

INSPECTION REPORT

ST. MARY'S CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Bradford Abbas, Sherborne

LEA area: Dorset

Unique reference number: 113775

Headteacher: Mrs D. Evans

Reporting inspector: Mr F. Carruthers
21285

Dates of inspection: 21st – 25th May 2001

Inspection number: 190357

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant & junior
School category: Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils: 4 - 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Mill Lane
Bradford Abbas
Sherborne
Dorset

Postcode: DT96RH

Telephone number: 01935 476515

Fax number: 01935 476515

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr D. Bailey

Date of previous inspection: November 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21285	Mr. F. Carruthers	Registered inspector	English, Geography, History, Music, Religious education, Special educational needs	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9348	Mrs M. Le Mage	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents? Equal opportunities.
18842	Mrs G. Peet	Team inspector	Mathematics, Science, Art & design, Design & technology, Information and communication technology, Physical education, Children in the Foundation Stage.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This voluntary controlled, Church of England primary school is situated in the village of Bradford Abbas on the border between Dorset and Somerset. There are 116 pupils on roll. Children enter the reception class, initially part-time at the start of the school year in which they are five. There are slightly more girls than boys on roll. Apart from when they are in the reception class and Year 6, pupils are taught in mixed-age classes. All pupils are of white ethnic background and speak English as their first language. The school is popular, drawing pupils from beyond the village. Many of the pupils come from economically advantaged homes, but there is a small minority (3 per cent) who are eligible for free school meals. Attainment on entry varies year on year. In general it is in line with the county average and this includes the full range of ability. There are 22 pupils on the school's register of pupils with special educational needs, one of whom has a statement of special educational need. Collective worship is the subject of a separate inspection.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The effectiveness of the school is good. Pupils achieve well and standards in English, mathematics and science by the time the pupils are 11 years old are above average. The pupils have very good attitudes to their work and behave very well. The quality of teaching is good overall and the leadership and management of the school are very good. The cost of educating a pupil at the school is in line with similar small schools and therefore the school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils achieve well in English, mathematics and science. Standards they achieve by the age of 11 have risen since the last inspection and show good improvement in the current Year 6.
- The pupils have very good attitudes to their work and behave very well, because the school promotes their personal development and looks after them well.
- There is a high proportion of very good teaching in the junior classes.
- The quality and range of subjects taught, including activities outside lessons, are very good, especially in the junior classes.
- Links with parents are very strong. Parents contribute well to the work of the school and the children's learning.
- Leadership and management of the school by the headteacher, senior teacher and governing body are very good.

What could be improved

- The quality of teaching in some lessons where it is only satisfactory.

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. Improvement since then has been very good. Six key issues were identified for improvement and all have been resolved well. These were to improve the monitoring of teaching, the quality of teachers' planning and marking and how they assess the pupils' progress. In addition the school was required to improve standards in information and communication technology (ICT), the quality and quantity of learning resources, and information about standards in the school's prospectus. As well as these improvements, the school has been successful in raising standards in English, mathematics and science. This has been recognised recently in a School Achievement Award from the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) for progress since 1997. The leadership and management of the school have improved and are now very good. There is a higher proportion of very good teaching than at the last inspection. Renovations have improved the quality of the classrooms in the main building. Good standards identified at the last inspection have been maintained.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	All schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	B	B	A	B	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Mathematics	D	D	C	D	
Science	B	C	C	D	

Standards in English are well above average and pupils achieve well. Standards in the current Year 6 are an improvement on those of last year. As a result of a greater focus on teaching skills of writing, the school's target of 79 per cent of pupils to achieve or do better than the level expected of 11-year-olds, is likely to be exceeded. Pupils have very good skills of speaking and listening. They read fluently and enjoy reading and their writing is mature and well expressed. Standards in mathematics in the current Year 6 are similarly an improvement on last year. The school's target of 75 per cent of pupils to achieve the expected level or better is likely to be exceeded. Skills of numeracy are good. Standards have risen well since the last inspection. Pupils are skilful using numbers and solve everyday problems well. Standards in science in the current Year 6 are similarly better than last year and are above average. Pupils have a good grasp of concepts and understand how to make a test fair. Pupils' attainment in art and design, design and technology, history, music and physical education is above that expected of pupils at the age of 11. Attainment in ICT and religious education is satisfactory. Standards in the current Year 2, when the pupils are aged seven, are above average in English, mathematics and science. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress throughout the school.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	All pupils are enthusiastic and have very good attitudes to their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	They behave very well and concentrate well in lessons. Around school, they are polite and sensible.
Personal development and relationships	The pupils develop self-responsibility and independence very well. They have very good relationships with staff and one another. Pupils are frequently seen helping one another and working well cooperatively.
Attendance	Levels of attendance are above the national average and are good. Pupils are punctual to school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Thirty per cent of the teaching is very good or excellent and this is an improvement since the last inspection. A further 52 per cent of lessons are good and 18 per cent are satisfactory. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. Teaching at the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall, there being 40 per cent of lessons that are good. In the infant class, seven out of eight lessons are good and in the junior classes, half of the teaching is very good or excellent. A further 40 per cent of junior lessons is good. This high proportion of very good teaching in the junior classes is giving rise to the rise in standards evident in English, mathematics and science in the current Years 5 and 6. Pupils of all levels of ability, including the more able and those with special educational needs, are taught well. The teaching of literacy is very good overall and teachers make very good use of subjects such as history and religious education to promote literacy skills. The teaching of numeracy is good. In science, teaching is good overall and very good in junior classes. Where there was sufficient evidence to form a judgement, teaching was generally good, for example in religious education in both infant and junior classes, in physical education in the infant class and in art and design, history and music in junior classes. Too few lessons were seen in ICT, design and technology and geography to make a judgement. In most lessons, teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and the quality of learning is good. In a minority of lessons, the pace is slower and the quality of learning is only satisfactory.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum provided by the school is very good. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy have been implemented effectively. Personal, social and health education has been recently introduced into the curriculum. Provision for teaching drugs awareness is provided. Aspects of the curriculum, such as art and design and religious education, help the pupils prepare for living in a diverse society. However, the English curriculum lacks a scheme for the teaching of drama. There is a very good range of activities outside lessons.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	This is good. Staff know the pupils' needs well. Both teachers and assistants provide them with good support. As a result they make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school makes good provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The ethos of the school is positive. A strong sense of caring for each other and for the environment prevails throughout the school. It is an integral part of daily life. The school helps the pupils to prepare for living in a racially diverse society through the content of assemblies and subjects such as English and personal, social and health education.
How well the school cares for its pupils	This is a strength of the school. All aspects of health and safety are treated with great attention to detail. Staff assess the pupils' progress well and track how they are achieving. However, there is no formal recording of pupils' personal development.

Partnerships between the school and the parents of its pupils are very effective. Parental involvement in the life of the school has improved since the previous inspection and parents make a significant impact on the work of the school. Some elements of the reports to parents on their children's progress are in need of improvement, for example the attention given to the pupil's progress.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	There is very good leadership provided by the headteacher. She is a very good role model for staff because of the quality of her own teaching. The senior teacher provides very good support. Together they promote good teamwork among the staff.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors have a very good overview of the school's strengths and potential for improvement. They are very ably led by the chair person.
The school's evaluation of its performance	This is good. Governors and staff use well information about standards to help them plan for improvements.
The strategic use of resources	All funding and specific grants are used very well to promote high standards of attainment. Governors and senior staff apply principles of best value by consulting a range of people about important matters, obtaining the best resources at the most economic prices and using them appropriately in raising standards.

Levels of staffing are good and teaching assistants are well deployed across the whole age range. The accommodation is in good condition and has good features, such as a spacious hall and an outdoor swimming pool. Learning resources are good overall but there are insufficient large outdoor toys for children in the reception class.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like coming to school • They make good progress • They are expected to work hard and achieve their best • The school is well led and managed • The school helps the children to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework • The range of activities outside lessons.

Inspectors fully support the positive views expressed by parents. They consider that

- Homework is planned well and progressively increases as the pupils get older. It makes a good contribution to pupils' learning.
- There is a very good range of activities outside lessons, evident, for example, in the list of clubs for the summer term recently sent to parents in a newsletter.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The majority of children start school with attainment that is in line with the average for children in Dorset. Although for some children this is above the national average, there are a significant number of children in both this year's reception class and in the present Year 1 who started school with attainment that is below average. Children make satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage (that is, the reception class). For most children the standards that they achieve are in line with that expected in all areas of learning.

2. Because of the small year groups, standards are influenced from year to year by the composition of each age group and the percentage of pupils with special educational needs. Standards in English are well above the national average by the end of Year 6 and this is confirmed by results in the 2000 national tests for the age group as well as standards in the current Year 6. The proportion of pupils achieving levels above expectations is similarly above average in that year group. Standards have risen significantly since the last inspection and continue to rise. Pupils have very good skills of speaking and listening. They read fluently and enjoy reading and their writing is mature and well expressed.

3. Standards of reading achieved by pupils by the age of seven have fluctuated since the last inspection. In the current Year 2, standards are better than last year's, when they were in line with the national average. More pupils this year are achieving at a level above expectations. Standards in writing were above the national average from 1997 to 1999. In 2000, they were well below the national average and the average achieved by similar schools. Standards in the current Year 2 are much improved, as a result of an increased focus on writing and on standards of spelling. Thirty per cent of pupils are achieving at a level above the level expected of pupils aged seven. None is below expectations.

4. These improvements are the result of the very effective use of the National Literacy Strategy and the quality of teaching, which is never less than good, and often very good in junior classes. Staff have raised the standard of writing throughout the school by making it a clear focus for improvement. In addition, they use other subjects very well to improve standards of literacy.

5. The school's performance in mathematics when compared nationally in 2000 was in line with the national average. In comparison to similar schools, the performance was below average. Since the last inspection standards have risen steadily from being below the national average in 1999. Standards for pupils at the end of Year 6 are continuing to rise significantly and that this year, are above average. There is no indication that girls are performing better than boys.

6. In the national tests for seven year olds in 2000, standards were in line with the national average. When these results are compared to those of similar schools, the school's performance was below average. Inspection evidence suggests that standards are rising and that pupils presently at the end of Year 2 are achieving above expectations. A small proportion are attaining below. This is an improvement on attainment at the time of the last inspection.

7. The school is likely to exceed its target for 79 per cent of pupils to achieve the expected level or better in English and for 75 per cent of pupils to do likewise in mathematics in this summer's national tests. This is the result of the good focus that staff have put on improving writing and mathematics in the current school improvement plan.

8. In the national tests for science in 2000, all pupils attained at least the expected Level 4, which is a very high percentage, but the number of pupils attaining above this level was below both the national average and that of similar schools. Overall, the school's performance when compared nationally was in line with the national average, although in comparison to similar schools the performance was below average. Since the last inspection standards at the end of Year 6 have risen sharply from being well below the national average in 1997. Standards for pupils in the current Year 6 are continuing to rise and that this year, are above average.

9. The results of the teacher assessment of science for pupils aged seven in 2000 showed that the number of pupils attaining the expected Level 2 was very low when compared both to the national average and to the attainment of pupils in similar schools. The percentage of pupils reaching the higher level was close to the national average and to that of similar schools. Standards in the current Year 2 are better than last year and are above the national average. This judgement reflects an improvement since the last inspection when standards were judged to be in line with expectations at age seven.

10. Standards are above those expected of pupils aged 11 in art and design, design and technology, history, music and physical education. These good standards reflect the quality of teaching in upper junior classes, which is often of a very good or excellent standard. Attainment in religious education is in line with that expected in the locally agreed syllabus and some pupils achieve above that. Attainment in information and communication technology (ICT) is in line with that expected of pupils nationally. This is an improvement since the last inspection when standards were judged to be unsatisfactory. It was not possible to judge accurately standards in geography because it was not on the timetable during the term when the inspection was carried out.

11. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve well. This is because the focus of work they are given is of sufficient difficulty to challenge and motivate them. They are supported by well by teachers and assistants in all subjects, not just English and mathematics. This was evident, for instance, in lessons in science, history and music.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12. The attitudes, values and personal development of pupils are very good and the very high standards observed at the time of the previous inspection have been maintained. Parents report their children like school very much and this is evident in the happy way they come into school in the morning and the interest they demonstrate in lessons throughout the school day. Pupils settle quickly to the tasks set in lessons, listen very well, co-operate well with each other and approach working independently in a very sensible manner. These very good attitudes help to make maximum use of the time available for learning and therefore have a very positive impact on standards attained across the school.

13. Pupils' behaviour is very good. The high standard of good behaviour is consistent across all aspects of school life and there have been no exclusions. Lunchtime is a pleasant, social occasion with pupils sitting at small, mixed age tables. Older pupils

noticeably help and care for younger pupils in the dining hall. The playground is harmonious and operates effectively to a playground code of conduct developed recently by the pupils themselves in consultation with staff. Some parents expressed concerns about possible playground difficulties as a result of having very energetic children in a relatively small hard surface play area. However, the inspection findings are that the code of conduct addresses these concerns well and has given the pupils a good opportunity to contribute to the organisation of their school.

14. Relationships in the school are very good. Pupils relate very well to all adults they encounter during the school day. They give a friendly welcome to visitors and are very polite and courteous. There is a high degree of social harmony between pupils. They have good co-operative skills when working together in pairs and small groups and support each other very well in the classroom. There are examples of pupils voluntarily helping pupils with behavioural difficulties to achieve the targets they have been set.

15. The personal development of pupils is very good. Respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of all is implicit in the aims of the school and was clearly demonstrated in the quality of discussion in a Year 6 history lesson about life in Bradford Abbas in the early 1900s when pupils were encouraged to suggest reasons for differences from present day norms. Their suggestions were invariably sensitive. There are progressive opportunities throughout the school for pupils to use their initiative or take personal responsibility in contributing to the life of the school. They use these skills in some areas of their learning. This is most evident in ICT, when pupils use the machines independently. They also keep their own record of how well they are doing in this subject.

16. Attendance at the school is good, being above the national average. Registers are kept accurately and efficiently with lateness and unauthorised absence properly recorded.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

17. The quality of teaching is good. Thirty per cent of the teaching is very good or better and this is an improvement since the last inspection. A further 52 per cent of lessons are good and there is no unsatisfactory teaching.

18. Teaching in the reception class is satisfactory overall, with 40 per cent of lessons that are good. It supports the learning of children of all abilities effectively. A part-time classroom assistant supports the teacher well. Regular appraisals are made of children's progress in order to provide a curriculum that meets the needs of all of the children. However, although teaching is overall satisfactory there is less emphasis on children's creative and imaginative development than on other more formal areas of the curriculum. For example, although there is a role-play area where pupils can take their pets to the vet, this is not a rich or stimulating environment that encourages pupils to explore enthusiastically.

19. In the infant class, seven out of eight lessons are good and in the junior classes, half of the teaching is very good or better and a further 40 per cent is good. This high proportion of very good teaching in the junior classes is the cause of the rise in standards evident in English, mathematics and science in the current Years 5 and 6. Pupils of all levels of ability, including the more able and those with special educational needs, make good progress.

20. The teaching of literacy is very good. Lessons of the National Literacy Strategy are well planned and staff have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Work for

example in Year 6 on Shakespeare's 'Romeo and Juliet' challenged the pupils' understanding of language, plot and character at a level above that usually found in primary schools. Because standards in writing were judged by staff to be not high enough, staff have focussed additional time on improving spelling and writing skills. This has been successful in raising standards. Staff also use other subjects, such as history and religious education, very well to teach writing. There are good examples of pupils writing narratives, factual accounts, diary extracts, biographies and reviews.

21. The teaching of numeracy is good overall, which is an improvement since the last inspection when teaching was judged to be satisfactory overall. Teachers make lessons of the National Numeracy Strategy interesting and sometimes games are used to add interest. For example, in the mental and oral starters to lessons pupils challenge one another or the teacher. These starters are always at least satisfactory but sometimes lack the pace that excites pupils to want to succeed. Activities in the main part of the lesson generally have a good level of difficulty for the pupils. In some classes, however, insufficient time is spent recalling how pupils arrive at answers and so opportunities for pupils to learn from each other are not fully used. In most lessons the summary at the end of the lesson consolidates learning and prepares pupils for the next stage.

22. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. Teachers plan appropriate work and support for these pupils, which reflect the targets in their individual education plans. Teaching assistants are effective in their supporting roles. For instance they work well with individual pupils, encouraging them to take part in whole-class sessions, when otherwise their attention would wander. Teachers make a specific point of including them when they ask questions or share their work with the whole class. In most lessons, the assistants work with individual pupils or small groups in the classroom. On occasions they work with them separately when this is appropriate. Staff ensure that the pupils take a full part in the whole curriculum.

23. In science, teaching is good overall and very good in junior classes. Pupils are encouraged to express their own ideas and to raise their own questions. This was seen in the class of Year 3 and 4 pupils. Pupils considering what they could investigate about snails, raised some sensible and probing questions such as. 'Do snails go to sleep?' The teacher encouraged them by helping them to rephrase the question in such a way that could be investigated. Teachers have a good understanding of both science and the way in which pupils learn it. This is resulting in a good quality of learning.

24. Teaching is good in religious education in both infant and junior classes. Teachers plan lessons well and use a good range of resources, including books, pictures and visits to help the pupils to understand more about Christianity and the religions of the world. The quality of learning is good and lessons are interesting and varied. Teachers listen carefully to the pupils' views and encourage the pupils to respect the viewpoint of others. Teachers use religious terms and explain their meaning clearly.

25. Teaching is good in physical education in the infant class and one very good lesson was observed in Year 6. It is good in art and design, history and music in junior classes. Too few lessons were seen in the infant class to make a judgement in these subjects. There was insufficient evidence in ICT, design and technology and geography to make a judgement.

26. Marking of pupils' work has improved since the last inspection and is generally good with clear indications of what needs to be done to improve. Staff have introduced termly targets in literacy and numeracy for individual pupils and these help to give the pupils a

good idea about what they need to focus on. Homework, which parents feel has improved since the last inspection, makes a good contribution to standards. The policy sets out a progressive increase in the amount each year group is given. There is a good variety to the homework set and it includes extended pieces of research and writing in junior classes.

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

27. The curriculum provided by the school is very good and meets the legal requirements. It is relevant to the needs of the pupils, including those with special educational needs. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy have been implemented effectively. Personal, social and health education has been recently introduced into the curriculum although there is not yet a scheme of work for the subject. Provision for drugs awareness education is provided by the Dorset Life Centre, which provides a mobile classroom at the school to provide teaching for the pupils. Sex education is taught within the science curriculum and personal and social education. Religious education is taught and a daily act of worship is provided. The allocation of time to individual subjects is appropriate. In Years 3 to 6 the school day is shorter than in the average primary school. During the inspection, however, time was used well and no instances of time being wasted were noted. The inspection judgement is that this below-average amount of time does not adversely affect the quality of education provided or the standards achieved.

28. The key issues arising from the previous inspection identified the need to improve progression in pupils' learning through the continued development of appropriate policies and schemes of work. While this has been tackled well, recent changes to the curriculum have required further updating of policies. This task has still not been completed for all subjects. In most subjects the school has adopted the nationally recommended planning documents. The school recognises the need to review the implementation of these and to amend them as necessary. As yet, there is no scheme for drama within the English curriculum.

29. The quality and range of learning opportunities for children at the Foundation Stage (that is, in the reception class) are satisfactory. All six areas of learning are covered and there is an appropriate emphasis on the teaching of literacy and numeracy and in developing children's personal and social skills. There is less emphasis on the provision of children's creative and imaginative activities. The children are well prepared for the next stage of education and for working to the National Curriculum programmes of study. In the rest of the school the curriculum is rich and varied.

29. There is a consistent approach to planning throughout the school. This is having a good effect on each individual teacher's planning and is beneficial to pupils' learning. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been successfully implemented and are now having a positive impact on pupils' progress in both areas. The extra time spent on writing and spelling has been particularly successful in raising standards. ICT is used to support learning in other subjects and pupils regularly use the Internet for research. This was seen in science when pupils in Year 6 looked up animal skulls when they were thinking about how animals adapt to their environment. In the reception class, children looked at a CD-ROM of garden animals.

30. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Pupils are given good support so that they achieve the targets in their individual education plans. These plans are

specific to the needs of the pupils and written by class teachers and the co-ordinator for provision. Targets are specific and allow for progress in appropriately small steps. They are regularly reviewed by staff and amended. Teaching assistants take a full part in preparing work for the pupils and reviewing progress afterwards.

31. The school makes very good provision for extra curricular activities which include a wide range of sports clubs, music groups, a craft club and a French club. There are educational visits to a variety of places which enhance classroom experiences, for example a visit to the local church and to a mosque. Year 6 pupils have the opportunity to participate in a course at an outdoor centre and Year 5 pupils take part in a residential visit to an environmental centre. Visitors come into school to talk to the pupils or perform for them, for example, a Shakespearean theatrical group and a visiting musician, who taught the pupils street dancing. These visits and visitors enrich the curriculum and support pupils' personal, social and cultural development.

32. The school is well integrated into the local community. There are very effective links with pre-school organisations and good liaison with the local secondary school. Pupils join the villagers for the annual village fete. Villagers help pupils with their local study of the village and the local camera club has provided the school with old photographs of the village.

33. The school makes good provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The ethos of the school is positive. A strong sense of caring for each other and for the environment prevails throughout the school and is an integral part of daily life.

34. The religious education programme positively supports pupils' spiritual development. Pupils learn about a range of religions, for example Christianity, Islam, Judaism and Hinduism. This helps them to be sensitive and open to values that are different from their own. In religious education lessons there is a strong emphasis on pupils' own feelings and thoughts. Assemblies contribute to pupils' spiritual development. They are conducted in a calm and purposeful manner. There are opportunities for quiet reflection during them and a calm atmosphere is set when music is played as pupils enter. Pupils are encouraged to appreciate nature in their studies of snails, plants and animals. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good.

35. Moral development is promoted well through the caring relationships that exist in the school. All adults in the school are good role models and encourage the pupils to be fair-minded, to share and care, and to consider the effects of their actions on others. Each class sets its own class rules which are clearly displayed for all to see. The playground code was drawn up in collaboration with the pupils. Teachers use praise effectively and the majority of pupils understand the code of conduct expected. Stories in assemblies and lessons support pupils' awareness of what is right and what is wrong, for example the tales from Pilgrim's Progress. Resources are treated with respect and there is an absence of litter in and around the school. Provision for pupils' moral development is good.

36. There are many opportunities across the curriculum for pupils to develop social skills. For example, pupils work collaboratively when working on a class tapestry in Years 4 and 5. In Year 6 pupils take charge of keeping their own athletics records. In Years 3 and 4 pupils plan together how to investigate aspects of the way in which snails live. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility and older pupils organise and enjoy helping the younger ones. Pupils in the Year 3/4 class have made books for younger pupils. Lunchtimes are sociable occasions when pupils sit in mixed-age 'family groups'. Older pupils help younger ones. All pupils in Year 6 have a job to do and before they leave at the end of the year they

train their successors in Year 5. Pupils show a very good understanding of the needs of others in their close involvement with charities. Often the ideas and successful organisation for the fund raising come from the pupils themselves. For example, pupils organised the annual collection for the Blue Peter charity. Last year the school collected for a series of children's charities. Pupils collect paper which is recycled to help Third World countries. Provision for social education is good.

37. Pupils' cultural development is supported well by their work in religious education. Three major faiths are explored in depth and pupils have visited both a church and a mosque. There are good opportunities in assemblies and in English and personal, social and health education to prepare the pupils for living in a racially diverse society. Pupils were recently given the opportunity to produce work for and to visit an African exhibition in which they saw a range of African art. In art lessons they look at the work of artists such as David Hockney and pupils in the Year 3/4 class have used the 'Angel of the North' sculpture by Antony Gormley as an inspiration for their own work. Provision is good.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

38. The school's arrangements to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety are very good. The school environment is one in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued. All statutory checks are undertaken, safety is given priority in lessons and the general welfare of pupils is very well catered for in the daily life of the school. Child protection procedures are very good and all staff are very aware of them. The ethos of the school with regard to pupil welfare is to do as much as the staff can and not limit themselves to basic statutory requirements. An example of this approach results in the termly premises inspection being a full risk assessment according to county requirements and not merely a walk around the school.

39. The school carries out all statutory assessment requirements and reports the results to parents. In addition to statutory assessment, a range of other assessment procedures exist in the school. The most thorough recording of assessment takes place in English where it is good, as it is in physical education and ICT. There are satisfactory arrangements in mathematics and science. The school has focussed on assessment and recording of assessment information since the last inspection when it was a key issue and has made good progress in this area. The school has targeted literacy well to improve standards in writing and is well involved in analysing and using assessment data and test papers. The personal development of pupils is not recorded but is monitored informally at present relying on the pupils being well known by all adults. This is effective because the school is relatively small with a broadly stable staffing situation. Overall, the monitoring of pupils' academic performance and personal development is good.

40. The support and guidance for pupils' educational and personal development are good. The systems in the school to monitor behaviour and promote desirable behaviour are very good, involving all pupils in determining their own rules and being underpinned by a very good behaviour policy which is consistently applied. Class teachers monitor attendance regularly and effectively. The monitoring and support for the academic progress of pupils are developing through the use of agreed targets with pupils and implementing a system to track pupils' progress in English and mathematics. The school is very responsive to the needs of specific individuals or groups of pupils across the range of abilities in the school. Staff make good use of specialist agencies outside school for advice about pupils on the register of pupils with special educational needs.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

41. The effectiveness of the partnership between the school and the parents of its pupils is very good and parents are very pleased with the school's provision and achievements. Parents are most pleased with the leadership and management of the school, the welcome that the school provides parents with and how the school helps the children to become mature and responsible. The inspection evidence fully supports the positive views of the parents.

42. A small minority of parents, however, are dissatisfied with the range of activities available outside of lessons. Inspection evidence does not support the concern about the range of activities available outside of lessons, which is judged to be very good. The school makes full use of the expertise of members of the local community, for instance in music and sports, to run clubs.

43. The quality of information provided for parents is generally good. The school prospectus is informative and comprehensive, the governors' Annual Report to Parents is very attractively presented and provides a very good read for parents. There is regular contact with parents through reading diaries, homework books, monthly school newsletters and curriculum newsletters for each class. Although these newsletters give details of what is going to be taught, they do not indicate specific ways in which parents can support this learning at home. The school has consultation meetings for parents in the autumn and spring and parents receive an annual report on their children's progress. These reports tend to make general statements about attainment. They give no contextual information, setting the pupil against nationally expected levels, other than in mathematics, English and science at the ages of seven and 11. A recent development is the inclusion of a literacy target for each pupil. Reports frequently describe the pupil's attitude to the subject rather than progress. This is particularly true of subjects other than English, mathematics and science. Religious education is reported under the heading of humanities with geography and history but there is not always explicit reporting of each subject. A strength of the report is the opportunity for pupils to write their own comments which they do at length and to a high standard.

44. Parents have raised a significant amount of money for resources in the school. A small number of parents and grandparents help voluntarily in school on a regular basis and more respond to specific initiatives such as developing the wildlife area and maintaining the school facilities. Parental involvement in the life of the school has improved since the time of the previous inspection and parents make a significant impact on the work of the school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

45. Leadership and management of the school are very good. This is an improvement since the last inspection when they were judged to be sound with good features. The headteacher, appointed in the last two years, and chair of governors, who has been in that role since before the last inspection, have a clear vision of how they wish the school to develop and this is shared by all staff. The headteacher is a particularly good role model for both staff and pupils. She is a highly effective leader for the school, teaches very well the Year 6 class part-time, sharing the role with another teacher, and has a high profile around school. She is well respected by staff, pupils and parents alike. Despite the fact that there is no deputy headteacher, there is very good support from the senior teacher, who shares

responsibility for running the school on a daily basis and has many responsibilities for subjects and overall provision. There is effective support from the administrative assistant in all aspects of secretarial support, governor support and general public relations. Teamwork is a strong feature of the school and staff have been delegated sufficient responsibility for their roles so that they make a good contribution to reviewing provision and writing the school improvement plan. The management of provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and all aspects of the Code of Practice for such provision are well addressed. Teaching assistants make a very valuable contribution to the provision and also support groups of pupils in lessons very well.

46. The effectiveness of the governing body is very good. There is very good leadership from the chair and an excellent range of expertise among the governors, who bring to their work a commitment and loyalty that are highly effective in supporting the work of the staff. An example is the annual report that they produce for parents. It is exceptional in its coverage, readability and contribution to the parents' understanding of how the school is doing. Governors take a full part in the training offered by the local education authority and value it highly. They have a very good grasp of the strengths of the school and where it needs to improve. Individual governors, such as those who take on responsibility for monitoring finance, special educational needs, literacy and numeracy, are very effective in their roles. Governors expect to know how the school is developing and to ask the more difficult questions about past performance. They are given clear detailed reports and information about the budget from both the headteacher and administrative assistant.

47. Strategic planning is very good and the school improvement plan clearly sets the scene for decision-making and prioritising action. Planning is founded on wise financial considerations. The school makes very good use of all resourcing available and seeks best value in its service level agreements and purchases. The governors are beginning to look towards the local cluster of schools in such actions and this is intended to make even more efficient use of funding. The balance carried forward to the present financial year was larger than average because of grants that were entered into the budget later than anticipated. The projected carry-forward into next year is within customary limits for a small primary school.

48. Monitoring of the provision is good and has led to improvements in standards, such as in mathematics and pupils' writing. However, so far the focus of the monitoring has been more on English and mathematics than in other subjects. All key issues at the last inspection have been fully addressed. There have been further improvements in provision. These include the effective introduction of National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy and schemes of work that follow nationally recommended guidelines. The school has also introduced other published schemes in subjects such as mathematics, music and religious education. There have been improvements to the grounds and buildings, such as the refurbishment of classrooms in the old building. Levels of resourcing for learning have improved and are now good overall, except in outdoor play equipment for the children in the reception class. Staff are aware of this deficiency and have ordered more. Staffing levels are good and there is a good match of staff expertise to their class responsibilities. There are some significant strengths in the accommodation. For example, there is a spacious hall for assemblies, physical education and dinners. There are many lawns, two hard surfaces for playing, one for infant-aged pupils and one for junior-aged pupils. There is a wildlife area and an outdoor swimming pool, currently being refurbished with the help of parents. However, the position of the library in the Year 4/5 classroom is not ideal and staff and pupils cope with this drawback well. There are further drawbacks when the weather is inclement, because pupils have to move between buildings. For instance, there are no

toilets in the mobile classroom. Plans are well advanced to create a space for an ICT suite from existing accommodation.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

49. Governors and staff should

- (1) pursue further the monitoring of and support for teaching so that the quality in the whole school matches the best evident in junior classes. (Paragraphs 18, 21, 48, 55, 71, 77, 84, 102)

In addition governors should consider for inclusion in their action plan the following points for improvement:

- producing a scheme for drama in English (paragraphs 28, 64)
- making a formal record of the progress that pupils make in their personal development (paragraph 39)
- improving reports to parents so that they cover all subjects and include more comment on the attainment of pupils (Paragraph 43)
- adding further to the resources for outdoor play for the children in the reception class. (Paragraph 48, 55)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	33
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	30

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3	27	52	18	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	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	116
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	4
Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	21
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	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	0

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.1
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
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	11	11	22

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	10	11
	Girls	10	10	10
	Total	20	20	21
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91 (100)	91 (100)	95 (100)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	10	8
	Girls	10	9	4
	Total	19	19	12
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	86 (100)	86 (100)	55 (100)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	85 (87)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2000	10	10	20

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 or above	Total	18	15	20
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	90 (69)	75 (54)	100 (77)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 or above	Total	14	13	19
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	70 (69)	65 (62)	95 (77)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

Because the number of boys and girls in the year group was fewer than 11, the results have been given for totals and percentages only.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	96
Any other minority ethnic group	2

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White		
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 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	5.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.9
Average class size	23

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	106

Financial information

Financial year	2000-01
	£
Total income	254 450
Total expenditure	235 129
Expenditure per pupil	2045
Balance brought forward from previous year	8185
Balance carried forward to next year	27 506

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	116
Number of questionnaires returned	95

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	57	42	1	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	48	49	2	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	49	48	2	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	35	46	17	2	0
The teaching is good.	59	38	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	43	46	11	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	71	24	4	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	66	32	2	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	46	47	6	1	0
The school is well led and managed.	69	28	2	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	49	48	2	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	28	51	17	2	2

Other issues raised by parents

Some parents feel there is too large a gap in what pupils are expected to do in Year 3 compared with Year 2. Inspectors consider the level of difficulty of work in Year 3 is very good and feel it helps towards the progress that pupils make. The quality of learning in Year 2 is nevertheless good and pupils achieve well. The concern has been brought to the attention of senior staff, who have proposed that they will monitor the situation.

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

50. At the time of the inspection there were 17 children in the reception class. Evidence from assessment soon after the children start school indicates that the majority of children enter the school with attainment that is in line with the average for children in Dorset. Although for some children this is above the national average there are a significant number of children in both this year's reception class and in the present Year 1 who started school with attainment that is below average. Children make satisfactory progress overall in the Foundation Stage and good progress in the area of physical development. For most children the standards that they achieve are in line with that expected in all areas of learning. The quality of teaching is satisfactory and in 40 per cent of lessons is good and supports the learning of children of all abilities effectively. A part-time classroom assistant supports the teacher well. Regular appraisals are made of children's progress in order to provide a curriculum that meets the needs of all of the children. Very good links exist with the school's pre-school playgroup. Pupils with special educational need are identified quickly and good support is offered to them. They make good progress.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

51. By the time they reach the end of the reception year, the children achieve the Early Learning Goals in personal, social and emotional development. Pre-school children from the playgroup often visit the reception class. This successfully introduces them to schools. It helps the new children to get used to school and they settle in quickly. They become familiar with the daily routines such as taking a reading book home, hanging their coat on a peg and lining up to go into the hall. The children try hard to manage by themselves when they change for physical education, and the teacher encourages this. Class charts are kept that celebrate which children are able to fasten their shoes by themselves or fasten their buttons without assistance. During class activities, children know where resources are kept and show independence in getting them out and putting them away. Children have very good attitudes to learning. They work beside each other in groups, sharing resources and helping each other. The children establish effective relationships with adults and with each other, listening carefully to instructions and usually responding as requested. The teacher promotes the children's personal and social development successfully and teaching in this area is satisfactory. She uses praise and encouragement carefully to help the children feel secure and to encourage them to persevere with their work.

Communication, language and literacy

52. The majority of children achieve the Early Learning Goals in communication, language and literacy by the time they leave the reception class. Adults regularly engage children in conversation when they are working on an activity, and this helps to develop children's speaking and listening skills and extend their thinking. When addressing the whole class, the teacher uses every opportunity to extend and introduce new vocabulary. For example, in a good part of one lesson, the teacher read a story about a tree, the teacher encouraged the children to say whether the minibeasts in the tree were 'beside' or 'underneath' other minibeasts. Pupils further develop their speaking and listening skills when they take their pets to the vet in the role-play area. Writing takes place in the literacy lessons and by the end of the reception year most children can, without support, use common words to write part of a story. They make sensible guesses at spelling uncommon

words. For instance they try 'gat' for 'goat'. Opportunities to practise writing in play situations are limited and children were not observed writing in the role-play area or during free activity time. Most children are making good progress in developing the early skills of reading and some are becoming competent readers. Children take books home to share with their parents and when they are in the classroom they show an obvious enjoyment of books and handle them with care. Teaching in this area of learning is satisfactory.

Mathematical Development

53. By the time they reach the end of the reception year most children have attained the Early Learning Goals and some have exceeded them. Children are confident with numbers up to 10 and most children are able to count up to 20. They can say which number is one less than a number up to 20. They use their numeracy skills to add or subtract simple sums using pennies. They understand concepts such as 'taller than', 'shorter than' and 'one more'. They measure using centimetre cubes. They sort simple 3-dimensional shapes and test to see which ones roll. The most able children are able to say and write the days of the week. Teaching of mathematics is overall satisfactory and in the lesson observed was good.

Knowledge and Understanding of the World

54. The majority of children achieve the Early Learning Goals in this area before they leave the reception class. When using the computer, children have good levels of confidence. They work well individually and in pairs, for instance when they look at the pictures of garden creatures on a CD-ROM. They have good 'mouse' control and click on different icons with accuracy. They enjoy their topic on minibeasts and particularly enjoy observing the ants in the formicarium or the worms in the wormery. They have looked at caterpillars and know that they grow into butterflies. They have looked at their own homes as well as those of animals. They have compared the way in which they live to life in Brazil. Good use is made of opportunities as they arise. For example, when the fire alarm went off accidentally, the teacher took advantage of this to allow the children to look at the fire engine. The children regularly listen to stories from the Bible and have visited the local church. Opportunities for sand and water play support their growing understanding of materials and their properties. Teaching is satisfactory.

Physical Development

55. Children make good progress in this area of learning and most exceed the Early Learning Goals by the end of the reception class. It was only possible to observe a short section of a lesson in the hall and in it, the children showed increasing control and co-ordination in their movements, particularly when running and twisting their bodies. They showed an increasing awareness of space and a consideration for others when they were moving around the hall. They responded to instructions from the teacher to stop and start. A very positive feature of their physical development is how hard they try to carry out tasks. Children of all abilities handle tools and materials well when engaged in creative or construction activities. They show confidence in handling materials and making things with them, even when the materials are difficult to handle, such as jigsaws. Although they do not have their own secure outside play area, there is a suitable space outside the classroom where they are able to play when supervised. They sometimes borrow large-wheeled toys from the playgroup because at present they have no such toys of their own. This was the situation at the time of the last inspection. Although they no longer have the use of a

climbing frame, they use the apparatus in the hall for climbing. Provision is good and teaching is at least satisfactory

Creative Development

56. By the end of the reception year, the majority of children achieve the Early Learning Goals. Throughout the Foundation Stage they are given opportunities to use paints, collage materials, and modelling materials such as dough and clay. The use of these materials is often linked to other areas of learning; for example, during their topic on minibeasts they made clay models of snails and papier mache models of ladybirds. Although paint is available for pupils to use, it is not displayed in an inviting way and pupils are inhibited from using it freely. This was the situation identified at the time of the last inspection. Children listen attentively to the sounds of different percussion instruments and are able to say which play high notes and which play low notes. They have frequent opportunities to play with construction kits and use the large soft blocks outside to make a house for themselves. Although teaching is overall satisfactory there is less emphasis on children's creative and imaginative development than on other more formal areas of the curriculum. For example, although there is a role-play area where pupils can take their pets to the vet, this is not a rich or stimulating environment that encourages pupils to explore enthusiastically.

ENGLISH

57. Standards of attainment are well above the national average by the end of Year 6 and this is confirmed by results in the 2000 national tests for the age group as well as standards in the current Year 6. The proportion of pupils achieving levels above expectations is similarly above average in that year group. Standards have risen significantly since the last inspection and continue to rise; and the school's results compare well with schools where there is a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. The school is likely to exceed its target for 79 per cent of pupils to achieve the expected level or better in this summer's national tests.

58. Standards of reading achieved by pupils by the age of seven were above the national average from 1997 to 1999. In the 2000 national tests, standards were in line with the national average and well below those in similar schools. In the current Year 2, standards are better than last year's and more pupils are achieving at a level above expectations. Standards in writing were above the national average from 1997 to 1999 but in 2000 were well below the national average as well as the average achieved by similar schools. Standards in the current Year 2 are much improved, as a result of an increased focus on writing and on standards of spelling. Thirty per cent of pupils are achieving at a level above the level expected of pupils aged seven and none is below expectations.

59. These improvements are the result of the very effective use of the National Literacy Strategy and the quality of teaching, which is never less than good, and often very good in junior classes. Staff have raised the standard of writing throughout the school by making it a clear focus for improvement. In addition, they use other subjects very well to teach reading and writing. These include history and religious education in particular, but also geography, design and technology and science.

60. Skills of speaking and listening are very good throughout the school. The great majority of pupils are articulate and confident to speak in class. They volunteer answers in whole-class sessions and use their good general knowledge to help them answer questions. Pupils in Year 2 read aloud confidently. When they talk about their recent visit to

the village church, they describe in full sentences some of the things they saw and what they signify. As they mature, pupils are confident to take a full part in discussions and debates. This was evident in two lessons in the Year 4/5 class, one in which the pupils discussed the benefits of an integrated transport system for Bradford Abbas and another in which they considered evidence about village life from census forms, maps and documents. The small minority of pupils with special educational needs are less confident but staff encourage them well to give their views.

61. Pupils read well. By the age of seven, pupils read accurately, using a range of techniques, including a good knowledge of letter sounds, to help them. They enjoy reading and refer to favourite stories. They like humorous stories and poems and pupils of all ability use the school library every week to choose books to read at home. When asked, they can describe what they like about characters and events in the stories and they predict what might happen next sensibly. Pupils continue to make good progress through juniors and by the age of 11, pupils of all levels of ability read for pleasure and can cite their favourite children's authors. Authors such as Jacqueline Wilson, J.K. Rowling and Roald Dahl feature among the most popular. An able pupil enjoys reading autobiographies about famous sports people. Another enjoys biographies and has books at home on famous figures in the past, such as Helen Keller. Poetry is popular and all pupils have good skills of research to help them find out information from books, the Internet and CD ROMs.

62. Skills of writing develop well. This has been a focus for improvement this year and the results are evident in the quality of pupils' writing as they go through school. By the age of seven, most pupils are beginning to use a neatly joined handwriting script and their spelling has developed well. Less able pupils write in sentences but are not yet consistently using correct punctuation marks. Average and more able pupils re-write stories, such as 'The Hare and The Tortoise', with good expression. During the junior years, the pupils draft and re-draft their work to produce pieces of high quality. Presentation is often excellent and shows a real pride in achievement. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. They are well supported by teachers and assistants and targets for literacy in their individual education plans are specific and progressive. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 write as if they are chimney sweeps in Victorian England. They write about the taste of soot in their mouths, their tiredness and how they have been abandoned by their families. In religious education, they write about special people and objects in their lives and all show sensitivity and warmth. One writes about her grandmother, 'I can still remember the smell of the grapes on her fingers.' By the age of 11, pupils write very well for a variety of purposes, such as letter writing, narratives, persuasive writing, reviews, biographies (of members of their family) and poetry. In a poem, entitled 'The Storm', one more able pupil in Year 6 wrote, 'The rain beats furiously against the windows like a shotgun.' Pupils have good opportunities to write play scripts in English and accounts and diary extracts in science, geography, history and religious education. Pupils in Year 6 write projects as homework assignments. They write biographies, which are well researched and of a good length on Mother Theresa, Martin Luther King and Ghandi.

63. The quality of teaching is very good. Teaching is good in the infant class and half of lessons in junior classes are very good. Teaching is never less than good. There are many strengths to the teaching. Staff have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and the level of difficulty of the work set, is good. For instance, pupils in Years 3 and 4 are taught about non-literal language, similes and onomatopoeia. Pupils in Year 6 study Shakespeare and read extracts from Romeo and Juliet. They experience workshops organised by a visiting theatre group, watch the play performed outdoors and take part in a modernised version, themselves. Lessons have a very good pace and as a result, pupils learn a lot and produce a good amount of written work. Relationships between staff and pupils are very

good and as a result pupils are interested and motivated to achieve well. Staff spend extra lessons emphasising how to write longer pieces of work and focus time on developing skills of spelling. These lessons have been effective in raising standards. Marking of pupils' work is generally good with clear indications of what needs to be done to improve. Because staff have introduced termly targets in literacy for individual pupils, the pupils themselves have a good idea about what they need to focus on. Homework makes a good contribution to standards. There is a good variety to the homework set and it includes extended pieces of research and writing in junior classes.

64. The subject is managed well by the co-ordinator and the school has been particularly effective in monitoring the quality of pupils' work and acting on findings. This has led to improving standards. Though there are opportunities for pupils to improvise and dramatise in lessons, there is no progressive scheme of work in drama. Assessment procedures are comprehensive and thorough. Staff and pupils know what they need to do to improve. Good use is made of the library, though being in the Year 4/5 classroom is not ideal for access and convenience. Levels of resourcing are good and staff make good use of subjects such as history, ICT and religious education to take the pupils' learning further. Progress in developing provision and raising standards has been good since the last inspection.

MATHEMATICS

65. In the national tests for 11-year-olds in 2000, attainment at the expected level or above was close to the national average. For Level 5 or above, it was above the national average. Overall the school's performance in mathematics when compared nationally was in line with the national average. In comparison to similar schools the performance was below average. Since the last inspection standards have risen steadily from being below the national average in 1997. The inspection judgement is that standards for pupils at the end of Year 6 are continuing to rise significantly and that this year, are above average. The school is likely to exceed its target for 75 per cent of pupils to achieve the expected level or better in this summer's national tests. This is the result of the good focus that staff have put on improving mathematics in the current school improvement plan.

66. In the national tests for seven year olds in 2000, attainment at both the expected Level 2 and at Level 3 was above the national average. Overall, however, standards were only in line with the national average because most pupils attaining Level 2 only just attained that level and few of those pupils attained close to Level 3. When these results are compared to those of similar schools, the school's performance was below average. Inspection evidence suggests that standards are rising and that pupils presently at the end of Year 2 are achieving above expectations, although a small proportion are attaining below. This is an improvement on attainment at the time of the last inspection.

67. Pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2. Able pupils achieve well and at the end of Year 2 work confidently with 2-digit numbers and are able to deduct 1-digit numbers from these in their heads. They understand the concept of multiplication and know the two and three times tables. Average pupils are not attaining significantly lower than able pupils because there is a drive in teaching throughout the school to raise standards by pulling the average and less able up a level. The less able pupils in the year make good progress. Work is set for them that challenges but encourages. They are able to work at a similar level to other pupils but need more time to work through activities. Pupils with special educational needs in Years 1 and 2 are well supported by adult help and positive encouragement and make good progress. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 receive a wide curriculum. Pupils in both years use different criteria to sort using Venn diagrams and

Carroll diagrams. Year 2 pupils interpret simple graphs. They have experience of measuring in a variety of ways and can estimate the length of objects up to a metre. Year 1 pupils tell the time and can accurately set the clock on the hour and half past. Year 2 pupils recite the months of the year and know what they like about the different months. Pupils in both years are familiar with a range of two-dimensional shapes and can name them. Older pupils look more carefully at the properties of the shapes and can recognise a right angle.

68. Pupils in the older classes make good progress and in lessons where teaching is very good they make very good progress. As in the younger classes the average pupils are pushed to achieve higher and there is often no significant difference between the work the average and above average pupils attempt. More able pupils are, however, challenged and are given extension activities to do, which, although within the same subject area, nevertheless challenge their thinking. An example of this was seen in the class of pupils in Years 3 and 4. Pupils in this class were given the task of creating a journey and describing it with compass instructions. Pupils of all abilities set themselves a very challenging route. In this class and in the other class, which has pupils of different year groups, tasks are sometimes set that are similar but always have an appropriate extension for the pupils that have been in school longer. For example, in the mixed Year 4/5 class, pupils from both years worked at turning in accordance with compass directions. The older pupils were encouraged to calculate their turn in degrees and not simply right angles. In a Year 6 class, pupils working on translations were able to recognise the difference between translations, reflections and rotations but more able pupils were able to combine two translations to define a single translation. Pupils in the older classes make good progress in all aspects of the work. Less able pupils at the end of Year 6 are generally working at the level expected for their age. They add and subtract decimal numbers to two places whilst more able pupils order a mixed set of numbers to three decimal places. Average ability pupils solve problems by extracting and interpreting information presented in tables, graphs and charts, whilst more able pupils are also able to solve problems involving ratio and proportion. In this class pupils with special educational needs are well supported and sometimes have additional adult help.

69. Throughout the school, pupils' attitudes to mathematics are always at least good and in half the lessons seen were very good. This is a response to good teaching, which interests and motivates pupils and helps them attain higher standards.

70. Since the previous inspection and the arrival of the present headteacher, a co-ordinator has been appointed to manage the subject. She has received special training in implementing and teaching the National Numeracy Strategy and she has since trained and supported her colleagues well. The focus on numeracy resulting from these two changes has improved the teaching and has been a significant factor in raising standards.

71. Teaching is good overall, which is an improvement since the last inspection when teaching was judged to be satisfactory overall. In lessons, pupils of all abilities and ages were challenged well even though sometimes they were apparently tackling similar work. The difference was in the level of complication of the work or in the extension activity presented to the pupils when they had completed the initial task. However, one lesson in the infant aged class was only satisfactory and compared to other lessons, the level of challenge in some parts of it was too low. Pupils had to complete this task before they could move on to more challenging work. Teachers make lessons interesting and sometimes games are used to add interest. For example, in the mental and oral starters to lessons, pupils challenge one another or the teacher. This was seen in a Year 1/2 lesson when pupils were challenged to find the teacher's errors. In another lesson in the same class, pupils played games that involved ordering the days of the week. These mental and

oral starters are always at least satisfactory but sometimes lack the pace that excites pupils to want to succeed. In some classes insufficient time is spent recalling how pupils arrive at answers and so opportunities for pupils to learn from each other are not fully used. In most lessons the summary at the end of the lesson consolidates learning and prepares pupils for the next stage. In a very good lesson in Year 6 the teacher made the lesson relevant to the pupils by bringing in every day examples of patterns. The task was challenging but less able pupils were well supported to achieve well. The pupils became engrossed in the task and this resulted in a high level of learning taking place.

72. Resources for the subject are good and generally used well. The co-ordinator is interested and works hard to raise standards. Assessment of pupils' progress, whilst at present satisfactory, does not always give the day-to-day information that would enable teachers to plan work that meets individual needs even more effectively. The co-ordinator is aware of this and is presently trialling a system that she hopes will be both manageable and informative.

SCIENCE

73. In the national tests for 11-year-olds in 2000 all pupils attained at least the expected Level 4. This is a very high percentage both when compared to the national average and when compared to similar schools. However, the number of pupils attaining above this level was below both the national average and that of similar schools. Overall, the school's performance when compared nationally was in line with the national average, although in comparison to similar schools the performance was below average. Since the last inspection standards at the end of Year 6 have risen steeply from being well below the national average in 1997. The inspection judgement is that standards for pupils at the end of Year 6 are continuing to rise and that this year, are above average.

74. The results of the teacher assessment of pupils aged seven in 2000 showed that the number of pupils attaining the expected Level 2 was very low when compared both to the national average and to the attainment of pupils in similar schools. The percentage of pupils reaching the higher level was close to the national average and to that of similar schools. The inspection findings are that standards at the end of Year 2 are better than last year and are above the national average. The group of pupils in 2000 had a more than usual number of less able pupils but this is not reflected as significantly in the attainment for other subjects. The pupils presently at the end of Year 3 are now judged to be attaining in line with the expectations for their age. This judgement reflects an improvement since the last inspection when standards were judged to be in line with expectations at age seven.

75. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make good progress as a result of good teaching and a well-organised curriculum. They learn about a range of scientific topics such as plants and animals, materials and physical processes. They know what a plant needs to grow and that a flowering plant produces seeds. They know that some materials can be changed by stretching and twisting and that others change when heated. They apply this understanding to baking cakes. They learn how to enquire scientifically when they make careful observations of, for example, the seeds inside fruits, or when they collect information about their hair colour and present this in a graph. The curriculum is organised over a two-year cycle. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and enjoy learning about the same things as other pupils. They make particularly good progress in learning how to find out about science and are able to describe the simple features of the plants they observe.

76. Pupils in the older classes also make good progress. In the aspect of life processes and living things they describe the main functions of the parts of animals and plants and know how these are essential to the organism. They have a good understanding of the ways in which animals have adapted to live in different environments. In studying materials, they find the best conditions for the evaporation of water. In physical processes they talk about upthrust as a force enabling objects to float. They attain highly in the aspect of scientific enquiry. Year 5 pupils were observed working at a very high level when they discussed how to set up scientific tests to find out which is the best soil for growing plants. They use their scientific knowledge to make observations such as, 'dark soil will absorb heat more effectively than lighter soil and will therefore be warmer.' In order to keep a test fair they suggest that the original soil would have to be washed off the roots of the plants used in the test, before planting them in the next soil to be tested.

77. Since the last inspection two co-ordinators have been appointed to manage the subject. Although both are enthusiastic they are not yet fully effective because the opportunities to monitor the teaching or the planning of the subject have not yet been fully developed. The nationally recommended scheme for science has been adopted and this is contributing to a curriculum that is well organised and which has improved the teaching of skills progressively. This is helping to raise standards.

78. The teaching of science and the pupils' attitudes to learning science are both very good. These are other reasons for the rise in standards. One excellent Year 6 lesson was seen. In this lesson the teacher started from the understanding the pupils already had. Activities were planned to consolidate understanding through applying it and generalising over a range of situations. Pupils found the activity, which involved testing simulations of bird's beaks for effectiveness, very challenging, yet enjoyed it. This resulted in an excellent level of learning. In other lessons observed, pupils were encouraged to express their own ideas and to raise their own questions. This was seen in the class of Years 3/4 pupils when they were considering what they could investigate about snails. They raised some interesting questions such as, 'Do snails go to sleep?' The teacher encouraged them by helping them to rephrase the question in such a way that could be investigated. Teachers have a good understanding of both science and the way in which pupils learn it. This results in a good quality of learning.

79. The resources for the subject are good and are used well. A digital microscope is used to observe things closely. Although the school has data logging resources they are new to the school and their use is not yet well established.

ART AND DESIGN

80. The attainment of pupils at seven and 11 is above that found in most schools and progress is good. This is better than the previous inspection when standards were only at times above national expectations. Only two lessons were seen and judgements are made on the scrutiny of teachers' planning and the work of pupils.

81. By the age of 11, pupils have used a range of resources such as clay to make containers for 'a wish', pastels for observational paintings, and textiles. Pupils look at the work of well-known artists and use their work as a basis for developing their own skills. This was seen in a lesson for the pupils in the Year 3/4 class. Pupils looked at the work of a number of artists including the 'Angel of the North' by Antony Gormley, before using papier

make to design and make their own model of a sculpture for a site in the school. Pupils understand that sculpture can be symbolic and as a result the sculpture of a man sprinting, deliberately had no arms. This was to emphasise the movement of the legs. Pupils in the Year 4/5 class looked at various tapestries and textile pictures including pictures of the Bayeux Tapestry before making a three-dimensional textile freeze of the story of 'The Three Billy Goats Gruff'. Many pupils are competent in applying pencil and pastel, ink and brush to their work. Year 6 pupils, in their observational sketches of twigs show a careful eye for detail.

82. By the age of seven, pupils show well-developed skills in using a good range of media, tools and techniques in their drawings, paintings and collage. They are aware of the styles of a range of famous artists. They look at the similarities and differences between portraits produced by Renaissance artists and Picasso and then produce their own portraits in their own style or use collage materials to produce a portrait. They learn to observe carefully when observing natural objects prior to drawing them and producing a class collage. In all classes pupils with special educational needs make the same good progress as their peers.

83. Because no lessons were seen in Years 1 and 2 it is not possible to make a judgement on teaching in these years. In the older classes teaching is good and in one lesson was very good. The school has maintained the quality of teaching, which was observed at the previous inspection. Learning for all pupils is good. The very good teaching was observed in the Year 3/4 class. Here, the pupils had looked at a wide range of photographs of sculptures. The inspiration from these is clearly seen in the imaginative work the pupils produced and the pride and interest pupils showed in it. In both lessons the enthusiasm and the encouragement of the teachers resulted in the pupils giving their very best efforts. The teachers' secure understanding helped them to give guidance to the pupils so that they produced work of a very high quality. It is apparent when looking at the work pupils have produced throughout the school that they are always encouraged to take pride in their efforts and to complete high-quality work. Teachers help them to do this by providing good quality materials that are suitable for the task. Pupils' attitudes towards art are very good.

84. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic. Although she supports other teachers in their planning, she does not yet monitor formally the teaching or the work the pupils produce. The school has adopted the nationally approved scheme of work and this is helping to support teachers in planning lessons that build on previous learning. Art makes a good contribution to the spiritual and cultural development of pupils.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

85. No lessons were observed during the inspection and so judgements are made on the scrutiny of the work of pupils, talking to teachers and looking at teachers' planning. It is apparent from the work observed that pupils at both seven and 11 are attaining standards that are above expectations. This is an improvement since the last inspection when standards were judged to be generally falling between satisfactory and below average.

86. By the time they are seven, pupils have had experience of working with construction kits to design and make a variety of items, such as a playground. They use card to make well-produced houses and textiles to make finger puppets. The work they produce is of a high standard and reflects the pride they take in it.

87. By the time pupils reach the end of Year 6 they have continued to make good progress. Before they begin to design, pupils look at other examples of finished products

and use these to think about the best methods of producing their own work. This was seen in a Years 3/4 lesson, when pupils examined a range of different packaging before designing their own package to hold three small chocolate eggs. The completed work was of a very high standard. The designs were imaginative and suitable for their purpose. They were carefully finished. The same class produced work of an equally high quality when they designed and made books with moving parts. They were carefully finished and laminated before they were given to younger pupils to read. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 have used wood to make toys that move with the use of cams. In Year 6 pupils made motorised vehicles. Again, these were carefully designed and made. The evaluations made afterwards were thoughtful and related to real issues that could improve the performance. The most common difficulty identified by the pupils was in getting the tension of the elastic band correct.

88. The strength of the subject is in the very high quality of the work produced. No judgement can be made on teaching because none was observed during the inspection. However, it is apparent from the completed work that pupils are taught the correct techniques and are encouraged to produce high quality work by being allowed to use high quality resources. The school has adopted the nationally approved scheme of work which is helping to ensure that teachers plan work which covers all aspects of the subject and uses skills that build on previous learning.

GEOGRAPHY and HISTORY

89. No lessons were observed in geography, as the focus of work was history in all classes in the half term during which the inspection was held. Evidence from lessons and a scrutiny of pupils' work indicates that good standards have been maintained in history since the last inspection. It was not possible to judge attainment in geography accurately. However, from the work covered during previous terms, it is evident that pupils' understanding of the subject develops well and, from teachers' plans, a good range of topics is covered.

90. In geography, infant-aged pupils compare life in their own locality with life on a Scottish island. In lower juniors, the pupils find out more about settlements locally. Linking work in history on place names with this work, they find out how and why villages developed. They draw their own maps using simple symbols and keys. Older juniors find out about life in Ghana and compare village life there with this country. In Year 5, pupils undertake a project, which they complete at home on countries of their choice. The standard of their work is high. They make good use of many different sources of information including reference books, travel brochures, the Internet and CD-ROMs.

91. Pupils' skills of using and analysing information from primary and secondary sources in history develop well. Lower juniors learn about Victorian times. They know about the life that Princess Victoria led, that she had a governess and was brought each evening to spend some time with her parents. They compare this with the life of children living in poverty, some as chimney sweeps, others as mineworkers. They show sensitivity and shock at the conditions that children had to endure, as they learn about the work of the Earl of Shaftesbury and read extracts from reports written in the 1840s. Older pupils use maps, newspaper cuttings, logbooks and old photographs of Bradford Abbas and the wider locality well, to find out about life in Victorian and Edwardian times. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 learn about employment in the area from census forms completed 150 years ago. They see that farming was central to life at that time and that the majority of working adults were

labourers rather than skilled trades people. One pupil pursued her own line of enquiry in the school logbooks by recording how often the school has been inspected since 1901. While researching local history, pupils in Year 6 note that attendance at school was recorded by the headteacher as low during the time of potato picking. They conclude that making a living from farming was viewed as more important than education at that time. Other topics in junior classes cover Invaders and Settlers and the Tudors. The pupils compare well what it meant to be the Queen of England in Elizabethan and modern times. They write at good length about the life of Sir Francis Drake. They create their own 'ancient' map of the route of the Armada fleet. The presentation of work is consistently good and often very good.

92. The quality of teaching in history is good. Staff are confident to teach the subject and use resources very effectively. This includes written, video and computer resources, as well as the locality, visits further afield and visiting specialists to school. As a result, the quality of learning is similarly good. Pupils become enthusiastic about the subject and take the trouble to find out more in their own time. Staff use homework assignments well to take the work further in both geography and history. Skills of ICT are also developed well as pupils import pictures into text they write and produce polished pieces of work for display. Pupils use a digital camera to compare parts of the village with photographs from the past. Skills of literacy and numeracy are promoted very well, for example, when pupils research their work and analyse graphs and tables of information.

93. Both subjects are well managed by the co-ordinator. Planning is good and incorporates a two-year cycle of topics, based mainly on nationally recommended guidelines. The co-ordinator monitors standards by sampling pupils' work and this helps to maintain quality and consistency across the school. Both subjects have been reviewed prior to the development of the school improvement plan and needs assessed. The quality of provision is good overall and junior-aged pupils enjoy a rich variety of experiences in history in particular. The subjects make a good contribution to the pupils' cultural development.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

94. Standards are in line with expectations at both seven and 11. This is an improvement on the findings of the last inspection when standards were judged to be satisfactory at seven but below national expectations at 11. No lessons were observed during the inspection and judgements are made on observations of pupils' work, pupils working on ICT in other subjects and from talking to pupils.

95. By the age of seven pupils use the computer keyboard with confidence and can move the cursor accurately on the screen. In the Reception class they have used a paint program to produce pictures of butterflies. By the time they begin work in Year 1 they are already confident to use the screen icons to get information from a CD-ROM. In the Years 1/2 class pupils use the computer as a tool for research. They are able to access approved Internet sites with confidence and use them to get information on, for example, plants. They use computers to record weather conditions on charts.

96. By the end of Year 6 pupils are confident in many areas of ICT. They have attained the expected standards in most aspects of the subject and in some have exceeded them. They use a word processing program, confidently changing the font or colour of the text. They use clip art from a CD-ROM to add interest to their work and can add music taken from the Internet. Pupils are generally confident in using the Internet and use it regularly to research aspects of other subjects. This was evident in projects that pupils in Years 5 and 6

completed at home. Pupils in the book club independently order books through the Internet. To support their work in physical education pupils in Year 6 use spreadsheets to record their achievements in the long jump. They use data handling programs to record their work in science or in mathematics. When learning about translations in mathematics pupils were able to translate shapes on the screen.

97. Pupils interviewed did not have computers at home yet still had a high level of confidence. Classes each have their own e-mail addresses but as yet few Year 6 pupils are confident using e-mail. Although the school has some data logging resources, their use is not well established yet and few pupils are confident to use these. A strength of the subject is the way it is used to support learning in other subjects. Pupils with special educational needs are also very confident and make the same satisfactory progress that other pupils make.

98. Because no lessons were observed it is not possible to make a judgement on teaching. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are, however, good and pupils observed working together cooperated well and shared responsibilities and ideas.

99. Since the last inspection a co-ordinator has been appointed who has been instrumental in introducing a scheme of work and a system of assessment. Pupils keep their own progress records. They are encouraged by this, because they know what they can do and what they still need to do. The provision of computers in the school is good and will be very good when the new suite is installed soon. The school is well resourced and uses its resources well. During the inspection two classes were observed using the digital microscope in science, an activity which highly motivated pupils and added further interest to their science lesson.

MUSIC

100. Good standards have been maintained since the last inspection and music continues to be a strength of the school. By the age of 11, pupils' attainment is above what is expected of pupils at that age and pupils who take up an instrument, such as recorder, violin, keyboards and trumpet often achieve well above expectations.

101. Pupils in Year 6 understand various elements of music and give examples when they listen to pieces. For example, they recognise changes in tempo and dynamics. They compare the pitch of various sections of choral pieces and some talk knowledgeably about the timbre associated with percussion, brass and stringed instruments. They note how the timbre affects the mood of the piece and this was especially evident as they listened to music for religious occasions, which were representative of a variety of world cultures. They create rhythmic patterns well using percussion and they can improvise a melody to accompany lyrics, using pitched instruments. They sing tunefully and can sing in a two-part round. Pupils who are taught individual instruments make good and often very good progress, achieving up to Grade 2 in examinations. They become confident to perform in front of an audience. Recorder players accompany the singing during collective worship and individual musicians play as a part of assemblies and as pupils leave the hall. For instance, two violinists played a duet during one assembly observed. They were keen and confident to play without an adult conducting, even though they had only recently begun to work on the piece. They performed very well and pupils applauded them enthusiastically.

102. Lessons were observed in junior classes and the quality of teaching ranged from very good to satisfactory. It was good overall. It was not possible to make a judgement about teaching in the infant class as no lesson was seen. Staff are using two published schemes of work and make good use of them to plan effective lessons. They manage the pupils very well and by their own enthusiasm foster the same in their pupils. In the very good lesson, the pace of learning was very good and the teacher actively involved the pupils very well. In the satisfactory lesson, the pace of learning was slower and as a result some opportunities were missed to extend the pupils' skills. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress as a result of the individual attention they are often given by the teacher and assistant. For instance in one lesson, the teacher worked specifically with one pupil to help her clap rhythmic patterns and to 'feel' the pulse of the music.

103. The subject is well managed by the co-ordinator and work in the subject reflects the school's aim to provide the pupils with as many opportunities as possible to widen their skills and interest. Parents and helpers from the community contribute well to the provision, for instance to teach the recorder. Since the last inspection, further developments have been made to boost the skills of staff. For example, the co-ordinator has introduced a new scheme of work in junior classes to help the specialist teachers on the staff and this is proving very effective. Music features strongly in the life of the school. There are various cultural events that the pupils enjoy both in school and locally with other schools and the subject makes a very good contribution to the pupils' spiritual and cultural development.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

104. Attainment is above that normally expected of pupils aged seven and 11. This is the same as the findings of the last inspection. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in developing their skills. During the inspection, pupils were only observed in one athletics lesson, one games lesson and one dance lesson. The full range of activities is undertaken over the year and Year 6 pupils take part in adventurous activities during their residential visit. The school has its own outdoor swimming pool, which is used in the second half of the summer term each year. All pupils use the pool and by the time
pupils
are in Year 5 all can swim at least 10 metres.

105. Pupils aged seven are able to receive and pass a large ball with accuracy, controlling it with their feet. Because they have good control of their bodies and can, for example, stand on one foot, they are able to focus on developing their skills even further. In dancing, they attain a high standard. They are able to copy, remember and repeat complicated
country
dance routines and dance with confidence.

106. By the time pupils reach the end of Year 6, they have become competitive and keen to improve their performance. In an athletics lesson, pupils worked at modifying and refining their skills. They understand the need to warm up before and cool down after exercise
and
can take control of this aspect of the lesson independently.

107. The quality of teaching is good and one very good lesson was observed. Teachers have a good level of expertise and have high expectations of the pupils. They give very clear instructions, leaving pupils in no doubt as to what is required of them. In the very good athletics lesson the teacher was able to coach the pupils effectively by constantly challenging them and using her own expertise to advise and support them. During

activities, pupils clearly understand that not being entirely successful in completing an activity is not a sign of failure but presents an opportunity for having another go. In the lessons observed the teachers were supported well by assistants who also had a good level of expertise.

108. Pupils clearly enjoy taking part in physical activities and their consistently positive approach and high standard of behaviour enable them to work hard and enthusiastically in all aspects. They follow safety rules well, clearly understanding the need to warm up before, and cool down after, exercise. They co-operate sensibly with one another, in pairs and small groups and use their initiative and imagination creatively. In the Year 6 lesson, pupils took responsibility for organising activities and recording their results. These results were then recorded on the computer.

109. The co-ordinator is full of enthusiasm for the subject and takes every opportunity to broaden the opportunities available to pupils. The school has been successful in a number of sporting areas such as netball and football. The school represented North Dorset at the Millennium Youth games in the South West. Pupils take part in the local swimming gala every year. The wide range of extra-curricular opportunities is of high quality and makes a significant contribution to the subject. The school is supported in the running of these activities by parents and members of the local community. Physical education provides a powerful source of support for the overall ethos of the school.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

110. Standards of attainment have been maintained since the last inspection. Pupils achieve at least the standard expected by the locally agreed syllabus for religious education and some achieve above that. Two lessons were observed, one in the infant class and one in a junior class. Evidence has also been taken from sampling pupils' work and reviewing teachers' planning.

111. Having recently visited the village church, pupils in Years 1 and 2 recall well the features that they saw there, such as the font, a sundial, memorials, gravestones, gargoyles and carvings. They know that the font is used for christening and that a particular carving over the porch was a sign of blessing. They know why the memorial plaques contain lists of names. Further work, that covers stories about the life of Jesus and well-known events from the Old Testament of the Bible, show that the pupils take a pride in what they write and draw. Older pupils in the class write with a good level of detail about the early life of Moses in the form of a book, which they present neatly.

112. In Years 3 and 4, the pupils learn more about Christianity and the life of Jesus. From the parables, they know about the Christian view of forgiveness. They understand the concept of what is special, by thinking about special things and events in their own lives, as well as special occasions, books and symbols in Christianity and Islam. They visit a mosque and explore the significance of prayer and the ritual of washing in the life of Muslims. They gain a good understanding because of the quality of first-hand experiences they have. In Years 5 and 6, the pupils learn more about Judaism and are introduced to the principles of Hinduism. They research Hindu gods and write at good length about the significance of some of them in the lives of their followers. Older pupils reflect on life after death, comparing the views of Christians and Hindus. They show good awareness of the different points of view and also outline their own beliefs and those of their classmates. All pupils are

encouraged to think about the significance of religious belief and they all make good progress.

113. The quality of teaching is good and one very good lesson was observed in the Year 3/4 class. Teachers plan lessons well and use a good range of resources, including books, pictures and visits to help the pupils to understand more about the religions of the world. The quality of learning is good and lessons are interesting and varied. Skills of literacy are developed particularly well in this subject. The pupils read and research topics, they discuss issues sensibly and write at good length. Teachers listen carefully to the pupils' views and encourage the pupils to respect the viewpoint of others. Teachers use religious terms and explain their meaning clearly. For instance, to provide the pupils with an understanding of religious metaphor, the teacher set the pupils to work thinking of non-literal language that is used in everyday language to explain emotions and feelings.

114. Subject management is satisfactory and teachers' planning reflects ideas not only from the locally agreed syllabus, which has recently been revised, but also from nationally recommended guidelines. The scheme of work is currently under review and it is intended to modify it in the light of teachers' experiences. The school is adding to available resources through loans from the library service and by buying poster packs, CD-ROMs and reference books. The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, social and moral and cultural development.