

INSPECTION REPORT

Motcombe Church of England First School

Motcombe, Shaftesbury

LEA area: Dorset

Unique reference number: 113808

Headteacher: Mrs K Lewis-Evans

Reporting inspector: Mr M Davidson
2396

Dates of inspection: 18 to 20 June 2001

Inspection number: 190247

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	4 to 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Motcombe Shaftesbury Dorset
Postcode:	SP7 9NT
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Names of joint chair of governors:	Mrs Highnam and Mrs Patterson
Date of previous inspection:	4 – 6 November 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2396	Michael Davidson	Registered inspector	Science Art & Design Design & Technology Geography History Physical Education Equality of opportunity	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9561	Husain Akhtar	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
21927	Christine Curtis	Team inspector	Foundation Stage English Mathematics Information & Communication Technology Music Special educational needs	
1038	Sylvia Richardson	Team inspector	English as an additional language	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school, which is for pupils aged 4 to 9, is much smaller than most other primary schools. The roll, currently 73 pupils, has been stable in recent years and there are similar numbers of boys and girls who come to the school from Motcombe and beyond. The proportion of pupils for whom free school meals is claimed is well below the national average. No pupil speaks English as an additional language and none is from a minority ethnic group. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is in line with the national average and has increased in recent years. When children join the school at the age of 4, their overall attainment is generally average, though usually it is higher in language and personal development than in knowledge of number.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school that provides good value for money. Pupils make good progress and achieve well, reaching above average standards in most subjects. Teaching is good overall and there is a significant amount of very good teaching. The school is very well led and managed. It makes very good provision for pupils' learning and personal development.

What the school does well

- Pupils learn well helped by much good and very good teaching.
- The governors and headteacher have put in place a very good strategy to raise standards in mathematics
- It helps pupils to develop very well in their behaviour and maturity and to become good at learning.
- It provides a rich and stimulating curriculum, with excellent extra-curricular activities.
- It takes good care of pupils and supports them well, thereby contributing to their academic progress and personal development.
- The headteacher, working closely with the governing body, ensures that the school meets its aims.

What could be improved

The school does not have significant weaknesses.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in November 1996. It has responded well to the report from that inspection and improvement has been good. A programme to check on the quality of teaching and learning has been put in place. Good use is made of assessment of pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science. Planning for teaching and learning has been improved. The most able pupils generally progress well. Boys and girls now have equal access to all the activities in physical education. Annual reports for parents give all the national curriculum subjects and religious education under separate headings. The required policy on child protection has been written. More could be done, however, to develop the use of assessment in all subjects. Reports for parents could be more informative on whether their children are doing well enough and on what they could do to improve further. These last two matters are again raised in this inspection.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 7 year olds based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			Similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
Reading	A	C	A	B
Writing	A	D	B	C
Mathematics	A	C	C	D

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

Children in the reception class have made good progress to reach an overall above average standard in reading, and average in writing and mathematics. Personal development and physical development are good. Their knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development are average.

In 2000, seven year old pupils attained results in reading which were well above the average for all schools nationally and above the average for similar schools. (Similar schools are those where free school meals are claimed for a similar proportion of pupils, in this instance up to 8% of pupils.) Attainment in writing was above the average for all schools and in line with that for similar schools. In mathematics, the results were in line with and below the respective national averages. The dip in results in 1999 can be accounted for by the higher than usual proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the class that year. Taking the last five years' results together, there is a rising trend in reading and writing which is above the national trend. After being above the national averages for mathematics from 1996 to 1998, the school's results were in line with them in the last two years. Teachers' assessments of attainment in science by seven year old pupils in 2000 show overall average attainment, though with a significant minority of pupils reaching higher standards.

Nine year old pupils are reaching standards which, overall, are above average in reading and average in writing. Standards in mathematics also are above average. These achievements show that pupils have made good progress in the two years since they were tested in 1999. Attainment is above average in science. In their other subjects, both seven and nine year old pupils are generally reaching at least average standards, and they are above average in music and physical education. But standards by nine year olds are below average in aspects of information and communication technology. Due to a high proportion of good and very good teaching, pupils throughout the school achieve well and make good progress in almost every part of the curriculum. This includes pupils with special educational needs and the more able. Boys and girls achieve equally well in general.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils develop very good attitudes to work at the school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good at all times. Bullying is not an issue.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are very good, and pupils show a lot of respect for each other and for adults.
Attendance	Good. Most pupils attend school regularly and punctually.

Pupils' very good attitudes to school and their enjoyment in learning help them to work hard and make progress. They are very co-operative during lessons and at other times. The school is very calm and purposeful. Pupils get on very well with each other. They mature and gain in confidence at the school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Very good	Good	Good

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

All the teaching seen was satisfactory or better, and it was good or very good in three quarters of lessons. Very good and occasionally excellent teaching occurred in a third of these lessons. The overall good teaching is the main reason why pupils learn and achieve well, combined with pupils' own very positive attitudes to school. Teaching of literacy is good, and the teaching of numeracy is often very good. Teaching is carefully planned to meet the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and more able pupils. In addition to this key strength, other strengths in teaching are teachers' expectations of how well pupils should do, though this is not always followed through into the quality of presentation by pupils of their work. Further strengths are the choice of teaching methods, low key and very effective management of pupils' behaviour, the use of time and the deployment of classroom assistants who make a very good contribution. Aspects of teaching which are less successful are the quality of marking of pupils' work and some lack in the regularity and clarity of homework. Pupils respond to this good quality of teaching by working hard and trying their best. They concentrate for long periods, even the youngest, and are very interested in all that is provided for them during lessons. Pupils with special educational needs co-operate with the teaching and support they receive, and learn well.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Pupils are provided with a well-planned and very interesting range of learning experiences. Very good use is made of the locality and beyond to extend pupils' learning. Extra-curricular activities are excellent.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The school supports the needs of pupils with special educational needs well. Classroom assistants work closely with teachers to ensure that each pupil's needs are met and this enables them to make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Overall, provision is very good. It is very good for spiritual, moral and social development. The steps taken to develop pupils culturally are good, but more could be done to prepare pupils for life in a multicultural society.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Pupils are well looked after. They are confident that they will receive help and support when they need them.

The school's partnership with parents is very good in many respects, and it reflects the positive picture given at the previous inspection. Parents are welcomed into the school and they readily contribute to its work. Pupils are provided with an unusually wide range of learning experiences that go to make up a very good curriculum. These help to build up pupils' social skills and overcome any disadvantages

there may be in a small school. Information and communication technology is not as well developed as it should be. The school is calm and well-disciplined, and it is sensitive to pupils' individual needs.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher leads and manages the school successfully. As a result, it is very orderly, and staff and pupils go about their work with enthusiasm. Other staff with responsibilities contribute well.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very well. Governors are very committed to the school and work hard for the benefit of the pupils.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good use is made of information on pupils' attainments to judge how well the school is doing. Governors work closely with staff to find out what could be improved.
The strategic use of resources	Great care is taken to make the best use of the resources allocated to the school.

The school has sufficient teachers and classroom assistants. The accommodation is adequate, and is supplemented by very good quality facilities in the locality. Pupils have enough resources to enable them to learn well. Governors work closely with the staff for the benefit of the pupils. The school is very well led and managed, with a clear focus on the standards pupils are reaching and how to improve them further. Governors take considerable care in using the school's budget and apply the principles of best value conscientiously.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children like school • It helps children to mature and be responsible • Behaviour is good • There is a good range of extra-curricular activities • Children make good progress • The school has high expectations • Teaching is good 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better information about children's progress • More regular and clearly described homework

Inspectors agree with parents' positive views about the school, most of which are summarised above. They agree that the school could do more to inform parents about whether their children are achieving as well as they can, and about how they can improve. They agree that the school could be more helpful about homework. Both these matters are given in the report as improvements the school should address.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

- 1 When children enter the school in the reception year, their overall attainment is usually broadly in line with that found nationally, though in 2000 attainment was below that in local schools. Attainment in mathematics was below average, while language and personal development were average on entry to the school. Most of the children in the present reception class are likely to meet or to exceed the Early Learning Goals set for children by the age of five. Attainment in reading is above average, and it is average in writing and in mathematics. Children have developed good understanding of how to co-operate in lessons, listen, take turns and share resources. They usually are very keen to learn. As a result, helped by very good teaching and support, they have made good progress and have been well prepared to enter Year 1.
- 2 In the 2000 tests for seven year olds, pupils reached well above average standards in reading compared with all schools nationally. Compared with similar schools, attainment was above average. In writing, attainment was above average compared with all schools, and in line with the average for similar schools. Attainment in mathematics was average compared with all schools, but below the average for similar schools. Since the previous inspection, results have fluctuated. This can be accounted for by the small size of the cohorts and the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in Year 2 in 1999. However, the trend in attainment in reading, writing and mathematics has generally been above the national averages. During the past three years, boys and girls have reached similar standards in reading compared with their respective national averages. In writing, boys outperformed girls, whereas girls did far better than boys in mathematics. Judging by the proportions of pupils who reached above average levels in reading, writing and mathematics, the most able pupils achieved better in reading and mathematics than they did in writing. Teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment in science show that overall attainment was close to the national average for all schools. A good proportion of pupils reached an above average standard.
- 3 Work of seven year old pupils seen during the inspection presents a similar picture to that shown by the 2000 statutory tests, other than for mathematics. Attainment in reading is above average overall, with a minority of pupils having well above average skills. Pupils' skills in writing are not as strong as in reading, and are in line with the standard expected nationally. Pupils have well developed speaking and listening skills. Both boys and girls make good progress in English, including those with special educational needs. Inspection evidence and the 2001 test results both show that the more able pupils also achieve well, except in writing where standards are average. In mathematics, attainment by seven year old pupils is well above average, and is a significant improvement on the same stage last year. Teaching of the Year 1 and 2 pupils separately is proving to be very successful. Boys and girls of all abilities have made good progress since joining the school in their knowledge and use of number. The 2001 test results present a similar picture of a good proportion of pupils achieving above average results. Attainment in science is above average overall, though better in knowledge and understanding than in the skills of practical science.
- 4 In their other subjects, attainment by seven year old pupils is above average in music and physical education, and pupils are achieving well in both subjects. Evidence of attainment was more limited during the inspection in other subjects. Indications of average attainment in design and technology and in information and communication technology point to satisfactory achievement. This is also the case in geography and history. Some above average work in art was on display. Much good and very good teaching throughout the curriculum, and pupils' own very positive attitudes to school

and their very good behaviour, result in good learning and achievement by boys and girls of all abilities.

- 5 Present nine year old pupils, that is those in their final year at the school, overall have attainment in reading above those found nationally. About half the pupils are reading at the level expected for an average eleven year old. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and most reach an average standard for their age. Speaking and listening are good. Attainment in writing continues to lag behind the other aspects of English, and is average. The 2001 national optional tests show a similar picture of reading stronger than writing, and progress is better in reading than in writing. Within this context, boys and girls achieve equally well, as do pupils with special educational needs. Overall, a good rate of progress in English has been maintained since pupils left Year 2. There is a wide variation in attainment in mathematics which reflects the range of abilities in the class. Overall, however, attainment is above the national expectation and achievement across the ability range is good. Division of the Year 3 and 4 class into two classes where pupils of similar attainment levels in mathematics learn together is successful, and pupils are achieving well. Pupils in Year 4 have made good progress since the time they were tested at the end of Year 2. As with seven year old pupils, those in Year 4 are reaching overall above average standards in science, which are not as good in the skills part of the science curriculum as in knowledge and understanding.
- 6 With respect to the other subjects studied by the nine year old pupils, the pattern of average or above average attainment is similar to that for seven year olds, with two further years of at least satisfactory progress in almost all subjects. The one exception to this is information and communication technology where attainment in some aspects of the subject is below that expected nationally, namely use of databases, research and control. As a result, this subject does not make as strong a contribution to learning in other subjects as is expected nationally. Pupils' well developed reading skills mean that they can readily access information for use in other subjects, and hence reading makes a major contribution to standards across the curriculum. The same is not the case with writing. Opportunities for pupils to write at length in other subjects are not as frequent as they might be, for example for writing reports on investigations in science. Speaking and listening make very significant contributions to pupils' progress in all subjects. Pupils' much improved use of number plays its part in several subjects.
- 7 Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs make good progress and many achieve the level expected nationally for all pupils by the time they are seven and nine. Those pupils with more specific learning needs make good progress towards the goals set for them in the individual plans. There are no pupils from minority ethnic groups and none who speak English as an additional language.
- 8 The school is not required to have targets in relation to the statutory assessments. However, good use is made of information on pupils' attainments when they enter the school to set expectations for the statutory tests and teacher assessments for seven year old pupils.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

- 9 Pupils' attitudes are very good and help them to achieve good educational standards. They enjoy coming to school and have a real interest in their work and their friends. Pupils, even the youngest, come to school prepared to work and learn, and approach all their tasks conscientiously. They work with an air of purpose and become absorbed in their activities, like in a Year 2 mathematics lesson where pupils were using number facts for division and multiplication. Another example is their joy of singing, either as a class or in assemblies, listening and learning quickly. They participate very well in lesson and outside lesson activities, particularly in music and sports. Pupils enjoy

investigation. This was evident in a Year 1 science class when the pupils responded well to an interesting and challenging lesson on finding different habitats in different environments. Pupils who have special educational needs are keen to learn and respond well to the support they receive. Pupils attend the school regularly and promptly and therefore benefit from the learning opportunities: no pupils have missed the national test due to absence.

- 10 The youngest pupils show independence from parents and organise themselves well. This was evident, for example, at the start of the school day and in an out of school swimming activity. They have a well-established sense of routine and they take turns and share equipment fairly and achieve good standards in their personal and social development, including behaviour.
- 11 Parents' and pupils' positive views about behaviour are confirmed by the inspection. Pupils behave very well in class and in the play areas. They respond quickly to staff and teachers, and are well mannered to visitors. Inspectors saw no incidents of any oppressive behaviour. Bullying is not an issue. Exclusions are not a feature of the school. Pupils treat school property, including displays, with care.
- 12 The personal development of the pupils is very good. Pupils are prepared to take initiative, work independently and are confident in choosing their activities. Pupils choose and share materials and equipment, and settle to group work quickly. In a Year 3 and 4 design and technology lesson pupils worked productively and co-operatively in designing an environmental poster and making a simple card box. They take their responsibilities seriously, including taking part in the school council, counselling, watering the plants and tidying their classrooms. Pupils who take part in extra-curricular activities organise themselves very well.
- 13 Relationships throughout the school are very good. Good quality discussions are achieved as a result of very good relations between pupils and teachers. Even the youngest pupils are encouraged to express their views and to ask questions. A good example of this was seen in a Year 1 and 2 English lesson on comparing books by the same author. All pupils mix very well. They work and play together happily. In a Year 1 and 2 physical education lesson, pupils acted sensibly and valued others' efforts in using a small bat and ball to play a simple rounders game. In line with the care and respect ethos of the school, pupils listen with interest and respect others' views and feelings.
- 14 Attendance is good. Unauthorised absence is average. Whilst illness accounts for most of the authorised absences, some absences are because parents take their children on holidays during term time. Pupils arrive on time in the morning and the school day starts promptly.
- 15 All the positive features identified by the last inspection are still evident. Well-established discipline, very good relationships and good teaching have a positive impact on pupils' attitudes and behaviour.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

- 16 The quality of teaching, judged by how well it helps pupils to learn and make progress, was good overall. It ranged from satisfactory to excellent, and was good or better in three quarters of lessons. A higher proportion of very good teaching was seen on this inspection than the previous one: very good, and occasionally excellent, teaching was observed in a third of lessons. Teaching of children under five is very good. Activities are carefully planned to meet the needs of individual children, and the teaching methods are appropriate for their age. Teaching of pupils aged five to nine is good. The teaching of English, based on the national literacy strategy, is good overall, and ranges from satisfactory to excellent. In the best teaching, good attention is given to developing pupils' skills as writers, going beyond exercises in grammar, spelling and handwriting, to developing their abilities to express their own ideas in writing. Teaching of numeracy is often very good. Implementation of the national numeracy strategy is helping pupils to reach high standards in number work. Another

strength in mathematics teaching relates to developing pupils' abilities to investigate real life situations using mathematics. The teaching of science is good, and is better in the teaching of knowledge and understanding than the skills of scientific investigations. The school has already has plans to improve this.

- 17 The teaching of music is always at least good and often is very good. Specialist subject knowledge in teaching is the key factor contributing to the often very good learning in this subject. Good teaching was seen in physical education where well-managed activities drew a generally enthusiastic response from pupils. Little or no teaching was seen in the other subjects during the inspection. However, examination of pupils' work points towards at least satisfactory, and often good, teaching in art, design and technology, geography and history. Pupils frequently used computers during the inspection, but no planned teaching of this subject was observed. However, teachers and classroom assistants readily responded to pupils' requests for help.
- 18 Sound knowledge of the curriculum for children under five and the subjects of the national curriculum leads to clear explanations during teaching so that pupils generally develop their knowledge, skills and understanding well. Reading and writing and the use of number are successfully taught during English and mathematics lessons, but not enough is done consistently to use writing to enhance learning in other subjects. Planning for lessons is good: care is taken to ensure that all pupils have enough work to do so that they are kept busy and make progress. This equally applies to pupils with special educational needs and to those who are more able. A notable strength of the teaching is the way that activities are well matched to the needs of pupils with special educational needs. Their learning is enhanced by consistently good support from classroom assistants. Pupils who have talents, for example in music and physical education, make good progress as their needs also are well met. Pupils of all ages know what to do next during lessons and can work independently, though readily ask for help when they need to. This good work ethos is notable even with the children under five. Expectations of the standard of work pupils should be capable of achieving are good. This is transmitted to the pupils who respond by working hard and with good concentration, though their written work is not always as tidy as it could be. Expectations could be higher in this respect.
- 19 There are sufficient resources for pupils to use during lessons, so they are able to learn from first hand experience. When working in groups, pupils' discussions focus well on the work. Very good management of pupils' behaviour means that almost no time is lost from learning and teaching. Lessons are carried out in a friendly and business-like way, and pupils respond very promptly to instructions. Classroom assistants have a good grasp of the content of the subjects and the standards pupils should be able to achieve. They make a very effective contribution to pupils' learning. In the best lessons, there are frequent questions during teaching to find out how well pupils are learning. This guides the next steps in the lesson. But marking of pupils' work is not always as thorough as it might be. Consequently, pupils are not always clear what they need to do to improve. Homework is a frequent feature to extend learning, but it is not set as regularly as it might be so that pupils and their parents do not always know when to expect it nor, occasionally, what exactly the tasks are.

HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?

- 20 The school provides a generally well planned and a stimulating curriculum which meets pupils' interests and needs very well, and which enables pupils of all abilities to learn and make progress. An appropriately strong emphasis is given to the teaching of reading, writing and the use of number, using the national strategies. Planning for the various subjects is better than at the time of

the previous inspection when weaknesses were found in the written framework for teaching and learning; it is now good. The school is using national guidelines to plan for the curriculum, though the curriculum for the youngest pupils is not yet fully aligned with the early learning goals for children under five. Statutory requirements for the curriculum are met. The school is very successful in overcoming any disadvantages there may be in being a small village school. It has established very good links with other schools which provide access to their facilities for swimming and design and technology. Some parts of the curriculum are planned jointly with first schools in the cluster; this helps to achieve consistency in expectations. The upper school shares its expertise in physical education to the benefit of the pupils. Very good use is made of visits, visitors and also the residential experience for Year 4 pupils to extend pupils' horizons. The school uses every opportunity to involve pupils in local events, such as dance and music festivals and team sports. Children in the Foundation Stage also are appropriately involved, for example by being taken for swimming lessons. In these ways the school is providing a very good range of learning experiences which contribute significantly to pupils' enjoyment of school, their very positive attitudes to it and the progress they make. The school provides an excellent range of extra-curricular activities. Teachers, parents and friends of the school together significantly enhance pupils' opportunities to carry on learning beyond the formal lessons.

- 21 The weakness found in the previous inspection about lack of equality of opportunity in physical education has been addressed. Pupils have equal access and opportunity with respect to the school's curriculum, though this is not fully achieved in information and communication technology. Too often, use of computers is used as a reward for finishing work and, consequently, pupils who progress more slowly do not all have the same access as others do. Staff, both teachers and classroom assistants, know the pupils well and plan carefully to match the demands of the work and resources to pupils' differing needs. Personal, social and health education is taught effectively within cross-curricular topics. This sound arrangement includes teaching on sex education and healthy lifestyles.
- 22 The school has effective strategies for teaching language and literacy. Pupils have many opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills across the curriculum. Their ability to read well promotes their progress in other subjects. Opportunities to apply their skills in writing in other subjects is less developed than is often the case and planning systematically for this is an area for development in the future. The school has enthusiastically embraced the national numeracy strategy. This has had a positive impact on both the standards of work achieved and the enthusiasm of pupils for the subject. Further work is needed to ensure that pupils' skills are fully used in other areas of the curriculum, such as design and technology, geography and science. Word-processing skills are used to support learning in other subjects, particularly English. But other aspects of information and communication technology, especially data handling and research, are not sufficiently well developed to enhance learning across the curriculum.
- 23 The curriculum is organised to ensure that pupils with special educational needs benefit from small group working within lessons and from work as individuals or small groups outside the classroom. Individual education plans are in place for all pupils who require this support and these are reviewed regularly. Parents are involved in the review and the part they will play is recorded. Targets set are usually clear and precise, though occasionally targets are too general and therefore progress towards them cannot be easily measured.
- 24 The school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall. At the time of the last inspection it was identified as a major strength of the school and this continues to be the case. The school has produced a very good policy for these aspects of school life which identifies clearly a wide range of opportunities.

- 25 Opportunities to develop spiritual awareness are very good. A Christian ethos underpins all that happens within the school. The very good use of story, music and prayer in assemblies and at other times of the school day are regular and valued aspects of school life. Work in religious education enables the pupils to reflect on their experiences, such as what makes them happy or sad, and why we celebrate special events. For older pupils, there are opportunities to develop understanding of the importance to Christians of symbols such as crosses and candles. They also learn to appreciate the values of those of other faiths, for instance through learning about special foods eaten at the Passover by Jews. The whole school topic on the environment provides many opportunities to explore the wonder of the natural world through observing creatures in the school grounds and the environmental area. Pupils then have opportunities to respond to this through art, craft and poetry.
- 26 Provision for encouraging moral and social development is also very good. The school rules are simple and clear and are well understood by the pupils. They understand the need for sanctions and regard them as fair. All adults in the school provide good role models, promoting understanding of respect, teamwork and consistency in relationships. Social development is promoted through many opportunities to work co-operatively within the class and in activities such as playing in recorder groups or taking part in team sports. Pupils take on many responsibilities within the class and whole school and they carry out these responsibilities seriously. Those elected to the school council understand the importance of listening to and responding to the needs of those who have elected them. They are active in ensuring that the playground is a safe and happy environment. The pupils also raise money for several charities, the latest link being with a school in Nepal.
- 27 There is good provision for cultural development overall. Music plays a central part in the life of the school and many pupils enjoy performing to a range of audiences within and outside the school. Pupils enjoy meeting the many visitors who come to the school, for instance visiting groups of musicians from Africa and a poet. They also make many trips into the local environment, for example going to Salisbury Cathedral to enjoy a creative arts day and the residential trip to Swanage. The school possesses few books and artefacts from other cultures and more could be done to prepare pupils for life in a multicultural society.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

- 28 Like at the time of the last inspection, care and support for pupils are good. The school offers its pupils a positive and welcoming learning environment, which supports their confidence and independence. Staff know the pupils well and are sensitive to their needs. There are very good procedures for monitoring pupils' personal development as they progress through the school; pupil's personal records are well maintained. The school promotes a calm and well-disciplined atmosphere and encourages a sense of pride in the pupils' efforts, which has a positive effect on their learning.
- 29 External agencies, including the school nurse and the educational psychologist, give good support to the school. Pupils are also well guided on matters relating to their welfare and development through the talks from visitors, like the vicar, a police officer and the 'Life Centre' mobile unit. Specific provisions, such as the extra-curricular activities and the school council, effectively support pupils' personal development. At play and during lunch break, pupils are supervised well. There are effective procedures for monitoring and promoting discipline and good behaviour. The behaviour policy clearly outlines rewards and sanctions, and parents and pupils are in no doubt about high expectations of good performance. There are many rewards, including public acknowledgement at the Friday assemblies, and an opportunity to discuss concerns, like bullying, in the school council. The school has been very successful in eliminating any oppressive behaviour.

- 30 The procedures for promoting good attendance are effective. The headteacher monitors attendance and the secretary helps in scrutinising and maintaining the registers. Registration requirements are met and absences are appropriately identified and promptly followed.
- 31 The arrangements for child protection are satisfactory. The headteacher, the designated person, is knowledgeable in child protection procedures and keeps the staff informed of the issues. There was no detailed written policy on child protection at the time of the last inspection. Now there is one but it does not cover children in public care. The staff are not trained on 'child restraint'. The school is vigilant about health and safety matters. The equipment is regularly checked. There are regular fire drills and checks on fire and electrical equipment. There are several trained first aiders and clear accident procedures. Whilst unwell pupils are warmly looked after, there is no welfare room for them to rest. The first-aid treatment is recorded.
- 32 Procedures for assessing and monitoring academic progress of pupils are satisfactory. The information gained from assessing what pupils know, understand and can do when they start school, is used to plan work and identify the specific needs of pupils. However, the use made of assessment to plan the curriculum, though improved since the last inspection, still varies. For example, it is not as well developed in subjects other than English, mathematics and science, and is barely satisfactory in information and communication technology. This lack of consistency limits teachers' ability to track progress carefully enough, and makes it harder for co-ordinators to identify the strengths and weaknesses in the different subjects. The school has started using internal and external assessments to set individual and year group targets, evaluation of which is developing. Similarly, tracking of pupil's progress is developing well. At present, pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics is tracked, based on the initial assessments in the Foundation Stage and on end of key stage test results. This has helped in addressing concerns, for example there is now more focus on writing.
- 33 The school has a comprehensive policy for special educational needs. The register of special educational needs is audited annually to ensure that pupils at the various stages are receiving the level of support appropriate. This aspect of the school's work is also closely monitored by two well-informed and active governors who, in addition, give personal support and encouragement to some pupils. This mentoring scheme is imaginative and supportive to the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- 34 Partnership with parents is very good in many respects and the overall picture is as positive as it was at the time of the last inspection. The school can rely on parents to support its work and environment, and parents make good contributions to the life of the school. Most parents take good interest in their children's work. Consultation meetings are well attended. Parents help with reading, swimming and school visits. School events are well supported. Many parents have worked hard in improving the school environment, which enhances pupils' learning. The conservation area, developed by parents, greatly helped a Year 1 science class in investigating an environment in which different habitats are found. There is an active school association (*Motcombe School Association*), which raises considerable funds for the school's resources. All this has a very good impact on pupils' learning.
- 35 Parents are well satisfied with the teaching, which is good, and pleased with the school's expectations, which are high. They are happy with the progress that their children make and the support for their children's personal development, which are good. Some parents are less satisfied with the amount and consistency of homework and the way the school works with them. Inspectors found that pupils take work home but not regularly and that homework is not consistently set in all

the subjects which normally have homework. The school does well in reaching out to parents and works closely with them.

- 36 The quality of information provided for parents is satisfactory. The prospectus and governors' reports are informative but the latter did not always report on the action plan following the previous inspection. There are frequent consultation and curriculum information meetings for parents and these are well attended. Some parents felt that they are not well informed about how their children are getting on. Inspectors found that pupils' annual written reports are satisfactory. Whilst the reports inform parents of what their children can do, they do not give information about what pupils should be capable of doing or what exactly their parents can do to help to improve academic standards. Also parents felt that they are not well briefed about their children's progress by all teachers in more informal settings.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- 37 The school is very well led. Management has improved since the previous inspection and is also very good. Change is being brought about sensitively and with evident commitment to provide the best for the pupils. The headteacher and governors work together very closely to make the most effective and economical use of the budget allocated to the school and to plan for the school's continuing development. Parents' confidence in the school is well justified. The school is achieving what it sets out to do, as summarised in its inspiring mission statement in the school brochure. The school is effective and provides good value for money.
- 38 The headteacher leads and manages the staff team very well, both through her example in the classroom and the arrangements in place for the day to day organisation of the school. As a result, pupils have very positive attitudes to the school, relationships are very good, and pupils learn and make good progress. The school is very orderly and calm, and staff and pupils know exactly what is expected of them. The start to the school day is particularly smooth, with pupils usually going straight to their classrooms to organise their books, read, write or use the computers. Staff are there to receive them. Arrangements to check on the quality of learning and teaching have improved since the previous inspection and are now good. The headteacher has participated in the national programme of further training for this work. She is highly effective in her role as special educational needs co-ordinator, is well trained, supports other members of staff and involves outside agencies as necessary. Other teachers with responsibility for managing subjects carry out their roles diligently; the headteacher has taken on responsibility also for several subjects.
- 39 The governing body has improved the arrangements for its committees since the previous inspection. Governors fulfill all their responsibilities, with the exception of reporting annually to parents on the implementation of the action plan following inspection. The required arrangements are in place for the management of teachers' performance. Governors know the school well, visit it regularly and use their experience from beyond the school to plan for its continuing development. They manage the budget carefully, taking good account of the principles of best value. The school development plan, which contains appropriate priorities for improvement, guides the governors in their work. They use it to maintain a check on how well they are meeting their own targets. Governors focus their work well on standards pupils are reaching, especially in English and mathematics. On the advice of the headteacher, they have put in place a very good strategy for raising standards in mathematics. This involves increasing the teaching allocated to this subject and, hence, is an example of a very effective use of the budget. They ensure that grants allocated to the school are used as intended, for example for teachers' continuing professional development and for pupils with special educational needs. The good progress these pupils make shows the effective

use of spending in this area. Two governors are highly active in supporting implementation of the school policy on special educational needs.

- 40 All staff are committed and hard working. Teachers are suitably qualified by training and experience to cover all aspects of the curriculum, including special educational needs. Teaching is good in general. The classroom assistants provide very good support for pupils and are well deployed, as are the parents who support the curriculum. Similarly, the administrative, cleaning staff and lunchtime supervisors provide a good service for the school. The overall quality of the school buildings is satisfactory. They are well kept and wisely used. Displays are purposeful and conducive to learning. Outdoor play areas are well maintained and of an adequate size, for all uses other than team sports and athletics. The nearby village field compensates for the small size of the school's own field. Resources are adequate to meet the needs of the National Curriculum, and are good for information and communication technology hardware. The conservation area developed by parents is a very useful learning resource. Other facilities, like the swimming pool and design and technology provision at local schools, are productively used and support pupils' learning.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

41 The school does not have significant weaknesses and there are no key issues.

42 Governors should address the following minor areas for improvement and include them within the school development plan or as an addition to it.

- Standards being reached by nine year old pupils in all parts of the information and communication technology curriculum are not high enough, and the subject is not used as fully as it should be to assist progress in other subjects. The school development plan already includes parts of this point. (Paragraph 77)
- Homework is not set with enough regularity. (Paragraph 19)
- Assessment in the subjects other than English, mathematics and science is not sufficiently thorough. (Paragraph 32)
- The quality of information for parents on their child's progress and what they should be able to achieve is not detailed enough. (Paragraph 36)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

19

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

18

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	6	8	4	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	N/A	73
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A	2

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N/A	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	N/A	18

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	5
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	2.8
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.4
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2000	8	8	16

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	8	8	8]
	Girls	7	7	8
	Total	15	15	16
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94(82)	94 (71)	100(88)
	National	83(82)	84(83)	90(87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	8	8	8
	Girls	7	7	7
	Total	15	15	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 (76)	94 (88)	94 (88)
	National	84(82)	88(86)	88(87)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	73
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y4

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	3.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19.2
Average class size	24.3

Education support staff: YR – Y4

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	67

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	N/A
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	N/A

Total number of education support staff	N/A
Total aggregate hours worked per week	N/A

Number of pupils per FTE adult	N/A
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/01
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	£
Total income	205941
Total expenditure	208111
Expenditure per pupil	2850
Balance brought forward from previous year	5794
Balance carried forward to next year	3624

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

73

Number of questionnaires returned

40

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	60	35	5	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	55	38	5	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	55	40	0	0	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	45	40	15	0	0
The teaching is good.	53	40	5	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	40	40	10	10	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	53	35	8	5	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	58	35	5	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	40	45	8	8	0
The school is well led and managed.	50	35	5	5	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	53	43	5	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	56	38	5	0	0

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

- 43 Children enter school in the September of the year in which they will be five. Almost all children come from the playgroup on the same site and benefit from visits to school before they start. Attainment on entry is usually broadly that found nationally, although knowledge and skills in mathematics is often lower, and skills in speaking and listening higher. This year the small group of children shows significant differences in what boys can do when they joined the school compared with girls. Girls consistently show above average skills in language and personal skills, but below average skills in mathematics. Boys had on average low scores in mathematics and language but above average physical skills. Overall, attainment on entry to the school this year was below that found in local schools.
- 44 Children have made generally good progress throughout the year and most are likely to meet or exceed the Early Learning Goals set for this stage of education by the end of the year. This is because the very good quality of teaching they receive, enhanced by high quality support, enables pupils to make good progress. All activities are carefully planned to match children's needs and the teaching style is appropriate for children of this age both in the morning when they work together as a group and in the afternoon when they are joined by some older pupils. The standards and quality of provision seen at the last inspection have been maintained. The school is beginning to plan to the new curriculum recommended for this age but planning and tracking of progress towards the Early Learning Goals are not fully embedded in the reception class. Work to develop these areas is planned and will further improve the quality of provision.

Personal, social and emotional development

- 45 Provision for children's personal, social and emotional development is good, enabling them to make good progress over the year. The excellent relationships between all staff and children have a significant impact on their development. Clear boundaries are set for behaviour, and children's behaviour is managed consistently and sensitively. They know what is allowed and what is not and are confident and independent in class, assembly and in the playground. They are enthusiastic about their work and can sustain concentration for long periods both when they have selected activities for themselves and when they are undertaking a task set by the teacher. They work well in groups, co-operate with equipment and talk about their work with each other. They can dress and undress themselves with minimal help. Almost all children will reach or exceed the goals in this area by the end of the year. Sensitive support is given to those who find this area more difficult.

Communication, language and literacy

- 46 Children listen well in lessons, and to each other, and can carry out sensible conversations. They can talk confidently about books they are reading, handle them correctly and use picture clues well to work out what is happening. Knowledge of letter sounds and shapes is good and most can sound out simple words and insert vowels correctly in short words such as "man". Good strategies are used to involve all pupils in building up their knowledge of sounds and spelling through the use of small whiteboards and letter cards. The most able children can read simple books with confidence and enjoyment. Computers are used effectively to support pupils' learning. Pencil control is generally good and almost all children can write their names. Some more able children attempt to write sentences on their own. Overall the majority of children exceed expectations in reading and match them in writing, although there is wide variation in the attainment of this group.

Mathematical development

47 Very good teaching, which is very well matched to the needs of the individual children, ensures that they all make good progress in developing mathematical understanding during their first year in school. The majority of children this year entered school with a knowledge of number and mathematical vocabulary below the average but by the end of the year are set to reach the goals set nationally for this age. They are able to count up to ten objects accurately and to match the correct number symbol. When asked to give a number one smaller or one bigger than a given number they can do this mentally. They can talk about objects which are above, below and next to others and can recognise pictures of bears that are bigger or smaller than each other. Children who enter school with average understanding of mathematics also make good progress and by the end of the year are able to add and subtract small numbers with the help of apparatus, recognise left and right, and are becoming confident in counting to 30 and above. All children are enthusiastic when joining in number rhymes and songs and can use the computer confidently to practise number skills.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

48 Children make good progress in this area and most will reach the goals set for the end of the year. They use the environment of the school grounds to investigate the creatures that live there. Children are able to describe differences between where creatures live and make suggestions about why this might be the case. They use construction kits confidently and can join materials to make models of insects. Computers are often used to support learning and children can manipulate the mouse well. Visits to unfamiliar places such as the café at a nearby airfield have provided a stimulus for role play in the classroom. Whilst provision is generally satisfactory and teaching good, the opportunities provided through the planned curriculum are less extensive than is sometimes the case. Progress towards the early learning goals is not recorded precisely for this area of learning.

Physical development

49 Observation of a lesson on the school field and of children at play shows that they move with confidence, control and an awareness of those around them. They control balls well and, with very good teaching, are beginning to use bats to hit balls in the required direction. Hand/eye co-ordination is well developed for children of this age. They use the climbing frame with agility and standards overall are above those normally seen at this age.

Creative development

50 Children are able to mix colours and make models using their imagination on some occasions. They use their senses to explore items from the natural world. In music, they explore the different ways in which sounds can be made and they join in enthusiastically with songs and rhymes. Children reach a satisfactory standard in this area by the end of the year but the curriculum as planned at present does not give as many opportunities to develop creativity as is often the case.

ENGLISH

51 In the tests for pupils aged seven in 2000, standards were reached that were well above the national average for all schools in reading and above in writing. This is typical of recent years with performance in reading being stronger than writing. Pupils' reading was better than that found in similar schools but writing was broadly in line with this standard.

- 52 Recent tests and work seen during the inspection confirm that pupils' skill in reading continues to be stronger than that in writing. Pupils of all abilities read books of an appropriate level with expression and obvious enjoyment. They use a wide range of strategies to make sense of the text and the more able pupils comment thoughtfully on the author's choice of vocabulary and sentence construction. Regular reading at home and in school supports good progress and the targets set in the reading diaries are helpful to ensure that teaching points are reinforced at home.
- 53 In their writing, pupils aged seven are able to construct sentences well, sometimes using unusually mature phrases and interesting vocabulary. They can choose appropriate adjectives with imagination to enhance the quality of their writing. They have a good knowledge of punctuation and invariably start sentences with a capital letter. They can write interesting stories, retell Bible stories, and write very imaginative poetry in response to a visit from an author. The pupils' well developed speaking and listening skills enable them to use words with confidence to communicate meaning and atmosphere in their writing. The majority write legibly in a well formed, joined script. Overall, pupils of this age, both boys and girls, make good progress in developing their English skills. This applies equally to pupils with special educational needs and those who are very able.
- 54 By the time pupils are nine their reading continues to be better than that found nationally overall, although there is considerable variation in this particular year group which has a significant proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Almost half the pupils are reading at the level expected of pupils aged eleven. Pupils with special educational needs have made good progress to reach average or, occasionally below average, levels. Pupils clearly enjoy reading, read confidently with expression, choose books from the library with skill and are enthusiastic to share their contents.
- 55 Speaking and listening skills continue to be good at age nine. Pupils listen attentively in many situations and can express their opinions to each other and to visitors in carefully judged language. Generally they possess a mature vocabulary. Their ability in speaking and reading is not, however, fully reflected in their writing skills. Spelling levels are broadly in line with those found nationally and do not match pupils' achievement in reading. Handwriting also is not as good as often found at this age and development of a flowing joined style is uneven. Presentation in general is inconsistent and sometimes less than satisfactory. Writing by the most able is well organised and keeps the interest of the reader. Less able pupils use simple sentences correctly but employ a limited vocabulary. At present there are insufficient opportunities to develop writing by using reading texts as a model and too little time is spent writing either short or extended pieces. Opportunities to develop writing skills in other subjects such as science are too few. Too much time in the literacy hour is spent on exercises in grammar, spelling and handwriting and this accounts for the lower skills levels in writing than reading. Overall, however, pupils have made at least the progress expected throughout the last two years, and sometimes progress has been good. They are enthusiastic about their work in English.
- 56 The small number of lessons observed during the inspection indicate that teaching is always at least satisfactory, and at its best it is excellent. It is good overall. In the best teaching, planning was very good and met the needs of all groups of pupils, excellent use was made of time and resources, explanations were very clear and pupils were managed well. This meant that the pupils were fully engaged and able to make excellent progress due to excellent teaching. Where teaching was satisfactory, there was less direct teaching of the class or groups by the teacher. A positive feature of the teaching and learning in English is the very good use made of classroom assistants to support pupils with special educational needs as well as other groups of pupils. This has a positive impact on standards achieved.

- 57 Pupils' progress is carefully tracked through the use of teacher assessment, tests and target setting. Individual writing targets are set for all pupils and are reviewed by staff with the support of a governor. This is beginning to have a positive impact on standards. Discussions with older pupils indicate that they find the targets useful but would appreciate having them reviewed more regularly. This would support further improvement in writing.
- 58 Since the last inspection the positive picture of good standards overall, and of relatively stronger reading than writing, has remained. In order to improve further the school should review the balance of activities within the literacy hour for older pupils to increase the opportunities for writing, and provide more opportunities for writing at length in other subjects.

MATHEMATICS

- 59 In 2000, pupils aged seven reached average levels of attainment in mathematics compared with all schools nationally, but below the average for similar schools. This is partly accounted for by the relatively high number of pupils who entered the school with less than average knowledge and understanding in mathematics and the number of pupils in the year with special educational needs. In the light of both these factors this group of pupils made satisfactory progress in mathematics, including the more able pupils who reached standards above the national expectations for their age.
- 60 The work seen during the inspection and outcomes of recent tests show that attainment this year for pupils aged seven is generally above that expected nationally. This represents a significant improvement over last year. Boys and girls and pupils of all abilities, including the very able, have made good progress since they entered the school. Typically they are able to recognise multiples of five and ten and double numbers such as 45. The majority of pupils understand the value of numbers up to 1000. They can measure time in quarter hours and recognise the properties of many two and three-dimensional shapes. A particular strength is their ability to investigate mathematical situations for themselves, recording their work clearly and checking that they have covered all the possibilities, for instance when discovering different combinations of toppings for pizzas.
- 61 By the time the pupils are nine, the standard of work is, overall, above that expected for their age, although there is a wide range of attainment reflecting the spread of ability in this year group. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and the most able, are making good progress. Less able pupils, including those with special educational needs, are able to recognise numbers which are multiples of 50 and 100 and can find combinations of numbers which add to hundred. Average and above average pupils have a good understanding of equivalent fractions and know more multiplication tables than normally expected at this age. They can also plot co-ordinates accurately, collect data by survey and plot the results on a graph and read simple timetables. As with the younger pupils, their ability in investigate mathematical situations is developing well.
- 62 The good progress that all pupils make in mathematics is accounted for by the quality of teaching and some recent changes to the organisation of the way that mathematics is taught. Teaching is often very good. It is planned to reflect the national numeracy strategy and this has helped to reach the above average standards in number work. Teachers use a range of approaches to ensure that all pupils can learn, including good use of practical work supported by very experienced and skilful classroom assistants. An example of this occurred when a group of less able pupils worked on a multiples game with an assistant whilst more able pupils undertook written work. Teachers' questioning is often very challenging and directed to individual pupils to extend their understanding, for example during a mental starter activity the teacher directed questions to individual pupils who were combining mentally the given numbers. After pupils had given all possible pairs of numbers, more able pupils, aged six, were asked what the highest and lowest combinations might be and were

able to justify their answers. Clarity of teaching and effective grouping of pupils into year or ability groups combine to ensure that learning is good throughout the school in almost all lessons, and often very good especially for children between five and seven. Occasionally, opportunities are missed to build on pupils' misunderstandings and turn them into effective teaching points, but sometimes teaching makes good use of pupils' mistakes to reinforce learning. Pupils are very enthusiastic about mathematics, they persevere with problems even when they find work difficult and make great effort to complete work well in the time allocated. Generally, pupils are confident and articulate when explaining their mathematical thinking and this is a reflection of the good use of mathematical language by teachers and classroom assistants.

- 63 Pupils' progress in mathematics is carefully tracked both within the lesson and over longer periods of time. The school is using this data well to provide teaching which is well matched to need and this is having a positive impact on standards. The co-ordinator has been active in developing the investigative side of mathematics and this has raised standards in this area. She is involved in monitoring the provision in the school and works with local schools to ensure consistency of expectations. The school has identified appropriate priorities to continue to develop the subject, including improving the provision of homework by developing the use of games for the younger children. Homework for the older pupils is frequent but not necessarily regular. At present, there is insufficient use of computers to teach data handling with the older pupils, although there is some use of programs to practise number skills throughout the school.
- 64 Since the last inspection the strength in number work has been consolidated and using and applying mathematics is now also a strength. In order to improve still further the school should ensure that data handling aspects are covered more fully, supported by the use of computer software.

SCIENCE

- 65 The seven year old pupils reached close to the national average standards in the 2000 teacher assessments for the attainment expected for their age, and above the national average for the higher level. Assessments for the present seven year old pupils show a similar picture, again indicating that the more able pupils are reaching above average standards, which was not the position at the time of the previous inspection. The school's assessment of nine year old pupils is that they are reaching an overall above average standard, with the most able attaining well for their age, again indicating improvement.
- 66 Work of seven year old and by nine year old pupils seen during the inspection was of generally above average attainment, though better in the knowledge and understanding of science than in pupils' ability to plan, carry out and record scientific investigations. In this respect, teachers' assessments of pupils' standards are slightly generous. While pupils are being taught how to think about predictions, carry out fair tests, make observations and record their findings, this does not always lead to a consistently good standard of written work. Expectations could be higher for this part of the science curriculum. Overall, however, pupils are achieving well in science, including pupils with special educational needs. Pupils are being provided with an interesting curriculum which makes links with other subjects, as in work on the environment. Some effective use is made of mathematics to present and organise data, for example in a survey on healthy eating, but not enough is done to promote pupils' writing skills in science. Information and communication technology is used in science for word-processing only.
- 67 The small amount of teaching seen, and evidence gathered from pupils' work, show that teaching is good and pupils are learning well, including pupils with special educational needs. Classroom assistants are effective in helping pupils to progress and develop confidence. Teaching explanations are clear so that pupils know what to do to make progress. Plenty of questions help to

establish the level of pupils' understanding to plan the next stage of learning. Care is taken to provide pupils with interesting resources, for example an excellent collection from the County Museum in connection with work on animal classification. This stimulated very good discussion and enthusiasm. Varied activities keep pupils' attention, and give them opportunities to learn together in groups. Discussions remain well focused on the work, for example when pupils were challenged to find ways of classifying a range of animals. A few of the most able pupils immediately began to apply their knowledge of sets in mathematics to think of ways of grouping the animals according to their habitat preferences. Good use is made of lesson time, which is below the national average. This is one of the reasons why standards are not as high as they might be for the practical aspects of science. Lack of opportunities to write more extensively and to use information and communication for research and to present data are other reasons.

- 67 Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory in that there is more evidence now of better achievement by the more able pupils. A suitable curriculum is provided and there is regular assessment of pupils' progress. The school has plans in hand to raise standards in the practical aspects of science, having already recognised that this is an area needing further development.

ART AND DESIGN

- 68 As pupils take most of their art work home, and no art lessons were seen during the inspection, it was not possible to make a judgement on overall standards. However, pupils' work on display around the school contained some above average drawings and paintings. Representations of bluebells, for example, showed good control of media to produce well composed images of the flowers. Work inspired by Van Gogh and Monet, including some by older pupils, indicates pupils' growing abilities with colour selection and mixing as they learnt from the work of these masters. This points towards improvement since the previous inspection in pupils' knowledge of the work of artists. Three-dimensional work is less well developed. The co-ordinator, who has recently taken on this role, has good plans to address this. The new teaching scheme shows the intention to provide an increasingly broad experience of art and design. The displayed work indicates that the school has talented pupils who will benefit from further opportunities to express their creativity.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

- 69 The school is providing a sound curriculum in this subject. Pupils aged seven and nine are reaching average standards, as shown by work on display and the photographic record. As they move up through the school, their skills in designing and making improve, as do their abilities to evaluate the quality of their finished products. Pupils use a suitable range of materials and tools. In addition to working with recycled materials and textiles, all pupils study food technology. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 benefit from regular opportunities to use specialist facilities in a nearby school. Well constructed air turbines illustrate the work done there. Younger pupils have made wheeled vehicles, and have measured and cut, joined and finished, resulting in quite sturdy products.
- 70 Insufficient learning and teaching were seen during the inspection to make a judgement about them, though the work on display indicates that their satisfactory quality has been maintained since the previous inspection. Expectations on the quality of design could be higher, however, especially for the older more able pupils, linking this to their work in mathematics.

GEOGRAPHY

- 71 Work in books and on display indicates that standards being reached are average for pupils aged seven and above for those aged nine. The Year 4 residential experience results in above average

standards in use of maps. Work by other pupils in the development of skills in the use of maps shows sound progress. No lessons were seen during the inspection, but planning for lessons and also pupils' work illustrate that an interesting curriculum is provided which meets requirements. The residential experience by Year 4 pupils adds significantly to this, as does good use of the school grounds and locality. Visitors to the school and other contacts help to help to bring alive the differences between Britain and contrasting countries, such as Japan and Brazil, as well as Nepal, the country the school has links with. In this way, geography makes a useful contribution to pupils' social and cultural development.

- 72 Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. Some use is made of information and communication technology, for example to present data on land use in and around the village. More could be done especially for older pupils to enable them to develop their writing skills through geography.

HISTORY

- 73 Interesting project work by older pupils shows how teaching of history is helping to develop both their knowledge and understanding of times past and present and also their research and independent learning skills. This is leading to standards that are above average at the point when pupils leave the school. Throughout the school, planning and pupils' work indicate a step by step approach to meeting the national requirements for history. Given its long history, the school lends itself to a particularly detailed study of the Victorian period. Photographs and pupils' work shows how thoroughly the school uses its own history and accommodation to give pupils real insights into aspects of nineteenth century life.
- 74 Although no learning and teaching were observed, it is clear that the school has maintained their quality found at the previous inspection. To raise standards further, more opportunities could be provided to enable pupils to write at greater length, thereby developing both their understanding of history and their writing skills.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

- 75 Attainment in information and communication technology is broadly in line with expectations for pupils aged seven. They are able to word-process text, saving and accessing it themselves. They can add captions to pictures of Barnaby Bear which have been downloaded from the newly acquired digital camera. Simulation programs such as Ed the Goblin give opportunities to make choices and evaluate the consequences.
- 76 By the time the pupils are nine, their attainment in some aspects is below that expected nationally. This is partly accounted for by the agreement that local First Schools have that aspects of modelling and control will be taught at the Middle School. By the time they leave the school pupils can word-process with confidence, adding pictures or saved photographs. They choose sensible font styles and lay out work thoughtfully, for instance when they reproduced their own version of the rules for the swimming pool. They understand the power of the computer to compile a publication to be shared with others and are working together to produce a Junior Villager magazine. Current nine year old pupils have used a simulation program to explore aspects of Victorian life. Pupils can save and access their own work independently. Generally they talk confidently about information and communication technology. Recently, pupils have started to use E-mail to communicate with a partner school in East London. At present, however, opportunities to use databases, access information from CD Rom and to direct movements have been insufficient, and not all pupils have had equal opportunity to develop their full potential. Not enough account is taken of the needs of pupils who do not have access to computers at home.

- 77 An outline scheme of work is in place which covers the required curriculum and a tracking sheet is being developed. Assessment at present is not, however, clearly linked to national curriculum levels. This means that teachers are not always aware of what pupils can or cannot do and therefore do not plan sufficiently for their next steps in learning. Also, information and communication technology skills are not regularly taught as a subject in their own right, and opportunities are missed to use information and communication technology systematically as a learning tool in other subjects. Too often computers are used as a reward for fast work and simply offer opportunities to practise existing skills.
- 78 The school possesses a good stock of computer hardware and sufficient software. Staff have received recent training and benefit from the support of an expert who visits weekly in a voluntary capacity to support the teaching. Since the last inspection the school has acquired more computers, but overall attainment has not improved relative to national expectations. The school is aware of the areas, which require further work and has drawn up a manageable plan to address many of the issues. To further improve, the school should plan information and communication technology as an integral part of the whole curriculum, track pupil progress carefully and ensure that the needs of pupils with no access to computers at home are met.

MUSIC

- 79 The progress that pupils of all abilities make is good. By the time the pupils leave the school at age nine, the attainment of the majority of pupils is above average, and those pupils who are gifted and talented are enabled to achieve well because of the wide range of opportunities available to them and the quality of teaching. Due to the quality of teaching they receive, pupils with special educational needs make good progress and reach average standards.
- 80 Pupils' singing is very good. They sing clearly and with expression; they are always in tune and keep time well. They modulate their voices well in response to the different songs performed. For instance, in a rousing chorus they sing loudly and enthusiastically but adopt a gentler more thoughtful tone when singing a song about the wonder of the natural world.
- 81 Younger pupils recognise the sounds made by a range of percussion instruments and understand the different ways that the sound is produced, for example by shaking, blowing, vibrating and scraping. Older pupils are able to pick out themes when listening to music, for example certain themes, within the "Summer" movement of Vivaldi's Four Seasons. They are able to choose instruments skilfully to produce a desired musical effect and then work together co-operatively to produce a short piece of improvised music which is either loud and fast or slow and quiet. All the pupils enjoy performing but also listen attentively and appreciatively to each other's performance. When given feedback from the teacher they reflect upon it and improve their performance. A notable feature of their work is the pupils' sensitivity to each other's contribution to the group performance and a recognition of how the different musical instruments can combine effectively.
- 82 A high proportion of pupils learn to play instruments either through recorder clubs run by the co-ordinator or by accessing visiting music teachers who offer brass and string tuition. The older pupils regularly and confidently accompany singing in assembly and this contributes positively to the atmosphere of worship. The recorder groups keep time very well and more skilled players can hold descant lines with confidence, sight reading conventional notation skilfully. Although more girls than boys choose to perform, boys are sometimes used as role models, for instance by being asked to demonstrate their playing to younger pupils. The school choir and recorder groups perform regularly outside school, at local events and in competitions. Traditionally they win a high number of awards in the Salisbury Music Festival, and this was the case again this year.

- 83 Music teaching for all classes is carried out by the enthusiastic co-ordinator who is a music specialist. The quality of teaching has many very good features; it is always at least good and often very good. There is an appropriate balance between learning about music and performance. Pupils are given the opportunity to listen to recorded music, although opportunities are limited by the lack of CDs of music from different ages and cultures. The pupils do, however, gain from hearing live performances from the teacher, other pupils and visiting music groups including those from other cultures.
- 84 Apart from a lack of recorded music the school is well resourced. This is largely the result of the dedication of the co-ordinator who has donated proceeds from marathons to enhance the stock of instruments. The subject has an appropriate policy and scheme of work, and individual assessment of pupils is developing. At the time of the last inspection, music was judged to be strength of the school and this continues to be the case. To further improve the school needs to increase its range of recorded music, including an appropriate selection from other cultures.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- 85 The school attaches a lot of importance to this subject, allocates an above average amount of time to teaching it, and provides plenty of opportunities for team games, with parents helping teachers to manage these. This time allocation, together with good teaching, very good school and local facilities and the very good range of extra-curricular sports activities, lead to standards which are above average overall, and well above for swimming. All pupils are taught swimming, using the pools in two local schools. In the athletics lessons seen, skills in throwing and balance by seven year old pupils were above average, as were the speed of sprinting and distances balls thrown by some nine year olds. Pupils of all abilities achieved well. Almost all pupils, boys and girls, were enthusiastic and worked hard. Pupils with special educational needs participated fully and made good progress. This was also the case when younger pupils had a swimming lesson.
- 86 Good teaching led to productive use of time in these lessons. Pupils practised and developed their skills in running, throwing, catching and hitting, and in swimming. Attention was given to warming up, especially for the older pupils, and also to cooling down after vigorous exercise: the great majority of pupils tried their best when running during warm up. Instructions during lessons were clear and a good variety of activities had been planned so that pupils' interest was maintained. However, occasionally, pupils had to wait too long for their turn and the momentum was lost a little. Pupils listened attentively, but did not always have enough opportunity to share evaluations of their own and other's performances. Teaching gave a good emphasis to the quality of skills expected, showing secure knowledge of the subject.
- 87 The school is benefiting from being in a pyramid of schools where the upper school is a Sports College, for example by receiving specialist support for the teaching of gymnastics. The issue raised in the previous inspection, about equality of opportunity for boys and girls, has been addressed. Improvement has been good and this subject is a thriving part of the school's curriculum.