphasis on numeracy skills.	
Improvement since last inspection	Good.	

Pupils achieve well and attain well above expected levels by the time they reach Year 6.

63. Standards are slightly above expected levels in Years 2. Pupils in Year 2 show a developing understanding and recall of basic number facts, which they apply to tasks such as selecting coins for given amounts. By Year 6, most pupils are working well above the expected level, confidently using a combination of mental strategies and informal written methods to solve large multiplication problems relating to everyday situations. Inspection evidence and the school's own records confirm that all pupils make good progress and achieve well over their time in the school. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

There is very good support for pupils of all abilities.

64. Pupils are taught in year groups, with some higher or lower-attaining pupils working with older or younger pupils. This allows teaching to be focused at an appropriate level, creates smaller teaching units and ensures all pupils receive good levels of support. As a result, all pupils, including higher-attainers, those with special educational needs, boys and girls and those from Traveller families make good progress and achieve equally well.

There is a strong emphasis on pupils using their numeracy skills to solve problems.

65. Teachers show pupils different methods of mental calculation. They encourage pupils to use a range of strategies and to explore and validate the different methods used by others. This approach is common to all classes and is a strength of teaching and learning in the subject. Pupils grow in confidence and work with more complex calculations as they move through the school. Skills are not developed in isolation and are always reinforced through application to practical situations.

Good teaching and learning enable pupils to make good progress and achieve well.

66. Teachers make good use of a commercial scheme in Years 1 to 3 and of the Numeracy Strategy's Unit plans in Years 4 to 6 to ensure lessons provide suitable challenge, continuity of approach and progressive development of skills and understanding. Quick-fire mental arithmetic starter sessions are well used to sharpen pupils' mental skills. Good use is made of the well-briefed teaching assistants to work with groups of pupils or to support individuals. Teachers alert pupils to the purpose of lessons and re-visit learning at the end of the lesson. Marking is constructive, encouraging and often indicates how to improve. Good use is made of ongoing assessment to review lessons and inform planning for the next lesson.

The co-ordinator leads the subject very well and the recent extension of the use of ICT to support teaching and learning has had a positive impact on provision.

67. The headteacher's very good leadership and management of the subject and a well thought-out programme of development have been central to the drive to raise standards. Careful tracking of pupils' progress has been well used to compare and evaluate results and set targets for improvement. Teachers are already using the new interactive whiteboards as a teaching tool in maths lessons and this fires pupils' enthusiasm.

Mathematics across the curriculum

68. Pupils often have opportunities to use mathematics as part of their work in other subjects. These include the development of measuring skills and the analysis of data in subjects such as science, design and technology and geography.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above expected levels.
- Good teaching and learning enable pupils to achieve well.
- A strong emphasis on practical activities and investigations captures pupils' interest and develops their understanding well.
- There is an increasing use of ICT, with future developments planned.
- There is over-rigorous assessment at the end of Year 2.

Commentary

	Years 1 and 2	Years 3 to 6
Standards of attainment	Slightly above expected levels.	Above expected levels.
Achievement	Good.	Good.
Quality of teaching and learning	Good.	Good.
Quality of curriculum leadership	Satisfactory.	Satisfactory.
Other factors affecting pupils' achievement	Strong emphasis on practical activities. Increasing use of ICT.	

	Good use of locality and grounds.
Improvement since last inspection	Good.

Standards are above expected levels.

69. Pupils have continued to make good progress and achieve well since the last inspection. Standards at the start of this Year 2 are slightly above expected levels and at the beginning of Year 6 they are above expected levels. Although standards vary from year to year, depending on the make-up of the year group, it is evident from the work seen that all pupils, including higher-attaining pupils, those with special educational needs and those from Traveller families make equally good progress and achieve well. There is no evidence of differences between the performance of boys and girls.

Good teaching and learning enable pupils to achieve well.

70. Teaching is good throughout the school. Lessons are prepared and planned well and teachers have good knowledge of the subject. The well-briefed teaching assistants provide good support for specific groups, often focusing on supporting pupils with special educational needs, so pupils of all abilities achieve equally well.

There is a strong emphasis on practical activities and investigations that captures pupils' interest and develops their understanding well.

71. Practical tasks are common features of the work seen. In a Year 2 lesson, for example, pupils sorted and classified foods into different groups. They identified which foods would form part of a healthy diet and recalled a farmer's visit. The teacher encouraged good use of the correct terminology and the practical nature of the task met the needs of all pupils and developed their understanding well. In another lesson, pupils at the start of Year 6 made good use of their previous work on steam and water to plan investigations into evaporation. They suggested well thought-out hypotheses, knew how to ensure their test was fair, took accurate measurements, recorded and commented on outcomes. Open-ended tasks and investigations allow pupils of all abilities to work at their own level.

There is an increasing use of ICT, with future development planned.

72. ICT is being increasingly used within the subject, as a means of research, for recording and as an integral part of lessons. The school plans to develop this further. Good use is also made of the locality and grounds as a resource for learning.

There is over rigorous assessment at the end of Year 2.

73. The teacher assessments in Year 2 show an over rigorous approach. The teacher obviously knows the pupils well and is aware of what they know, understand and can do. However, standards in the work seen were higher than those shown in the end of year teacher assessments.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff confidence and expertise are a strength.
- Pupils are enthusiastic and reach good standards.

- There has been very good improvement in resources since the last inspection.
- The subject is led and managed well.
- There is increasing use of ICT to support learning as an integral part of lessons in other subjects.

Commentary

	Years 1 and 2	Years 3 to 6
Standards of attainment	Above expected levels.	Above expected levels.
Achievement	Insufficient evidence.	Good.
Quality of teaching and learning	Insufficient evidence.	Good.
Quality of curriculum leadership	Good.	Good.
Other factors affecting pupils' achievement	Considerable improvement in resources. Increasing use of ICT in other subjects.	
Improvement since last inspection	Good overall – very good improvement in resourcing.	

74. During the inspection, only one direct teaching session was seen in the ICT suite. Work from the previous year shows that, at least in the areas for which there was evidence, pupils in Years 2 and 6 were working at above the expected standards. Planning shows all areas of the expected curriculum are covered. The recent purchase of laptops and interactive whiteboards and the installation of a wireless network mean the school is in a much stronger position than at the time of the last inspection.

Staff confidence and expertise is a strength

75. Staff are now competent, confident users of ICT. They have already been experimenting with the interactive whiteboards since the start of term. Technical problems are quickly addressed and all are very positive about using ICT to support teaching.

Pupils are enthusiastic and reach good standards.

76. Work from last year shows that pupils have been consistently working at above the expected level for their age. Pupils in Year 2 not only created text but also imported and incorporated images. They used paint programs to select and use colours and carefully controlling a variety of tools and techniques. Work from Year 5 showed pupils inputting and manipulating data, publishing documents in a variety of formats, using e-mails and the Internet for research and to participate in an online debate on an ecological issue. Pupils are enthusiastic about using ICT and eager to explain what they have learnt and can do. In a Year 3 lesson, careful introduction and demonstration by the teacher meant pupils rapidly settled to experimenting with creating different sounds from a program bank. Good support, speedy resolution of problems and the opportunity for hands-on practice ensured all made rapid progress and achieved well.

The subject is led and managed well.

77. The subject has been very well developed since the previous inspection with the subject co-ordinator making a good contribution to the process by overseeing installation of equipment, supporting colleagues and developing her own expertise. Initiatives such as the 'robotics' club provide good opportunities for interested pupils to develop their skills even further.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

There is increasing use of ICT to support learning as an integral part of lessons in other subjects.

78. ICT is often used to support or introduce work in other subjects with good use already being made of the interactive whiteboards as teaching tools. This captures pupils' attention and brings learning alive whether it was to record pupils' ideas, display their calculations or display digital images or text. Since the last inspection, resources have been considerably improved. Pupils have regular, direct access to computers and make good use of them for research and to complete and present work across a range of subjects.

HUMANITIES

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject leader has very clear plans for improvement.
- Pupils in Years 3 to 6 do not record their work systematically and find it hard to recall what they have learnt.

Commentary

	Years 1 and 2	Years 3 to 6
Standards of attainment	Broadly in line with expectations for age.	Insufficient evidence to make a judgement.
Achievement	Insufficient evidence to make a judgement.	Insufficient evidence to make a judgement.
Quality of teaching and learning	No lessons seen.	No lessons seen.
Quality of curriculum leadership	Very good.	Satisfactory.
Factors affecting pupils' achievement	Teachers have very good subject knowledge.	Teachers' lack of confidence. Work is 'blocked', so pupils' learning is fragmented because lessons are not weekly.
Improvement since last inspection	Good provision maintained.	Satisfactory.

79. No lessons were seen in religious education and judgements are based on discussions with pupils and an examination of samples of their work.

The subject leader has a very clear vision for improvement.

80. The subject leader, who teaches the youngest pupils, is very clear about what needs to be done to improve the provision for religious education. This is related to planning for work in Years 3 to 6 and improving resources. She leads by example and encouragement.

Pupils in Years 3 to 6 do not record their work systematically and find it hard to recall what they have learnt.

81. Pupils do not record their work systematically and in conversation with a few pupils it was clear that they had limited recall of what they had studied in the past. This term an interesting project is planned for later in the term, in association with the local secondary school.
82. In humanities, work was sampled in **geography** and **history** and one lesson was seen in each subject (one in Years 1 and 2 and the other in Years 3 and 4). On the basis of this it is not possible to form an overall judgement about provision. There is every indication that standards are in line with those expected in both subjects.
83. In history, good attention is paid to ensuring pupils develop a sense of chronology and understanding of how to use different sources. In geography, there is good, consistent use of fieldwork and first-hand experience to develop pupils' enquiry skills and understanding of the wider world. Visits, visitors and use of the locality play an important role in making learning interesting and relevant in both subjects and constructive links are often made between them. Year 6 pupils recalled their visit last year to Burnham-on-Sea, where they gathered evidence for a geographical study. They had researched famous Victorians using the Internet. Good use is being made of ICT to support learning in both subjects. Year 3 and 4 pupils used a locally produced CD Rom to gain a good insight into life in a Lakeland village 2,000 years ago and how patterns of settlement occur. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 drew well on previous work on Meare to make meaningful comparisons with their twin school in Mudundi, Kenya, by looking at digital images of their teacher's visit.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

84. Only four lessons were seen in total in this area, one in art and design, one in physical education and two in music. No lessons were seen in design and technology. It is not therefore possible to make secure judgements about provision, although the limited evidence indicates it is at least satisfactory in all subjects. The school has won several awards for its involvement in creative and aesthetic projects. Evidence was drawn from talking to teachers and pupils, looking at examples of work from the previous year, photographs and teacher's planning.
85. In **art and design**, some very interesting ventures enhance the curriculum. Recently, for example, an artist in residence has worked with pupils in local schools to make a felt cloak for 'The Shapwick Giant' a mythical creature from the Levels. This type of exciting project captures pupils' imaginations and helps to develop their understanding and skills across a range of subjects. In some classes, the teaching of skills is very good. In Class 2, for example, Year 1 and 2 pupils achieved very well in a lesson where they were taught how to use pencil and charcoal to make different effects. Their paintings, based on the work of Kandinsky, are also of a good standard and are vibrant and lively. Good attention is paid to looking at the work of artists in order to appreciate how they work. In Class 4, for example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 worked in small groups to analyse a range of landscapes by famous painters.
86. In **design and technology**, pupils are encouraged to look at examples of artefacts and consider the design brief before embarking on designing and making a variety of products. Older pupils have investigated cam design for their moving toys and younger ones have experimented with levers and string. Their work, including food technology, is

often linked to current topics. For example, in Year 3 and 4 the Kenyan visitors taught pupils how to make 'Ugali', a traditional dish. Pupils recorded the steps in the process and evaluated their finished products.

87. Provision for **music** has improved since the last inspection. The school now employs a specialist teacher to take class music lessons and, since the beginning of this term, arranged for Year 4 pupils to learn to play the recorder. A few pupils also have lessons on other instruments. In the lessons seen, the teaching was very good and pupils achieved very well. Most reached the standards expected for their age, with some doing better. Singing in assemblies is lively, although it is not usually accompanied by either tuned or percussion instruments. Pupils do have the opportunity to perform in annual productions and concerts.
88. In **physical education**, the school works hard to ensure that pupils experience the full range of expected activities. From talking to teachers and pupils it is clear that all the expected strands, including outdoor and adventurous activities and swimming, are being taught. By Year 6, standards in swimming are well above the expected level. All are able to swim the expected 25 metres and most go well beyond this. With many local areas of wetland, they are learning a vital skill.
89. In the one lesson seen, younger pupils had good opportunities to practise and develop a range of gymnastic movements. However, there was insufficient opportunity to consider and improve the quality of their movements in the light of their own performance or that of their classmates. The large hall and grounds provide good facilities for the subject and a biannual residential week caters for outdoor and adventurous activities. Good use is made of outside providers and specialists to coach specific games and a good range of after-school clubs develops pupils' games skills further.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

90. No lessons were seen in this area, but the school's planning and work seen suggests that provision is at least satisfactory. The school attaches great importance to pupils' personal development. A regular programme of personal, social and health education is taught. This includes sex and drugs education, with improvements planned this year for sex education for older pupils. Statutory requirements in these areas are met. Planning shows that pupils benefit from opportunities to share their ideas and feelings and these are enhanced by discussions in religious education lessons. They learn about democracy by electing captains for the school's three houses and are encouraged to take on responsibility for the environment. The school's recent recycling project is a good example of this. The school grounds committee provides opportunities for pupils to be involved in the running of the school. Pupils are learning about world citizenship through their excellent link with a school in Kenya.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3

Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)	3
Attendance	4
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3

The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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

