

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **MILBORNE ST ANDREW FIRST SCHOOL**

Milborne St Andrew, Blandford

LEA area: Dorset

Unique reference number: 113672

Headteacher: Mr T Leech

Reporting inspector: Mr Graham R Sims

RgI's OIN: 28899

Dates of inspection: 19<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2000 Inspection number: 190870

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First School
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 – 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Milborne St Andrew First School Chapel Street Milborne St Andrew BLANDFORD Dorset
Postcode:	DT11 0JP
Telephone number:	01258 837362
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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs S Dunkley

Date of previous inspection: January 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr G R Sims Registered Inspector	Areas of learning for children under five English Art Design and technology Information technology Physical education Equal opportunities	The characteristics and effectiveness of the school The school's results and pupils' achievements Teaching and learning Leadership and management
Mrs M Morrissey Lay Inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development Pupils' welfare, health and safety Partnership with parents and carers
Mr P Kerr Team Member	Mathematics Science Geography History Music Religious education Special educational needs	Curricular and other opportunities for learning

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Milborne St Andrew First School caters for 75 boys and girls from the ages of 4 to 9. It is much smaller than most primary schools. The school lies in the village of Milborne St Andrew, situated midway between the towns of Blandford Forum and Dorchester. Pupils come from the village and the surrounding rural areas. The socio-economic background of the pupils is generally average. Just under ten per cent of the pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals, which is broadly average. Most children have attended privately run playgroups before they join the school. The attainment of children when they start school is generally below average. One third of the pupils have been identified as having special educational needs, which is above average. Three pupils have statements of special educational need. At the time of the inspection, there were two children under the age of five in the school. No pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds or from homes where English is not the main spoken language. This is below the national average. Under a reciprocal business arrangement, the school will be vacating its current site and moving to new purpose-built accommodation next year.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

Milborne St Andrew First School offers pupils a sound education. The pupils achieve appropriate standards in reading and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 1, and in mathematics and science by the age of nine. Standards in writing and information technology are below average. The overall quality of the teaching is good. The teachers work hard to provide for the wide age range and diverse needs of the pupils, and offer a secure and friendly environment which caters well for the pupils' personal development. With good support from the governors, the headteacher's unassuming but effective leadership has resulted in a good level of improvement since the last inspection. Although expenditure per pupil is well above average, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- With its small class size and imaginative teaching, the school provides a good start for pupils in the Reception class.
- The overall quality of the teaching in the rest of the school is good. The teachers know their pupils well and work hard to meet their individual needs.
- The work undertaken by assistant staff within the classroom and when helping individual pupils with special educational needs is of high quality.
- Within its closely-knit community, the school provides well for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Relationships with parents, partner institutions and the local community are good, and enrich the pupils' learning experiences.
- The pupils relate well to one another and to adults. They have positive attitudes to their work and their standards of behaviour are good.
- The school provides a good range of extracurricular activities.

#### **What could be improved**

- The quality and accuracy of pupils' writing.
- Standards in information technology and the use of new technology as an aid to learning.
- The use of assessment data.
- The level of challenge for more able pupils.
- The way pupils present their work.

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan, which will be sent to*

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*all parents and carers of pupils in the school.*

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

There has been a good degree of improvement since the last inspection, which took place in January 1997. The school has responded effectively to the previous key issues. Curricular planning for geography, art and religious education has improved and the school now offers a broad and balanced curriculum, with sufficient time allocated to each subject. Although improvements have been made in information technology, the provision for this subject is still a weakness. The school makes good use of the local community to enrich the curriculum. The school now complies with requirements for a daily act of collective worship. The quantity and quality of resources have improved. The organisation and storage of resources is more orderly, even though the outdoor locations are far from ideal. Governors have raised their awareness of curricular issues and demonstrate a good understanding of what is happening in the school. More thought has been given to the way in which pupils' work is assessed, but the information gathered is still not having a sufficient impact on teachers' planning. The way in which pupils present their work remains a weakness.

At Key Stage 1, standards in reading and mathematics have improved since the last inspection at a greater rate than the national trend. Standards in writing are slightly lower than they were. Aspects of teaching have improved. Staff now have a better base in almost all subjects from which to plan their lessons. Class timetables provide a more balanced curriculum and good use is made of teachers' expertise in music and religious education.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by seven-year-olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests. National comparative data is not available for nine-year-old pupils.

Performance in:	compared with			similar schools	Key	
	all schools					
	1997	1998	1999	1999		
Reading	E	D	C	D	Very high	A*
Writing	D	D	D	E	Well above average	A
Mathematics	E	A	B	B	Above average	B
					Average	C
					Below average	D
					Well below average	E
					Very low	E*

The school's results in reading and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 have improved steadily. In 1999, they were similar to the national average in reading and above average in mathematics. Standards in writing have remained below average. When compared to similar schools, the results were below average in reading, well below average in writing, but above average in mathematics.

The work seen during the inspection shows that, although children enter the school with below average attainment, they make good progress in the Reception class and achieve the nationally expected standards by the age of five. The pupils achieve appropriate standards in reading and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 1 and in mathematics and science by the age of nine. Standards in writing and information technology are below average. The pupils achieve satisfactory standards in religious education. The school has started to track pupils' progress more closely and is setting itself appropriate targets for improvement.



## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. The pupils are keen to come to school. Their attitudes to learning are good, and they show interest in most lessons. Their involvement in activities after school is very good.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. They behave well in lessons, and at break and lunchtimes. There is no oppressive behaviour, bullying, sexism or racism.
Personal development and relationships	Good. The pupils relate well to each other and to the staff. They understand the impact of their actions and show respect for others' feelings, values and beliefs. They undertake helpful tasks around the school willingly and well.
Attendance	Satisfactory. The level of attendance is slightly above the national average. Pupils arrive punctually in the mornings, allowing lessons to start promptly.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-9 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	Good

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

The teaching was satisfactory or better in all of the lessons seen. It was very good in 19 per cent of lessons and good in a further 48 per cent.

The overall quality of teaching in English and mathematics lessons is good. The teaching of basic numeracy has improved, although the more able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged in mathematics lessons at Key Stage 2. Not enough attention is given to developing pupils' literacy skills within other areas of the curriculum. The teaching of information technology is improving. Pupils with special educational needs receive good quality assistance and, as a result, they make good progress.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad and balanced. It has improved since the last inspection and meets statutory requirements. It is enriched through a variety of visits and a good range of extracurricular activities. Appropriate attention has been given to national initiatives to promote literacy and numeracy. Not enough attention is given to information and communication technology.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs which enables them to make good progress towards individual learning targets, without detriment to full participation and appropriate progress in all other activities.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good in all areas. Provision for spiritual and cultural development has improved since the last inspection. Staff provide good role models. Pupils are taught the importance of values and beliefs through religious education lessons and assemblies. They are given good opportunities to exercise responsibility within the school. There is a good programme for personal, social and health education.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The staff are very aware of health and safety procedures and take care to mitigate the potential dangers of the school's hilly site. The school provides a secure, caring and happy environment for the pupils to learn in, and staff all know the children well. Procedures for assessment have improved, but not enough use is made of the data when planning lessons, particularly for the more able pupils.

How well the school works in partnership with parents	The partnership with parents is very good. The school keeps parents well informed about their children's progress and about what is happening in school. Parents are very supportive and many help in various ways within the school. The thriving Friends Association provides valuable help for the school. Parents support their children's learning well at home.
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## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership of the headteacher has resulted in good improvements since the last inspection. He works well with a small, but committed staff and has maintained a good ethos within the school. Coordinators undertake their tasks seriously and effectively.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body exercises its role well and fulfils all of its statutory responsibilities. Governors are supportive and well informed. They have a good understanding of the needs and difficulties of a small school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching are improving. The school now has an annual cycle for reviewing its work and deciding priorities for improvement. The school development plan outlines appropriate areas for development. Governors are setting performance targets for the headteacher, and staff appraisal interviews undertaken by the headteacher identify areas for staff development.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes the best use of its limited accommodation. Greater care is now taken of resources. Financial and administrative systems are efficient. The school seeks best value for money. The business deal to secure a new school site with purpose-built accommodation is an imaginative and highly successful way of improving the school's facilities.
Adequacy of staffing, accommodation and learning resources	The school has a good adult to pupil ratio and class sizes are small. This is of particular benefit to the youngest pupils. There is a satisfactory range of learning resources, although there is limited access to computers. The present accommodation is unsatisfactory and restricts learning opportunities in a number of areas. This problem will be solved in the new year, when the school moves into new accommodation.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Parents feel this is a good school and are generally very happy with the education their children receive.</li> <li>● Their children are making good progress.</li> <li>● They are well informed about their children's progress and what is happening in the school.</li> <li>● The quality of the teaching is good. The teachers are supportive, helpful, caring and approachable.</li> <li>● There is an intimate, friendly atmosphere within the school.</li> <li>● It is easy to approach the school if there are any problems.</li> <li>● Their children enjoy coming to school.</li> </ul>	<p>Only a small number of parents raised any concerns. These included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Greater challenge for the more able pupils.</li> <li>● More homework for pupils in Years 3 and 4.</li> </ul>

Inspectors agree with all of the points raised by the parents. Whilst the school generally meets the needs of its pupils well, the standard of work at Key Stage 2 is sometimes geared more to the younger pupils and the more able ones are not, as a result, always sufficiently challenged.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and achievements**

1. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 1, the pupils' results were similar to the national average in reading, below average in writing and above average in mathematics. When compared to similar schools<sup>1</sup>, they were below average in reading, well below average in writing, but above average in mathematics. There are no national comparisons for pupils at the age of nine, but optional national tests taken by pupils at the end of Year 4 show that, overall, pupils exceed the nationally expected standard in reading, are below the expected level in writing, but are close to it in mathematics.
2. After a drop in 1997, the school's results at Key Stage 1 have improved steadily over the last three years and are now higher than they were at the time of the last inspection. The percentage of pupils reaching the nationally expected Level 2 is close to the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. However, in mathematics a significant proportion of pupils reached the higher Level 3; no pupils achieved this level in writing, and most were at the lowest end of Level 2.
3. There are marked differences in the performance of boys and girls. Over the last four years, girls have produced better results in reading and writing, but boys have achieved significantly higher than girls in mathematics. This is similar to the national picture in English, but not in mathematics, where girls and boys achieve similar levels nationally. Nothing was noted during the inspection to explain these differences. Staff give boys and girls equal consideration, and there was no discernible difference in the responses of boys and girls during lessons, or in the standard of work in their books.
4. The school is not obliged to set targets for pupils' attainment at Key Stage 1. However, staff have started to track pupils' progress more closely and are using this procedure to identify the level each pupil should achieve in the future and to set appropriate targets for improvement. The system is in its infancy, but the staff are already finding it helpful to focus on whether pupils have made sufficient progress or not.
5. The initial assessments undertaken when children start school indicate that their achievements are below average. As a result of the small class size and some good, imaginative teaching, the children make good progress in the Reception class and, by the time they are five, they meet the expectations which are outlined in the Desirable Learning Outcomes<sup>2</sup> in all aspects of their learning, although they have little time in which to consolidate their early reading or writing experiences. They are well prepared to start the National Curriculum. The children make particularly good progress in their personal and social development. They quickly learn to take care of their own books and belongings – even though some parents may question this fact at home! They gain rapidly in confidence and make positive relationships with other children and adults. They make good progress in language and literacy, mathematics and their knowledge and understanding of the world. They listen very attentively, and are

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<sup>1</sup> The school's results are compared both to the national average (ie the average of the results of all schools in England, where pupils took National Curriculum assessment tests at the end of Key Stage 1) and to the average for similar schools (ie the average of the results for all schools whose pupils come from similar socio-economic backgrounds, determined by the eligibility of pupils within the school to receive free school meals).

<sup>2</sup> The nationally agreed goals for learning for children by the time they enter compulsory schooling at the age of five. The skills, knowledge and understanding which are deemed to provide a suitable foundation for young children are described in the Government's guidance document *Desirable Learning Outcomes for Pupils entering Compulsory Education*.

confident speaking in front of other children and adults. They are starting to acquire a sound understanding of letter sounds. The youngest children trace words with increasing skill and accuracy, and the more able children can copy words with little help. In mathematics, they see and follow simple patterns of numbers, colours and shapes. Most of the children count to ten correctly, while the higher-attaining children can count past ten and some count in twos. They show confidence in using a computer to paint pictures on screen or to run a program which helps them to read. They talk about familiar features in their local environment and are aware that things change with time. The children make satisfactory progress in their creative and physical development.

6. Inspection findings are broadly consistent with the picture given by the school's National Curriculum test results at the end of Key Stage 1. In English, standards in speaking and listening are satisfactory throughout the school and, in many cases, the pupils' speaking skills are good. By the end of Key Stage 1, the pupils are confident in speaking aloud, but do not always listen carefully to what other pupils are saying. By the end of Year 4, the pupils have become increasingly confident in speaking in front of others, and also much better at listening to what others say. They converse well with adults. Standards in reading are average at the end of Key Stage 1 and, overall, above average by the end of Year 4. By the end of Key Stage 1, the more able pupils read fluently and with good expression. The lower-attaining pupils know how to sound out unfamiliar words, although their reading is somewhat mechanistic. By the end of Year 4, many pupils read well for their age, and some have reading abilities well in advance of their age. These pupils read very fluently and with good understanding. Some of the lower-attaining pupils do not enjoy reading, although they have sufficient skill to cope with most texts which are appropriate for their age. Writing is the weakest of the four key skills in English, and pupils say that writing is their least favourite activity. By the end of Key Stage 1, standards are slightly below average. Most pieces of written work are short in length, and lower-attaining pupils are still struggling to express their thoughts in writing. Although they can write at greater length by the end of Year 4, few pupils produce writing which is fluent, interesting and varied; their spelling is frequently inaccurate and they do not take enough care over the way they present their work. Although pupils produce some written work for other subjects, the staff do not use these opportunities to develop pupils' writing skills and do not give enough attention to the marking and correction of pupils' English.
7. Pupils achieve average standards in mathematics by the end of Key Stage 1. The pupils have good basic numeracy skills. They know their two, five and tens times tables, and are beginning to manipulate larger numbers in their heads, using these skills to solve practical problems. By the end of Year 4, standards are similar to those expected for nine-year-old pupils. The pupils use all the four rules of number and solve real-life problems. Their achievement in using and applying mathematics is not as good as their basic numeracy skills. The pupils' ability to recall basic number facts has improved significantly since the last inspection. Numeracy skills are also developed incidentally through subjects such as science.
8. The pupils achieve above average standards in science by the end of Key Stage 1. They have a better than average understanding of each of the areas of study. By the end of Year 4, standards are in line with national expectations, but recent improvements in the way the subject is taught are leading to significant improvements, particularly in the development of the skills of scientific enquiry. Pupils are beginning to set out their work to show their predictions and explain how they have tested them experimentally. In lessons, they are showing a very good degree of independence in their thinking.
9. There have been a number of improvements in the school's provision for information technology since the last inspection, but they have not been enough to enable the school to keep pace with national developments over the last few years or to provide pupils with sufficient opportunity to develop the necessary skills. The school still does not make enough use of information and communication technology as a learning tool in other subjects, and the time allocated to the subject is still insufficient. Pupils' attainment is below the national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 and by the age of nine. Progress throughout the school has been unsatisfactory for all pupils, including those with special educational needs, but recent improvements in teaching the subject are leading to a gradual improvement in the rate of progress.

10. The school now provides a more balanced curriculum in art, although standards achieved by pupils by the age of nine are below average. Pupils try hard to represent objects accurately when drawing in pencil, but they do not have appropriate technical skills. Their painting skills are also below average. The planning for design and technology has improved, and pupils achieve standards that are appropriate for their age. They enjoy the practical aspect of the subject, but they do not present their written accounts and diagrams well.
11. Standards have improved in geography. The subject is taught well and pupils make good progress. Standards are better at Key Stage 1 than at Key Stage 2. By the end of Year 4, pupils can use maps in a variety of scales to locate near and distant places and they have a sound understanding of some important similarities between countries. Standards in history are average. Pupils learn to use a variety of sources for evidence, from real objects and books to interviews with people, in order to compare life in distant times, such as the Roman era, to life today.
12. Provision for music has improved since the last inspection. The subject is now taught effectively, and pupils reach standards in line with expectations for their age at Key Stage 1 and in Year 4. When given a suitable starting note or a musical accompaniment, the pupils sing well, keeping in tune and putting good expression into their voices. All pupils appreciate the difference between various styles of music and the moods that can be created. The school has maintained high standards in swimming, and the pupils continue to show enthusiasm for their physical education lessons. Pupils achieve standards which are appropriate for their age in athletic activities at Key Stage 2 and in ball-control skills at Key Stage 1.
13. Pupils reach standards in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. They have a good knowledge of their own and other religions, and an awareness of how religious ideas can affect their own and other people's lives. Older pupils demonstrate an ability to think for themselves about how other religions compare with Christianity.
14. Pupils with special educational needs generally make good progress as a result of the additional help they receive and reach standards in line with the expectations of their individual educational programmes. These are pitched at appropriate levels. The more able pupils, and sometimes the older pupils in a class, do not always make as much progress as they should, because the work they are given is not always sufficiently challenging.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

15. The positive attitudes and behaviour noted in the previous inspection have been maintained. Pupils of all ages have positive attitudes to their learning. They participate well in lessons, contributing comments and questions that show interest and often thoughtful understanding. The majority listen attentively, settle quickly to work and concentrate on their tasks. Pupils are interested and enquiring, for example, in a science lesson in Years 3 and 4, pupils were keen to discover the mechanism for making a circuit and fitting a switch system. There were good examples during the inspection of pupils wanting to share what they had done with others. Pupils take pleasure in their achievements and talk with enthusiasm about their work. Parents at the pre-inspection meeting were very happy with the attitudes and values the school promotes. They say pupils respect their teachers and like them.
16. The pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Pupils understand and observe the code of conduct expected when they are in the classroom and absorb the values transmitted by the staff. No issues of bullying were observed and pupils and parents are confident that any issues of bullying will be dealt with swiftly and sensitively with a no-blame policy. There have been no exclusions in the last year.
17. Relationships in the school are good. Teachers and pupils relate well to one another and the friendly, relaxed atmosphere is built on a foundation of mutual respect. Parents say teachers take time to listen to problems and concerns and give extra help and attention to pupils if they need it. Pupils show

respect for others' feelings, values and beliefs. They are swift to applaud other pupils' achievements and are sensitive to others' problems, offering and giving support and understanding; this was seen in a number of lessons, including music and science. Relationships between staff and pupils, and amongst pupils themselves, are good and create a supportive and caring atmosphere in which pupils feel secure and comfortable.

18. The school is good at encouraging pupils to develop a sense of responsibility and all pupils are given the opportunity to take responsibility for themselves and for others. In the Reception class, pupils take it in turns to act as helpers for the day, and pupils in Key Stage 1 act as classroom monitors. By Year 4, pupils are involved in the running of the school as library monitors, register monitors and by providing other forms of general school support. Pupils carry out their responsibilities willingly and well. Younger pupils work cooperatively in pairs and in small groups, and are competent when working independently for short periods. There are not enough opportunities for pupils in the upper years to take greater responsibility for their own learning, with the result that they do not develop as independent learners as well as they should.
19. Attendance is broadly in line with the national average. Punctuality is good and unauthorised absence is low and in line with the national average. The punctual arrival of pupils allows the school day to begin on time in a calm atmosphere, which prepares pupils well for lessons.

#### **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

20. The overall quality of the teaching is good throughout the school. During the inspection, the teaching was satisfactory or better in all of the lessons seen. It was very good in 19 per cent of lessons and good in a further 48 per cent. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. Positive aspects noted in the last inspection have been maintained and many of the weaknesses have been rectified. The teachers' knowledge and understanding of geography has improved. Even though standards are still below average, the teachers' confidence in using and teaching information technology has also improved. Arrangements for teaching music are now much better than they were. The teachers manage time in lessons more efficiently, and provide pupils with a well-balanced timetable. The planning for subjects such as geography and religious education has improved. Resources are managed much more effectively and, although the storage areas are inconveniently located in separate buildings, they are well ordered and easily accessible. Marking was mentioned as an area of weakness, and this aspect has not improved. The teachers are committed, very hard-working and reflect carefully on the quality of their teaching. They take on board new initiatives and have responded positively to the introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, both of which have led to improvements in teaching. The quality of the teaching, combined with the pupils' positive attitudes and good behaviour, ensures that the quality of learning is good throughout the school.
21. Teachers give good support to pupils with special educational needs. They provide individual education programmes for those pupils who require them and give appropriate work and support to other pupils needing extra help. The classroom assistants work very closely with the teachers and are very effective in the support they offer to the pupils. They have a good knowledge and understanding of the pupils' needs and are confident and experienced enough to take the initiative in adapting the way they work with individual pupils as the requirements change.
22. The school continues to make good provision for children under five, despite the cramped conditions of the classroom and lack of facilities for the children's physical development. An appropriate range of activities is provided for each area of learning, and regular teaching and practice during the literacy hour and numeracy session help the children to develop their literacy and numeracy skills well. Relationships between the teachers and children are very good and help to establish an environment in which the children feel secure and develop positive attitudes to learning. Well-established classroom routines provide a very good framework within which the children can learn to live as part of a group but also show individual initiative.

23. Overall, the teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subjects of the National Curriculum are sound. Improvements in curricular planning and regular in-service training opportunities have helped teachers to become more secure in their understanding of subjects such as geography, information technology and religious education. Good knowledge of science is a significant factor in providing good learning experiences for pupils at both key stages. Lack of personal skills is still affecting the teachers' abilities to develop pupils' skills effectively in art. Where necessary, the teachers have a good awareness of health and safety requirements, for example in design and technology and physical education.
24. The school has responded positively to the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, and new teaching methods are starting to have a positive impact on the teaching of both English and mathematics. Thought is given to broadening pupils' vocabulary when teaching other subjects. In a design and technology lesson, for example, the teacher initiated a useful discussion about how best to describe the quality, texture and appearance of various drinks which they had tasted. However, pupils' writing skills are not developed well through other subjects. Some of the tasks given to the pupils provide little scope for extended writing, particularly when poor quality worksheets are used. Spelling and grammatical mistakes are not corrected and very little attention is given to other ways in which the pupils' writing can be improved. Mathematical skills are developed incidentally through subjects such as geography and design and technology. Insufficient use is made of opportunities to develop information technology skills by using computers as tools for learning in other subjects.
25. The teachers' written planning and their expectations of the level of work which is appropriate for their pupils vary, but are satisfactory overall. In some lessons, particularly at Key Stage 2, the work planned for the more able and older pupils is not sufficiently challenging. This is particularly evident in some of the group tasks or early morning activities, or when the lesson is targeted towards the needs of the younger pupils in the class. The teachers generally pay greater attention to meeting the needs of pupils with special educational needs than they do to ensuring that the most able pupils are sufficiently extended. However, lesson objectives are generally clear and explicit, and build on what has previously been taught. A good aspect of the teachers' planning is their preparation of appropriate resources, which means that for every activity the right teaching aids, such as big books, duplicated texts and the right learning equipment, are almost always ready and well organised. A particularly good feature is the way teachers communicate their planned intentions to support assistants and voluntary helpers. This ensures that the helpers' time is used effectively and efficiently. The planning for information technology is weak. Although some teachers have regular times during the week when individual pupils have the opportunity to consolidate what has been taught, insufficient time is allocated to all pupils in a class in order for them to make progress each week.
26. The teachers generally do not demand a high enough standard in the way pupils present their work, and there are not enough exemplars of work previously completed to a high standard which could serve as models of good practice to inspire the pupils to improve their presentation. Many of the commercially produced worksheets given to pupils require little thought and do not help pupils to extend their knowledge and understanding. All teachers expect high standards of behaviour. Whilst making good use of encouragement and praise, they make it quite clear to pupils when their behaviour or attitudes are not acceptable, which helps to create a good atmosphere in which all pupils are able to make progress.
27. The teachers use a good variety of teaching methods and styles, and strike an appropriate balance between whole-class teaching, group-work and individual tasks. Pupils are given clear explanations and, in most lessons, the teachers use good, open-ended questioning techniques which challenge and promote progress. Occasional visits or visitors to the school provide a good variation to the daily routine and contribute much to the pupils' progress.
28. The teachers' classroom management skills are good throughout the school. Good relationships exist between staff and pupils. The teachers know the pupils very well and they respect and value the pupils' contributions to lessons. The school has established clear expectations for behaviour, so that



intervention to solve disciplinary matters is rarely necessary. However, the tendency of pupils to call out answers is not always controlled adequately, and this occasionally affects progress during the lesson. The balance of control, reprimand and praise is good.

29. In general, the teachers ensure that their lessons are well paced and that pupils are fully engaged throughout the lesson. Very good use is made of assistants and voluntary helpers who provide high quality support for groups of pupils and individuals, especially those who have special educational needs. They form an effective addition to the school staff and have a positive impact on pupils' learning. Teachers use resources well to stimulate and support learning. The use of information technology as a resource is underdeveloped in all subjects.
30. The quality of the teachers' day-to-day assessment is satisfactory. The teachers' daily interaction with the pupils in lessons is a strong point, as most teachers are good at asking appropriate questions to ensure that pupils understand their work. Some lessons start with an effective review of previous work in order to ensure that the pupils understand what has gone before. When pupils are working on their own or in groups, most teachers use their time profitably to assess what pupils are doing and to provide appropriate help and feedback. The closing sessions of most lessons are used well to assess what pupils have learnt and to clear up any misconceptions. Assistants and voluntary helpers provide the teacher with useful feedback about what pupils in their group have achieved through the use of a simple assessment sheet. The weakness in the day-to-day assessment of pupils' work lies in the marking of written work. Most books are marked regularly, but the pupils are not given a clear enough indication as to how they might improve their work. The pupils rarely revisit their work to correct or improve it, in order to learn from their mistakes. In written work produced for other subjects, the teachers do not correct English mistakes, with the result that incorrect spellings are perpetuated.
31. The use of homework is generally satisfactory. The regular reading tasks and other work set by teachers help pupils to consolidate what is learned in lessons. Some parents feel that the older pupils should be given more homework. There was not enough opportunity during the inspection to investigate the use of homework in depth, but the school is looking at its current practice in the light of parents' concerns.

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

32. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum that meets the needs of all the pupils and is enriched by visits and a very good range of extracurricular activities. All the strengths identified in the last inspection have been maintained, and improvements made in all the areas of weakness that were pointed out.
33. All the statutory requirements to teach the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education are met. Each subject is planned from a scheme of work, ensuring full coverage of the National Curriculum programmes of study. This is a good improvement since the last inspection, addressing the issues that were raised about coverage of art, geography, music and religious education. The school has successfully implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, devoting a substantial proportion of the timetable to these two subjects. This has been achieved without any significant impact on standards in the other subjects. The two strategies have been largely effective in improving basic skills, but the school has not yet found a way of improving writing standards sufficiently. There have been recent improvements in provision for information technology resulting in the pupils improving their skills, but computers are not yet used as effectively as they could be to support learning across the curriculum.
34. Teachers take into account the different year-groups in their planning, using, for example, a two-yearly topic cycle in some subjects to avoid repetitions. However, planning does not yet focus specifically enough on the skills each group of pupils should be learning each term or half term. This applies to

literacy and numeracy as well as to other subjects. Sometimes, the focus that is chosen suits the younger pupils in the class and does not take the older and higher-attaining pupils on far enough.

35. The curriculum for children under five is good, with an appropriate balance between all the areas of learning for children of this age. They learn through play and guided discussions with the teacher and other adults, and develop very positive attitudes to learning. The transition from the areas of learning to the National Curriculum is managed effectively by a skilful teacher, although the policy documents do not give a very clear picture of how this is managed. In Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, the school has maintained a healthy emphasis on physical education, particularly swimming, at which pupils continue to excel. This is coupled with a good range of extracurricular sport, giving the pupils a good opportunity to establish physical exercise as an integral and enjoyable aspect of their lives. Parents appreciate this aspect of the school's provision.
36. There is a robust programme for personal, social and health education, managed by an enthusiastic and knowledgeable coordinator. The school also has a clear policy on sex education and makes good use of the local authority's 'life van' to educate the children about their bodies and healthy living from an early age. A good feature of this service is the opportunity it provides for parents to discuss the issue of drugs misuse, although the school does not yet have a formal policy on the subject.
37. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Arrangements are made to help them with their individual problems without sacrificing access to any important curriculum activities. The school has good links with the middle school so that all the pupils, including those with special educational needs, enjoy a smooth transition to the next phase of their education. All pupils enjoy equal access to the curriculum, with no distinction made between boys and girls.
38. The school makes effective use of local resources; organised visits are arranged to places of interest connected with the topics pupils are studying. Very good links with the community enhance the curriculum for all pupils and provide good learning experiences through contacts with many organisations; for example, all pupils benefit from the visit to Carey Outdoor Activity Centre. Admission to the school and the transition to middle school are very well planned. The links with DARSET, a local small school cluster unit, and DASP, the Dorchester schools partnership, are being used to the school's benefit.
39. The school's provision for the pupils' personal development has improved since the last inspection and is now good in all respects. The good moral climate and very good opportunities for the pupils to develop socially have been maintained, and there have been good improvements for spiritual and cultural development. The daily act of worship is now a real and significant occasion for reflection. Pupils have appreciated this and have developed the confidence to make up and say their own spontaneous prayers in response to the issues and ideas that arise. The assemblies are also used effectively to reinforce positive values such as courage, through stories of famous people like Florence Nightingale and Grace Darling. All members of staff and other visiting adults such as governors set a good example for the pupils by the way they respect the views and feelings of individuals. The pupils come to an understanding of what is right and what is wrong through the recognition of shared human values rather than through fear of punishment or hope of reward.
40. The good relationships that exist throughout the school form the basis of good social development. The pupils are encouraged to take on responsibilities in the school community as well as accepting responsibility for themselves. The wide range of extracurricular activities and visits provided by the school, including residential trips, and good links with the community make a very strong contribution to the pupils' social development. The school's provision for pupils' awareness and appreciation of different cultures was criticised in the last inspection report. This shortcoming has been remedied. The religious education syllabus gives the pupils a good appreciation of some of the different faiths that contribute to our society. The teachers ensure that the pupils listen to music from different cultures, for example in assemblies, and take the trouble to explain its origins and occasionally to share their own enthusiasm for particular pieces. Subjects such as history and geography and the many visits that are

arranged continue to give the pupils a good grounding in their local cultural heritage. Despite its relative isolation, the school prepares the pupils well for life in a multicultural society.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

41. Since the last inspection, the school has maintained the caring, supportive environment in which pupils feel valued. The school cares effectively for its pupils' welfare and safety. Child protection arrangements are very good and comply with agreed procedures. The school's 'open door' policy takes into account the wishes and feelings of parents and encourages them to play a full part in home-school learning and the welfare of their children. Procedures for monitoring pupils' personal support are good. Pupils feel safe and secure in the school, and all are able to identify with an adult for support with any concerns they may have. Pupils are given a sense of self-worth and confidence and they enjoy being in the school. Pupils' academic guidance is satisfactory and the staff are beginning to set personal improvement targets for the pupils.
42. Procedures for monitoring health and safety are comprehensive; the policy is used well and is regularly monitored by the headteacher and the governors' premises committee. Risk assessment in all areas is up to date. All equipment is well maintained and checks on equipment are recorded. The site has many potential safety risks and, while a new school is now in the early stages of building, both the headteacher and governors are very conscious they must maintain the high standards of safety on the present site and they work hard to achieve this. There are clear notices in classrooms to support procedures for fire evacuation and to make pupils aware of the first-aiders. There are two trained first-aiders in the school and the first-aid box is well stocked. All serious accidents and head injuries are reported and recorded. All statutory requirements for health and safety are well met. Overall, the school and the grounds are a safe place for pupils, staff and visitors. The provision for the health and safety of pupils is good. Through the personal and social education programme, pupils are taught personal hygiene and safety to enable them to understand the importance of health education.
43. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are good and strictly adhered to. Registers are completed correctly both morning and afternoon, and the absence book is sent to the office after each registration. The educational welfare officer monitors the registers regularly and provides good support on the rare occasions it is needed. Parents are aware of the responsibility to comply with legislation and fulfil their obligations successfully.
44. Procedures for monitoring and improving behaviour are good. The school's behaviour and discipline policy is effective and is supported by a range of rewards, which are understood well by pupils. All pupils appreciate the Friday awards assembly, which has been effective in promoting good behaviour and raising the pupils' desire to improve and achieve well. Pupils have agreed their own classroom rules and follow them closely. This creates an environment in which pupils can learn effectively and has a positive effect on levels of attainment and progress. Procedures for ensuring oppressive behaviour is eliminated are good. No incidents of bullying were noted during the inspection, and the school has procedures to deal with these matters should they occur.
45. The school has developed sound procedures for assessing the pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science. Apart from the annual national tests, the pupils are given intermediate tests so that their attainment at the end of each year is recorded. Teachers are beginning to make use of this information, for example by revising their expectations upwards as pupils achieve higher than expected levels. However, the analysis of test results and the use of assessment information to guide planning is at the very early stages of development and is not yet contributing enough towards the pupils' progress. Assessments are not used, for example, to identify the limit towards which individuals or groups of pupils should be working. The tests are given and the results are recorded, but there is no way of knowing if the tests were challenging enough for all the pupils. This shortcoming contributes to planning that sometimes aims too low for the older and higher-attaining pupils in the mixed-age classes. In other subjects, there is as of yet no system to track the development of skills for each pupil or group of pupils, so teachers cannot be sure they are pitching lessons at the right level. This is a significant

area for further improvement. Good assessment procedures are in place for pupils with special educational needs, especially those with statements of need. Individual educational programmes are carefully monitored and learning targets amended as the pupils achieve existing ones. This ensures that the pupils are continually working towards their potential. The special educational needs coordinator from the middle school confirms that when pupils arrive there from this school, their targets are set at an appropriate level.

### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

46. The partnership with parents is very good. Parents' commitment to supporting their children's learning at home has a positive impact on the pupils' attainment and progress. The school has very good links with parents. Parents are generally pleased with the quality of education provided and the standards achieved by their children.
47. The quality of information provided for parents is very good; parents are well informed of their children's attainment and help set the personal targets for improvement. Through a wide range of methods, including the school prospectus, school polices, meetings and regular newsletters, there is clear communication between home and school. Pupils' annual reports give good information on their attainment. Parents greatly appreciate the efforts made by the school to keep them informed and involved in school life.
48. Parents are very supportive of the school. Over 30 parents help regularly and give hugely of their time to support the school. Parents are involved in extracurricular activities such as the nature club, and they are just forming a ramblers club. Parents make a good contribution to their children's learning at home; there is a regular dialogue with teachers through pupils' homework and most parents show a real commitment to hearing their children read and helping them to learn their spellings.
49. There is a thriving Friends of the School Association that raises considerable funds for the school and provides social events. Each term, assemblies are held to share work done in topics and to involve parents. Overall, the partnership between parents and the school and parents' commitment to supporting their children's learning at home has a positive impact on pupils' attainment and progress.

### **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

50. The headteacher continues to provide the school with sound leadership, and this has resulted in a good range of improvements since the last inspection. The school has responded effectively to the previous inspection's key issues. Curricular planning for geography, art and religious education has improved and the school now offers a broad and balanced curriculum, with sufficient time allocated to each subject. The school now makes good use of the local community to enrich the curriculum and complies with requirements for a daily act of collective worship. The quantity and quality of resources have improved and their organisation and storage are more orderly, even though the outdoor locations are far from ideal. More thought has been given to the way in which pupils' work is assessed, but the information gathered is still not having a sufficient impact on teachers' planning. Although improvements have been made in information technology, the provision for this subject is still a weakness. At Key Stage 1, standards in reading and mathematics have improved at a greater rate than the national trend, although standards in writing are slightly lower than they were. Aspects of teaching have improved. Staff now have a better base in almost all subjects from which to plan their lessons. Class timetables provide a more balanced curriculum, and good use is made of teachers' expertise in music and religious education. The way in which pupils present their work remains a weakness.
51. The headteacher leads a small, but hard-working and committed team of teachers and assistants in a very unassuming, but effective way. As a team, they implement the school's policies consistently and well, and are successful in fulfilling the school's main aims and maintaining its good ethos. The teachers share management tasks and coordination roles willingly. They respond well to new initiatives

and take a leading role in the development of their subjects. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is coordinated well.

52. The governing body exercises its role well and fulfils all of its statutory responsibilities. Since the last inspection, the governors have raised their awareness of curricular issues. They are supportive of the headteacher and staff and are well informed about school issues. They have a good understanding of the needs and difficulties of a small school. They have clearly delineated roles and responsibilities. The committee structure is well organised and meetings are efficiently minuted. They keep parents well informed through their annual report. They have played a leading role in negotiating the business deal which will provide the school with brand new and much more suitable premises during the course of the coming school year.
53. Procedures for the monitoring and support of teaching, learning and curriculum development are satisfactory and have improved since the last inspection. The school now has an annual cycle for reviewing its work and deciding priorities for improvement. Staff appraisal interviews with the headteacher have helpfully identified further areas for development. The governors have set performance management targets for the headteacher. The targets are appropriate, although they need to have more clearly defined criteria which will allow governors to determine at a later stage whether or not the targets have been fulfilled. Core subject coordinators observe pupils at work in the classroom once a term, and staff have found the mutual support and advice from their colleagues beneficial. The headteacher and staff have been involved in various in-service training initiatives and these have helped to raise their awareness of new developments and to improve teaching practice. One of the two weekly staff meetings is also used effectively for in-service development.
54. The school development plan shows that the headteacher and staff have a good understanding of which aspects of the school need to be developed, and that they are aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Targets for the previous year have, by and large, been met. The role of the subject coordinator has been developed effectively; the numeracy lesson has been implemented successfully and good progress has been made in preparing for the move to new premises. There are appropriate targets for improvement for the coming year which include the development of writing and improving the quality of teaching for information technology. The school benefits from being part of a local cluster of schools that collaborates on establishing priorities for development. The school has considered its targets for pupils' attainment carefully, and is now tracking pupils' progress much more closely in order to identify areas of weakness and to provide realistic, but challenging targets for the future. The commitment of the headteacher, staff and governors and their willingness to embrace change indicate that the school has the capacity for further improvement.
55. The school satisfactorily applies principles of providing best value for money to all areas of its performance. As a small school, its costs per pupil are relatively high, but the headteacher, staff and governors believe in providing a good quality environment in which pupils can flourish and learn. The school seeks to provide good quality resources and experiences for its pupils. Spending is carefully targeted and a good analysis is made by the school of various options before making final decisions on purchases. The school makes good use of new technology to support day-to-day administration and the management of school accounts. This has provided a more efficient flow of information and allowed planning for the future to be improved. However, new technology is not used enough to help the pupils develop learning across the curriculum. Grants are used well to support new initiatives, like extra support for literacy and numeracy. The school seeks many opportunities to apply for grants to enhance the school through staff development and the curriculum.
56. All teachers are suitably qualified and deployed appropriately. The headteacher and governors have seen it as a priority to increase the number of staff next year to allow four classes to operate for the morning and afternoon sessions, and to ensure that the headteacher has more time to monitor teaching and the standard of pupils' work. All teachers carry a number of responsibilities and delegation is effective in this respect. Accommodation remains unsatisfactory, but appropriate use is made of the available space. However, there are some detrimental effects on the curriculum: classes have to be

amalgamated in the afternoons; physical education provision is limited; children under five have no bikes or other outdoor play toys. Learning resources are satisfactory and have improved since the last inspection.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

57. In order to improve pupils' attainment, the headteacher and staff should:
- improve the quality and accuracy of pupils' writing [paragraphs: 1, 2, 6, 24, 33, 50, 71, 73, 75]. In drawing up their action plan they should consider:
    - devoting more time to the active teaching of writing skills [paragraphs: 75, 76]
    - developing pupils' writing through written work undertaken in other subjects [paragraphs: 6, 24, 75, 77, 96, 102, 119, 124]
    - improving the way in which pupils' work is marked and the attention pupils give to correcting their work [paragraphs: 6, 20, 24, 30, 75, 77, 93, 96, 124];
    - using commercially produced worksheets less often [paragraphs: 26, 76, 77, 89];
    - ensuring that tasks given to pupils when working on their own or in groups are sufficiently challenging [paragraphs: 25, 76, 78].
  - improve standards in information technology. In particular they should:
    - seek ways in which existing equipment can be used more efficiently;
    - ensure that all pupils have sufficient time using computers to consolidate their skills;
    - ensure that information and communication technology is used as an aid to learning in other subjects.
    - [paragraphs: 24, 25, 29, 33, 50, 55, 77, 93, 103 - 110]
  - provide work which is appropriately matched to pupils' needs, by making better use of assessment data [paragraphs 45, 99]. In addition, attention should be given to:
    - helping pupils carry out their self-assessment tasks [paragraph: 79];
    - ensuring that work samples collected for the pupils' 'book of the month' are appropriately annotated and levelled. [paragraph: 79].
  - ensure that higher-attaining pupils are given appropriately challenging work. [paragraphs: 25, 26, 34, 45, 76, 77, 81, 84, 87]
  - raise their expectations with regard to the way pupils present their work [paragraphs: 10, 50, 75, 77, 85, 92, 96].
58. In addition to the key issues for improvement, the school should consider the following areas for improvement:
- Developing pupils' independent learning skills [paragraphs: 18, 78, 87]; providing better facilities for children under five [paragraph 22, 69]; improving teachers' expertise in art [paragraphs: 10, 23, 95]

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	27
Number of formal discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils [In addition to this figure, there were many informal discussions with staff, other adults and pupils]	23

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	19	48	33	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	Y0 – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	75
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Y0 – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	26

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	6
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	1

### Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	4.8
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.5
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**

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	8	7	15

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	7	7	7
	Girls	6	7	6
	Total	13	14	13
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	87 (78)	93 (86)	87 (86)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	8	7	8
	Girls	7	6	6
	Total	15	13	14
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (78)	87 (78)	93 (78)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

**Ethnic background of pupils**

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

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

**Exclusions in the last school year**

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

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

**Teachers and classes**

Qualified teachers and classes: Y0 – Y4

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.75
Average class size	25

**Financial information**

Financial year	1999/2000
	£

Education support staff: Y0 – Y4

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	57.5

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

Total income	158,018
Total expenditure	154,100
Expenditure per pupil	2,266
Balance brought forward from previous year	3,500
Balance carried forward to next year	7,000

## ***Results of the survey of parents and carers***

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	74
Number of questionnaires returned	21

Percentage of responses in each category<sup>3</sup>

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school	66.7	33.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
My child is making good progress in school	57.1	38.1	4.8	0.0	0.0
Behaviour in the school is good	57.1	28.6	4.8	4.8	4.8
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home	38.1	42.9	14.3	4.8	0.0
The teaching is good	57.1	42.9	0.0	0.0	0.0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on	42.9	42.9	9.5	4.8	0.0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem	61.9	28.6	9.5	0.0	0.0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best	61.9	33.3	4.8	0.0	0.0
The school works closely with parents	61.9	23.8	9.5	4.8	0.0
The school is well led and managed	52.4	33.3	9.5	0.0	4.8
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible	52.4	23.8	9.5	0.0	14.3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons	57.1	42.9	0.0	0.0	0.0

### **Other issues raised by parents**

Some parents are concerned about the pressure on teachers, particularly in a small school where each member of staff has to undertake a wide range of responsibilities.

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<sup>3</sup> Because of rounding, percentages may not add up to 100.

## **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**

59. Children under five are taught in the Reception class in the morning, and in the afternoon they are joined by a number of pupils from Year 1. On most days of the week, the children have a different teacher in the afternoon. Assessments undertaken when the children enter the school show that attainment on entry is below average. The children receive a good start to their education and make good progress in all areas of learning, achieving most of the Desirable Learning Outcomes by the time they are five. All of the positive aspects mentioned in the previous inspection report, such as the good relationships, good behaviour, enthusiasm and clear objectives, have been maintained. The planned curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant to the needs of the school's youngest children.

#### **Personal and social development**

60. The children make good progress in their personal and social development because of the wide range of opportunities provided in the classroom. By the time they are five, most of them have achieved the Desirable Learning Outcomes. They have good levels of personal responsibility, taking care of their own books and belongings, and they follow the basic rules of personal hygiene. They know the class routines well, and show their initiative in tidying up and preparing for snacks and playtimes. During class lessons, they attend to the teacher and, when working, they talk sensibly to their friends. They concentrate well when in a group being taught by the teacher or another adult. When they choose activities, they give their full attention to what they are doing. They have progressed from being self-absorbed to being able to share toys and equipment, and talk about what they are doing with their friends and with adults. They are confident in themselves, but aware of the need to have good manners and show respect to others.

61. The teaching is good in this area of learning. The teacher has a very good knowledge and understanding of how young children develop. She gives them plenty of opportunities to play on their own, but also encourages them to socialise. The classroom routines are such that the children feel secure. They can ask for help with things they can't do, such as tying their shoelaces, but know that they are expected to make an effort to do as much as possible for themselves. The teacher is very skilled at leading class discussions, appropriately including the very young children with the older and more confident ones and catering for all their social and personal needs. This enables the children to learn very effectively from their peers in a safe and supportive environment. The classroom routines that are established provide a very good framework within which the children can learn to live as part of a group but also show individual initiative. These include preparations for life in the school and wider community, such as the weekly visit to the library to change books.

#### **Language and literacy**

62. The children make good progress in language and literacy and, by the age of five, nearly all of them reach the Desirable Learning Outcomes. They listen attentively and particularly enjoy listening to stories. When the teacher read them the story of the 'Sleeping Beauty', they listened with rapt attention, taking in every detail and then showed remarkable skill for their age comparing the story to the tale of Rapunzel which they had heard earlier in the week. They contribute their ideas and opinions when there is a class discussion. Most speak audibly and are confident with adults and other children. In reading, they begin to understand the relationship between letters and their sounds, and recognise a number of frequently used words and some longer words which they have encountered recently. They recognise the initial letters and use these to make educated guesses. They know that print and text in books have meaning, and are already aware of some writing conventions, for example, that sentences begin with capital letters and end with a full-stop. Higher-attaining children write in simple sentences, some of which have full stops. The children show appropriate writing skills for their age, although they

have little time to consolidate these skills before they start Key Stage 1. Higher-attaining children can write letters independently, whilst the lower-attainers are still acquiring the manual dexterity to trace over letters written by the teacher.

63. The teaching of language and literacy is good. The teacher and classroom assistants have a good knowledge of the needs of children under five and provide them with a warm, supportive and encouraging atmosphere in which to learn. The teacher's planning outlines clear objectives and appropriate activities which are well suited to the children's needs. Lessons relate well to what the children have previously learnt. The teacher is skilful in her use of questions, providing more challenging questions for the higher-attaining children, whilst drawing the less able children into discussions. Explanations are given very clearly, so that all children have a clear idea of what they are expected to do. Children are encouraged to work independently during the group-work sessions, although the youngest children find it hard to complete anything other than the simplest of tasks on their own. Classroom assistants work very well with the teacher and make a very good contribution to children's learning. The pace of lessons is good. Classroom routines are well established and children move quickly to their allotted tasks with the minimum of fuss.

### **Mathematics**

64. The children make good progress in their mathematical understanding and skills, and most of them achieve the Desirable Learning Outcomes before they are five. They sing songs and play number games and use words like 'next to', 'before' and 'after' to describe the position of objects and of numbers in a sequence. They understand and follow simple patterns of numbers, colours and shapes. Most of the children are counting correctly to ten using one-to-one correspondence, while the higher-attaining ones can count beyond ten and some count in twos. They show a good understanding of how numbers relate to real life. For example, they use plastic cubes to track the number of apples lost and found as the character in a story has a series of adventures.
65. The teaching is good in this area of learning. The teacher has a good understanding of the stages of mathematical development that the children need to go through before they are ready to begin the National Curriculum. She gives them plenty of opportunities to experience mathematical ideas in enjoyable ways through games, songs and playing with equipment. The classroom includes sand and water areas and lots of different sets of objects to sort and match. The children are encouraged to talk about what they are doing in order to help them develop their understanding. The teacher provides a good balance between the freedom to choose and play, and the guidance and support required for them to begin formalising what they know. The children's needs are well catered for in numeracy lessons. The teacher keeps the introduction short and practical, and directs suitable questions at the children under five. They are given demanding but achievable tasks to do, such as placing floor tiles in order and walking along them counting correctly. In the group activities part of the lessons, the children have a good range of to choose from to reinforce their learning. The teacher keeps good records of their progress and tailors the planned activities to suit their emerging needs.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

66. The children make good progress, and most of them achieve the Desirable Learning Outcomes by the time they are five. They have a good vocabulary for their age to describe the world as they see it, including some scientific and technical words. For example, following a science lesson, some of the younger children remembered that a battery is called a cell, and knew that it can be used to light up a bulb. They can relate this knowledge to their own experience of electricity at home, and know the basic rules of safety, such as not to let water near electrical appliances. When using a computer, the children know the names of the different parts of the machine such as the keyboard and mouse, and are confident in their use of them. For example, they click on icons to select colours to paint pictures on screen. They know that they can save or print their work. In their play, they show a good awareness of geographical features in their environment, for example when programming a robot to visit a river or a lake on a floor map. They talk about familiar features near their home or school, such

as roads and shops, and say what they like or dislike. They are aware that things change with time, and that life was different in some ways for their parents and grandparents. They demonstrated this knowledge, for example, when they talked about the differences between Cinderella's kitchen and their own at home.

67. Teaching is good in this area of learning. The teacher provides the children with a wealth of experiences that enable them to learn about the world through purposeful play and talking. The classroom contains plenty of areas for imaginative play involving real and toy machines and equipment, from cookers and telephones to robots and computers, so that the children learn the purpose and uses of the things around them. The teacher ensures that when the children are involved in whole-class and group discussions, their specific needs are met. They are given plenty of opportunities to learn through play and are also encouraged to engage in conversations with the teacher, other adults and their peers. In this way, they are able to learn at their own rate without losing confidence, and are prepared very effectively for the National Curriculum programmes of study in history, geography, science and technology.

### **Creative and physical development**

68. There was little opportunity to observe activities designed to promote the children's creative and physical development. The limited amount of evidence points to the fact that the children make at least satisfactory progress and that, by the time they are five, they achieve the Desirable Learning Outcomes in these areas. The children's drawings and paintings reveal an appropriate level of detail for five-year-olds. They sing with enthusiasm and show a good awareness of rhythm. They show well-developed fine motor skills in activities such as cutting, sticking and painting. They handle tools and equipment competently and safely, and use a range of construction toys to build models. They are developing good control of the mouse when using a computer. Most children are learning to use a pencil to form letters and words accurately. The actions and movements of most children are well coordinated. They enjoyed a physical education lesson in which they had to control a ball with their feet, even though the youngest children found the exercise difficult.
69. Not enough was observed in these areas to make a secure judgement on the quality of the teaching, although evidence from teachers' planning and the standards achieved by the children suggest that the teaching is at least satisfactory. The teachers provide an appropriate variety of activities in the afternoons which help the children develop their creative skills. The school is poorly equipped with large play equipment and physical facilities for children under five, but this does not appear to hinder their progress.

### **ENGLISH**

70. The results of the 1999 National Curriculum assessment tests in reading at the end of Key Stage 1 were similar to the national average. They were below average in writing. When compared to the results of similar schools, they were below average in reading and well below average in writing. The range of attainment in reading was fairly wide. Thirteen per cent of pupils were still working towards the nationally expected Level 2, whilst 20 per cent exceeded the national expectations by achieving Level 3. No pupils achieved this level in writing, and the standards achieved by two-thirds of the pupils were at the lowest end of Level 2. Since the last inspection, standards have improved in reading, but they have declined slightly in writing.
71. Initial assessments show that children's attainment in language and literacy is below average when they enter the Reception class. The inspection findings show that children make good initial progress and that most children achieve the Desirable Learning Outcomes by the age of five. Progress through Key Stage 1 is satisfactory and, by the end of the key stage, standards are average in reading and just below average in writing. Pupils make good progress in reading at Key Stage 2, but their progress in writing is unsatisfactory. By the end of Year 4, standards are above average in reading, but below average in writing. Optional national tests taken in Year 4 indicate that nearly all pupils reach the expected Level

3 in reading by the age of nine, and a good number of pupils achieve Level 4. However, only slightly more than half of the pupils reach the expected Level 3 in writing. The school has identified writing as an area for concern, and has included the development of pupils' writing skills as a key priority in its new development plan. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in reading and satisfactory progress in writing in relation to their prior attainment because of the additional help they receive and the school's recently introduced policy to ensure that all pupils at Stage 2 or above on the register for special educational needs receive at least half an hour of one-to-one support each week.

72. The pupils achieve at least satisfactory, and in many cases good, standards in speaking throughout the school. The pupils' listening skills vary, but are satisfactory overall. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils are confident in speaking in front of others. At times, however, it is difficult to prevent them from calling out because they do not listen carefully enough to what others are saying or take note that somebody else is already speaking. The good relationships between teachers and pupils encourage pupils to participate in discussions. The pupils' oral command of language is much better than their ability to write correctly. By the end of Year 4, the pupils have become increasingly confident in speaking in front of others. In an English lesson, for example, pupils worked in pairs to decide how they would perform some poems of their choice in front of the class; they spoke audibly and clearly and conveyed evident enjoyment in their recitation. Although the older pupils still have a tendency to call out or interrupt whilst others are speaking, they show increasing willingness to listen to the viewpoint of others and an ability to respond appropriately. They converse naturally and easily with adults.
73. In reading, most pupils reach the expected standard of Level 2 by the end of Key Stage 1. The emphasis given to reading during the literacy hour and additional time devoted to reading activities at the start of the day, often with a considerable amount of additional support from other adults, has helped to improve standards. The more able pupils read fluently and with good expression, taking note of punctuation. They cope well with longer unfamiliar words, splitting them up into shorter units and they understand what they have read. The reading of lower-attaining pupils is somewhat mechanistic and lacks expression. They hesitate when they come to new words, although they are learning how to split words up in order to pronounce them and are becoming less dependent on the prompting of adult helpers to decipher unfamiliar words. Most pupils have a satisfactory sight vocabulary and use their knowledge of other words and sounds to attempt to read unfamiliar words. Most pupils know how to use contents and index pages to search for information in books. The rate of progress in reading varies. A few pupils remain on the same reading level for long periods of time, whilst others progress quickly from one stage to the next. Their progress through the various stages of the school's reading programme does not appear always to be monitored effectively.
74. By the end of Year 4, a small number of pupils have reading abilities well in advance of their years, and almost half of the pupils have progressed beyond the level expected for nine-year-olds. One pupil, for example, read a complex passage very clearly, coping effortlessly with difficult words and showing very good understanding of the text. He clearly derived much pleasure from reading and was able to compare different types of text and state clear reasons for his preferences. Most pupils read fluently and with reasonable expression. They exercise discretion when choosing a new book to read, and have learnt how to determine whether or not the text will be too difficult for them to cope with. A few pupils still struggle with their reading, stumbling over words and finding it hard to apply common conventions to unfamiliar words. The weaker readers say they gain little enjoyment from the activity and only read infrequently at home or when they have to in school. By the time they leave the school, all pupils know how to locate books by topic in the library, using the school's colour-coded system, but they are not yet aware of the way books are arranged numerically according to the Dewey classification system. The school has worked hard to improve standards in reading, and the improvement in National Curriculum test results and the school's own monitoring of the levels reached by pupils at the end of Year 4 show very clearly that these efforts have been successful. There is now, however, a significant difference between the standards achieved in reading and those achieved in writing.
75. Early indications from this year's National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 1 suggest that there has been a gradual improvement in writing standards, although evidence from the inspection

shows that this is still the weakest aspect of pupils' work and that standards are still a little below average. When viewed over the course of a year, the pupils' books show that progress has been made, although few pupils manage to improve the accuracy of their spelling or their range of expression sufficiently to reach standards which are characteristic of work at the top end of Level 2. Pupils say that writing is their least favourite activity. Most pieces of written work are short, and there are few examples of extended writing. However, the teachers frequently reinforce basic principles during lessons. The pupils are very aware that sentences begin with capital letters and end with full stops. They successfully undertake spelling exercises in which they look for spelling patterns or find other words which use the same combination of letters. They are slow, however, to transfer what they have learnt doing these exercises when producing their own writing. They use dictionaries independently, but often copy words from them inaccurately. Most lower-attaining pupils are still struggling to commit their thoughts to paper, and find it hard to write more than a few sentences. Progress in writing is slower in Years 3 and 4 than at Key Stage 1. The pupils much prefer to talk about their work or to read, and this is reflected in the higher standards achieved in these aspects, and the brevity of some of their written work, untidy presentation and poor standards of spelling. Few pupils produce writing which is fluent, interesting and varied or which demonstrates a wide range of expressive vocabulary. Pupils with special educational needs make somewhat better progress in relation to their prior attainment than other pupils because they are given additional help with this aspect of their work. Key factors which account for standards in writing are insufficient emphasis on the teaching of writing skills, the development of writing skills through other subjects, and the correction of pupils' written work.

76. The teachers have worked hard on improving the quality of teaching in English. They have adopted methods advocated in the National Literacy Strategy and made sensible adaptations in the light of experience. Additional sessions of a quarter of an hour are provided for group reading. Good attention is given to the development of reading skills within the literacy hour itself and during the group reading sessions, but not enough emphasis is given during the whole-class sessions to the teaching of writing skills. Some of the written tasks given to pupils at the start of the day and during the independent group-work time during the literacy hour do not provide sufficient challenge, particularly for the more able pupils. Many of the exercises are mechanical and require little thought. This is particularly the case with some of the worksheets given to the pupils. Whilst these ostensibly reinforce spelling patterns, the pupils frequently fail to transfer the concepts practised using these sheets to their writing. Not enough time is spent looking at how to structure writing or analysing written work to see how it could be improved.
77. The pupils use their writing skills to record work in other subjects. Project work in history and geography, accounts of practical work in science and design and technology, self-evaluations in art, music and physical education, and reflective writing in religious education, all rely on the pupils' ability to write effectively. However, not enough attention is given to ways in which these tasks can be used to help to develop the pupils' writing skills. Some tasks involving the use of worksheets constrain what pupils are able to write; this particularly affects the more able pupils. The teachers' expectations of what pupils are able to produce, particularly in Key Stage 2, are not high enough. Many of the pieces of work produced by the pupils are very brief, and the presentation is frequently scruffy. These aspects are not commented upon when the work is marked. Some pieces of work which require pupils to draw pictures and write a brief caption or cut up and rearrange a worksheet are very superficial and miss further opportunities to develop writing skills. However, a key element in all of these tasks is the fact that the pupils' writing is not corrected. Poorly constructed sentences and glaring spelling mistakes, even of key words for the task, are allowed to pass without comment. The pupils are not required to go back and correct mistakes they have made or to redraft sentences or paragraphs in order to improve them. A poorly-presented piece of work may draw a comment from the teacher, but the pupil is rarely required to redo it. The pupils have very little opportunity to use a computer to draft and redraft their writing.
78. Despite the weaknesses in developing pupils' writing through other subjects and through the purposeful use of marking and correction, the quality of teaching in English lessons is good. Of the six lessons observed during the inspection, one was satisfactory and the other five were good. The teachers relate



very well to the pupils, who particularly enjoy the whole-class sessions when they read big books together, explore poetry or engage in discussions. The behaviour of a small number of pupils with behavioural difficulties is handled sensitively. Lessons are well structured. Introductory sessions using a big book or chosen text are conducted well, at an appropriate pace and with good involvement of all pupils. During the group-work sessions, the teachers concentrate well on the needs of the group with whom they are working. In a lesson for pupils in Years 3 and 4, for example, the teacher motivated a group of lower-ability pupils who gained much enjoyment from reading a variety of poems. The teachers are also conscious of the need to develop the pupils' ability to work independently. The pupils generally respond well by getting on with their assigned tasks, although, at times, these tasks lack sufficient challenge, particularly for the older and more able pupils. The teachers do not always make clear how much they expect pupils to achieve during this time, with the result that some pupils work at a rather leisurely pace and the time is not used effectively. The staff have a good system for informing parent helpers and assistants what they are required to do during the lesson. This ensures that the assistants' time is used well, and that they provide appropriate help which ties in with the main objectives of the lesson. Brief assessment notes also give important feedback to the teacher as to how the pupils have done. Pupils have regular reading and spelling homework. The level of support given at home and the use of the home-school reading diary varies considerably, but good progress results when parents help their child by listening to them read every day and discussing the text with them, and by communicating regularly with the teacher through the diary.

79. The coordinator provides sound leadership for the subject, and the staff show commitment to improving standards in English. They have accepted change willingly, and have been trying new approaches to improve standards in writing. For example, tasks are now provided for pupils when they arrive in the morning. Where these are clearly matched to pupils' needs, progress is evident. Some of the tasks set for the older pupils, however, lack variety and rigour and, therefore, prove to be not particularly effective. Additional literacy support has been well coordinated and has helped to raise reading standards and boost pupils' confidence. Further thought has gone into procedures for assessing pupils' work. Teachers place a sample of English writing every month into each pupil's 'Book of the Month'. However, the standard achieved by the pupil is not recorded on these pieces of work, which reduces the effectiveness of this method of recording pupils' progress. The school has decided to introduce self-assessment procedures, but this is not operating effectively in English at present, and further thought is required to make this a more useful tool to focus pupils' attention on what they need to do to improve. Staff are starting to track pupils' progress through more regular assessment, but its recent introduction has not yet had enough impact to enable staff to use this as a tool to modify their planning and match it more closely to pupils' needs. Some effective monitoring of teaching has taken place; staff have found that the process has helped to make them more aware of what is happening and the interchange of ideas has led to improvements in teaching. The coordinator monitors individual pieces of pupils' work, but not larger samples which cover a longer time span. The school library continues to be housed in a dingy and unattractive temporary cabin, but the staff nevertheless encourage regular visits to the library, and older pupils have the opportunity to exercise responsibility as library monitors and help the younger pupils at lunchtime.

## **MATHEMATICS**

80. The school's results in the National Curriculum tests for seven-year-olds have improved over the last four years. In 1997 they had fallen to well below average, but in 1999 they were above both the national average and the average for similar schools. A feature of the 1999 results was the high proportion of pupils reaching Level 3, the level above that expected for seven-year-olds. The trend in results for girls and boys is quite different from the national picture as the boys have achieved significantly higher results over the last four years than the girls. The school sets appropriate targets for meeting the required standards in the national tests and is making sound progress towards achieving them.
81. The inspection finding is that standards are in line with the national average at the end of Key Stage 1 and in line with national expectations in Year 4. Scrutiny of pupils' work and conversations with them

reveal that in Year 2 and Year 4, the pupils have an expected spread of knowledge, understanding and skills for their age. At Key Stage 1, average attaining pupils have good basic numeracy skills. They are secure in their understanding of place value to hundreds. They know their two, five and tens times tables and are beginning to manipulate larger numbers mentally, using these skills to solve practical problems. They know the names and properties of common two and three-dimensional shapes, understand line symmetry and have used the metric system to weigh and measure. However, the higher-attaining pupils in Year 2 lack confidence in applying their knowledge and understanding to new problems, and require a lot of support when trying to explain what they know. The high proportion of pupils reaching Level 3 in 1999 reflects high levels of attainment among the top group in the present Year 3 cohort rather than above average attainment over the whole year-group. Their attainment at the end of Year 3, as measured by the end-of-year tests, has not improved as quickly as the average and below average groups, suggesting a slower learning rate for this group.

82. In Year 4, pupils have good basic numeracy skills for their age. They use all the four rules of number and solve real-life problems. For example, they divide tens and units by units to work out how to share out an amount of money equally. Higher-attaining pupils have a good understanding of coordinates. For example, they can work out four-figure references on a simple map and understand how patterns of points on a grid relate to connections between the coordinates. A weakness in their work is the absence of explanations of the patterns that emerge or of how they have arrived at their answers. For example, they use Venn and Carroll diagrams to sort numbers or objects, but do not record their observations of what the diagrams reflect. In conversation, they demonstrate a good understanding of mathematical ideas, but also a lack of confidence when discussing new ideas, indicating lower achievement in using and applying mathematics than in numeracy.
83. The quality of teaching is good overall. The pupils get off to a good start in the Reception class, with good teaching that takes them on from the under-fives curriculum into the National Curriculum very effectively. The teacher constantly challenges the pupils to think about what they are doing and to apply their mathematical skills in practical contexts. For example, when they use numbered felt floor tiles to help them count on and back accurately, the higher-attainers are asked to count in twos or threes if they can. The group-work also challenges the pupils at different levels, with the higher-attainers having to write number sentences to describe problems they have solved, while the lower-attainers practise recognising and using add and take away signs to count on and back. As the pupils get older, the teachers still generally manage to ask questions during the lesson introductions that are aimed at the different attainment groups in the class. The introductions are generally the most effective part of the numeracy lessons, as the teachers get pupils to explain their thinking, as well as helping them to increase their skills of calculation. Occasionally, the main purpose of this introductory session is forgotten, and the time is unnecessarily used to test the pupils' knowledge, for example of mathematical tables, leading to inattention among the pupils and inefficient use of the lesson time.
84. The teachers plan their lessons thoroughly, and prepare tasks for two or three different attainment levels for the group activity part of the numeracy lessons. However, the tasks provided do not consistently meet the needs of all the pupils, especially the higher-attainers in Key Stage 2. For example, the pupils might be required to do more of the same kind of sum to achieve a result, without requiring them to extend their understanding. The teachers have good relationships with the pupils and manage them well, setting high expectations for behaviour, which are generally fulfilled. Expectations for attainment are satisfactory in Key Stage 1 but, in Key Stage 2, not enough is expected of the older and higher-attaining pupils. The teachers have a satisfactory understanding of the subject overall. However, the lack of opportunities for the older and higher-attaining pupils to engage in suitably challenging activities suggests a need for more in-service training in this area. Marking is undertaken conscientiously, and teachers keep good records of the pupils' test results and other achievements. However, these processes are not used as effectively as they could be. The marking seldom engages the pupils in discussion about their work, for example, and there is little evidence that marking or assessments are used to ensure that all the pupils are being stretched towards their potential.

85. The quality of learning is good. The pupils respond very positively in lessons. They show great enthusiasm for mental challenges and enjoy getting things right or seeing patterns emerge. They are confident when offering suggestions and listen to one another's contributions. Their behaviour is good. They attend to instructions and get on with individual and group work without needing too much close supervision. They relate very well to each other and to the teachers and other adults, showing good manners and respect. When working in groups, they share ideas and equipment happily and cooperate well together. They persevere with and enjoy their work, but do not always take care to present it as well as they could.
86. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and they make good progress in their learning. Pupils with specific difficulties in mathematics have individual learning targets, and their progress towards them is monitored regularly, with new targets set as existing ones are achieved. Other pupils are also well catered for with specially simplified tasks and support from the teacher and very effective classroom assistants.
87. There have been good improvements since the last inspection, particularly in the balance of the curriculum, assessment procedures and in pupils' rapid recall of basic number facts. The coordinator has worked very hard to keep up to date with developments and has overseen the successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. Some weaknesses that were identified in the last inspection report remain, however, particularly in the development of Attainment Target 1 of the National Curriculum for the subject, regarding using and applying mathematics. To successfully address this problem, the school will have to ensure that the teachers' expertise is improved further in order to enable them to adapt the National Numeracy Strategy to suit all the needs of the school more effectively. Currently, planning is undertaken directly from the strategy document for each class, and in some cases this is not leading to the provision of sufficient difference in challenge between the older and younger year-groups.

## SCIENCE

88. Attainment is above national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 and broadly in line with expectations in Year 4. This is an improvement at Key Stage 1 since the last inspection, while standards in Key Stage 2 have been maintained. The results of the teacher assessments in 1999 were above average for pupils reaching Level 2 or above. The proportion of pupils assessed as being at Level 3 was well above average. The inspection findings agree with the teachers' assessments, showing that pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is above average. The work in the pupils' books and their responses in lessons show that the average attaining pupils' knowledge and understanding across the attainment targets are better than would be expected at this age. For example, they know about light sources and explain clearly what happens when a shadow is formed, explaining that light must go in a straight line. Higher-attaining pupils cover the same ground as the others, but demonstrate better understanding, making good use of diagrams and charts.
89. The last inspection report indicated lower achievement in Key Stage 2 than at Key Stage 1. To some extent this disparity had remained until recently, particularly in the development of the skills of scientific enquiry. The reliance on worksheets had continued, limiting opportunities for pupils to explore for themselves and find ways of recording and explaining their results. However, since January 2000, there have been very significant improvements in the quality of the pupils' work in Key Stage 2. They are beginning to set out their work to show their predictions and explain how they have tested them experimentally. In lessons, they are showing a very good degree of independence in their thinking, and are making good progress, so that by the end of Year 4, their attainment is in line with expectations in all the attainment targets, including investigating and experimental skills.
90. The quality of teaching is now good throughout the school. In the three lessons that were observed, the teaching was very good and the pupils made rapid progress in both key stages. Very effective teaching in the Reception class enabled the pupils to learn how simple electrical circuits operate through first-hand experience and discussion. High expectations, coupled with very good classroom organisation and

effective teaching strategies, ensured that all the pupils had opportunities to make circuits for themselves and discuss their work with the teacher and the other children. In Key Stage 2, the pupils took their understanding of electricity further in a very effective lesson that challenged them to make and fit their own switches in a circuit, discovering which materials are good conductors or insulators in the process. The teacher used good subject knowledge to provide an effective balance between challenging the pupils to think for themselves and providing sufficient support in the way of materials and a structure for the activity. The pupils have to think of their own way of recording what they have done and what they have discovered, which makes them learn to use the correct symbols and scientific language. High expectations and very good pupil management and relationships were characteristics of all the lessons. The teachers discuss topics with the pupils in a way that encourages them to have confidence in their own ideas and to be eager to learn new ones.

91. In a very effective lesson in the Year 2 and 3 class, the teacher enabled the pupils to make good gains in their understanding of light and shadow by a very good mixture of demonstration and practical group activities. Of particular note in this lesson was the degree of independence and maturity expected of the pupils as they worked independently in groups. The pupils responded very positively by organising themselves effectively and cooperating to get the tasks completed. Pupils with special educational needs have full access to all activities and make good progress. The classroom assistants are very skilled at giving them the right level of support and encouraging maximum independence.
92. The quality of learning is good, and the pupils benefit much by their very good attitudes to science. They are enthusiastic in discussions, and put forward ideas and explanations with confidence. They show real excitement and wonder when things surprise them, as when a group of Reception children managed to get a bulb to light in a circuit. In all the lessons seen, the pupils showed maturity in the way they cooperate and collaborate. They handle equipment sensibly, and are aware of some safety rules, such as the importance of avoiding contact with water when working with electricity. Their behaviour is good. They are courteous and respectful to adults and get on well with each other. In practical tasks, they show initiative, and take responsibility for routine tasks such as setting up equipment and tidying away. Their work is not as tidily presented as it could be, however. For example, diagrams are not always properly labelled and explained, and this limits the usefulness of their written work as a learning tool.
93. Teaching and learning in the subject have not been sufficiently monitored in recent years, leading to some important areas for improvement being overlooked. Teachers assess the pupils' understanding well as the lessons proceed and use this information effectively in their planning of further lessons. However, the marking of the pupils' written work has not been effective over time, particularly in Key Stage 2, although it is beginning to improve. There are few examples of comments by the teacher for improvements or further investigations, for example, and repeated mistakes made in grammar and spelling are not indicated. Overall, the teachers do not use the subject as effectively as they could to improve the pupils' standard of writing. The pupils use mathematical skills in their scientific work, such as accurate measurement or the drawing of graphs, but the development of numeracy through the subject is not systematically developed. Similarly, although there are one or two examples in pupils' work of computer-generated graphs, the school does not make the best use of new technology to aid the pupils' learning in science. Planning is based on local authority guidelines, which give good guidance on learning through experiment and investigation. However, the absence of effective monitoring has led to some lack of progression in the development and acquisition of pupils' knowledge and skills, with younger pupils being introduced to some ideas at quite an advanced level for their age, compared to work in the same area being given to older pupils. Following recent changes in the way the subject is taught, however, there is now more challenge for the older pupils to build on their knowledge and skills through experimental work, and this is beginning to have a marked effect on improving their achievements. The school benefits from an extracurricular nature club run by parents that exploits the schools' natural surroundings for the benefit of the pupils.

## ART AND DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

94. Only one design and technology lesson was observed during the inspection; there was no opportunity to see any art lessons. Judgements have been based on a scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with pupils and subject coordinators. There have been some improvements in both subjects since the last inspection. The school now provides a more balanced curriculum in art, although standards achieved by pupils by the age of nine are below average. The planned basis for design and technology is now very much better, and pupils achieve standards that are appropriate for their age.
95. The school now provides a broader curriculum in art, covering all aspects of the National Curriculum. The school has introduced the use of sketchbooks for pupils to record their drawings and observational work. However, the teachers acknowledge that they lack the expertise to teach pupils different techniques, and this is reflected in the standards of observational drawing and painting which, in most cases, are below average. Pupils try hard to represent objects accurately when drawing in pencil, but they have not been taught appropriate techniques which would help them, for example, to produce different qualities of line and tone in their drawings. The deficit in skills is seen even more clearly in the pupils' paintings, most of which are of a much lower standard than is normal for their age. The work of the younger pupils who are at an early stage of developing their artistic skills is generally better than that of the older pupils. In the Reception class, for example, paintings of animals are of an appropriate standard for five-year-olds. A few pupils show artistic promise at this stage; for example, one painting stood out from the other paintings because of its bold use of colour and realistic representation of a tiger. However, pupils who show this ability are not extended as they move through the school.
96. Pupils enjoy the practical aspect of design and technology, and talk enthusiastically about objects they have made. In the lesson observed, they listened well, participated eagerly in the discussion and carried out their evaluation of different drink products sensibly. They do not show the same enthusiasm for recording their work. Much of the presentation in their design and technology books is shoddy, and little attention is given to the quality of their diagrams, the way these are labelled and the depth of their written comments. The written records do not give a clear picture of what pupils have achieved or of the processes they have undertaken. Written work is not marked by the teachers, which misses important opportunities to help pupils develop their literacy skills. For example, one pupil wrote on successive evaluations "I would of put the material ...". Because the mistake was not corrected or explained on the first occasion, its use became more ingrained on following occasions.
97. The design and technology lesson observed was good, and there were aspects of the lesson which were very good. The teacher had planned a good sequence of lessons to develop pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding in a systematic and logical way. From their first lesson, the pupils were well aware of the importance of hygiene when handling food. The lesson helped pupils to develop an understanding that there are many factors which have to be taken into consideration when designing a product, and that what appeals to one person may not appeal to another. The teacher also helped pupils to enrich their range of vocabulary by focusing on suitable adjectives which could be used to describe a drink. A particularly good feature was the teacher's careful questioning which led pupils to the conclusion that it is important to consider smell, colour, texture and consistency as well as taste when evaluating a drink product.
98. Both subjects make a good contribution to the pupils' cultural development and their awareness of different cultures. Pupils have studied examples of African art produced by Matisse and Picasso and produced their own African masks. In design and technology, they have investigated the qualities of Indian food and designed their own Indian meal. Some aspects of the work in design and technology allow the teacher to develop the pupils' social skills. Before dividing the pupils into groups, the teacher reinforced the need for consideration when working with others, the importance of considering other people's feelings when making comments and the need to take turns and work cooperatively.
99. The leadership in both subjects is satisfactory. The coordinators have brought about improvements and now provide clearer guidance for other members of staff. The introduction of self-assessment sheets

helps pupils to focus on the work they have done. They are encouraged to think of processes involved in producing their finished products and whether they could have made improvements. However, the teachers do not assess pupils' work effectively, and do not, therefore, gain a clear picture of what they need to do to improve standards. The storage and organisation of resources has improved, although the external location of the resources area is far from ideal. These problems will be solved when the school moves into its new accommodation. Neither coordinator has had the opportunity to monitor what is happening in their subjects throughout the school, but time has been allocated for this to happen as part of a rolling programme of self-evaluation.

## **GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY**

100. There have been good improvements in the provision for geography since the last inspection. A good scheme of work is now in place, the subject is taught well and pupils make good progress. The level of provision and standards in history have remained at the same level as last time, with sound teaching and learning throughout the school.
101. Pupils reach standards in line with expectations in history in Key Stage 1 and in Year 4. In geography, standards are higher than would be expected at Key Stage 1 and in line with expectations in Key Stage 2. A strong feature of the pupils' attainment is the way they develop study skills alongside their knowledge and understanding. They learn to use a variety of sources for evidence, from real objects and books to interviews with people. In history at Key Stage 1, pupils compare aspects of life in their own times with evidence of life in past times from sources close to their own experience. For example, they describe how Cinderella's kitchen in the fairy tale would differ from their own kitchens at home. In Key Stage 2, they learn to compare life in distant times, such as the Roman era, to life today, through looking at specific aspects such as homes. In geography, in Key Stage 1, the pupils develop a good awareness of issues that affect their lives, such as pollution and conservation. They demonstrate a good awareness of good and bad practice in these areas by designing eye-catching posters to promote conservation and discourage litter. In Key Stage 2, pupils widen their knowledge of the world and by the end of Year 4 can use maps in a variety of scales to locate near and distant places. They have a sound understanding of some important similarities between countries, such as the need to provide food and engage in trade as well as differences in customs and climates.
102. Only one lesson was seen in geography and part of a lesson in history, so judgements on teaching and learning rely to some extent on the scrutiny of work and conversations with pupils. The standard of teaching and learning is good in geography and at least satisfactory in history. In geography, teaching is guided by good subject knowledge that informs lively debates on relevant issues. The pupils respond very well to this stimulating teaching and make good progress in their knowledge, understanding and skills. Their speaking and listening skills are improved by these lessons, and good links are made with other subjects. For example, they are encouraged to use scientific terms like 'rusting', 'eroding' and 'dissolving' in their debate on conservation. Lessons proceed at a brisk pace, and good use is made of resources, for example, a collection of items of litter to focus the pupils' attention. From the evidence seen, the teaching is satisfactory in history. Pupils are encouraged to use first-hand and secondary sources of information to compare aspects of life present and past. The teachers pay attention to the needs of the pupils in each key stage and ensure that they cover the agreed scheme of work. An adequate range of resources is used effectively to support lessons. In both subjects, there is insufficient attention to the development of writing. There is no obvious policy to use the pupils' written work to systematically improve grammar and spelling, and little evidence of redrafting to extend and improve the content of the written work. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support, both from the teacher and from very effective classroom assistants. The coordinator has a good overview of the subjects across the school and is aware of how the schemes of work are being implemented, although there has, as yet, been no formal monitoring of teaching and learning. There is good advice and support available for colleagues, and information gained from in-service training and outcomes of meetings with staff from other local schools are effectively disseminated. There is a good climate for learning and clear educational direction for both subjects.

## INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

103. There have been a number of improvements in the school's provision for information technology since the last inspection, but they have not been enough to enable the school to keep pace with national developments over the last few years or to provide pupils with sufficient opportunity to develop the necessary skills. The school's resources for teaching the subject have improved, and most teachers are now more confident in using computers. The school still does not make enough use of information and communication technology as a learning tool in other subjects and the time allocated to the subject is still insufficient. Pupils' attainment is below the national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 and by the age of nine. Progress throughout the school has been unsatisfactory for all pupils, including those with special educational needs, but recent improvements in teaching the subject are leading to a gradual improvement in the rate of progress.
104. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils are able to use a word processor to produce short sentences. They know how to use some basic features of the program, such as altering the size and colour of the text. They do not yet understand or have the opportunity to learn how to use the word processor as a tool to help them with their writing by drafting text, and then editing their work. They produce pictures using a graphics program, although some pupils still have difficulty controlling the mouse with accuracy. They have a basic understanding about how to use a CD-ROM to find out information, but have little opportunity to use different CD-ROMs in connection with their work in other subjects. They can give a simple sequence of instructions to make a programmable robot move. They do not yet know how a computer can be used to handle data.
105. By the age of nine, the pupils have learnt how to use other features of a word processor, for example the use of the spellchecker. However, because they receive few opportunities to use computers, most pupils have still not started to use the word processor as a tool to help them with the process of drafting and redrafting their work. They use a wider variety of tools and show greater precision when using a graphics program, for example, to create repeating images. They have not yet learnt how to combine information from different types of computer program in order to produce more complex documents which take account of the intended audience. They have learnt how to enter data into a data-handling program in order to produce bar charts, pie charts and line graphs, but they have not yet learnt how to create and interrogate a database. Pupils in Year 4 are learning to find information on the Internet. On their residential visit, they have also had the opportunity to see how sensing equipment can be used to record birds' feeding times, and how this information can then be represented in graphical format.
106. On the few occasions when teachers do provide teaching sessions, the quality of teaching is satisfactory. In a lesson for pupils in Year 1, for example, the teacher questioned pupils well about how to locate and start a program, thus consolidating knowledge and ensuring that pupils were familiar with this essential skill. She then gave clear explanations about how to use the program which simulated the movements of a programmable robot. This prepared pupils effectively for their individual practice sessions. However, the length of time elapsing between this session and the first opportunity for a pupil to practise at the computer was too long, and much of what had been taught was forgotten.
107. Overall, the teaching of information technology is still unsatisfactory because of the lack of planned opportunities to teach pupils new skills and insufficient provision for pupils to practise and consolidate their learning. Little attention has been given to the use of information and communication technology in teaching in other subjects or exploring ways in which this type of usage can enhance pupils' information technology skills. A good example of ways in which these two purposes can be combined was seen in its infancy in a design and technology lesson. Pupils had completed a tasting session in which they were evaluating different types of drink. The teacher explained to the pupils that they would subsequently be building a database from the information gathered from people's responses. They would then be able to interrogate the database to find out which factors are most important when designing a new drink. No other instances were observed of such well-integrated work, but the example illustrates that the school's provision in this respect is gradually improving. A few pupils with special educational needs have more opportunities than other pupils to use computers to help them

acquire literacy skills. A good session was observed in which an assistant combined the use of a spelling program and some clearly focused questions to help a pupil make progress in learning how to spell words beginning with 'fl'.

108. The pupils' progress has been affected by other factors. The coordinator's absence for two terms on maternity leave caused a temporary interruption to the development of the subject, even though some useful work was undertaken by the temporary coordinator. The distribution of computers and the lack of space within the classroom restrict the use of computers to one or two pupils at a time and make it very difficult to teach pupils efficiently. Until recently, the school's equipment and the lack of suitable software made it difficult to fulfil many of the requirements of the information technology syllabus. Recent investment has provided much more appropriate equipment, although the ratio of computers to pupils is still somewhat low. A further significant factor is the fact that most of the school's computers are not used for a large part of each school day. The small amount of time they are used each day is insufficient to enable pupils to make the necessary progress to reach the nationally expected levels.
109. A number of initiatives make good contributions to pupils' progress in the subject. A parent regularly provides good quality teaching for pupils in Years 2 and 3 on one afternoon each week. The one-to-one tuition has enabled pupils to make progress with specific aspects of the subject, but the organisation of such personalised tuition is not the most efficient use of the time which is generously donated, and it takes a good number of weeks before all pupils have covered the planned objectives. Once a week after school, pupils in Year 4 have the opportunity to attend computer club, which is run by a teaching assistant and her husband. On these occasions, pupils who attend manage to cover a wider variety of applications than are covered during normal lessons.
110. The coordinator has produced an elementary form of assessment, but the assessment sheets are not used consistently by staff, and are not sufficiently flexible to identify what higher-attaining pupils are already able to do, so that appropriate work can be planned to help them to make progress. The assessments are also not yet used effectively to identify pupils who need additional help. Some members of staff are beginning to make effective use of information and communication technology themselves, for example, by producing attractive labelling for displays. In the Reception class, the teacher had used a digital camera very effectively to produce a record of the pupils' visit to Carey Camp. There is no collection of work which pupils have accomplished in information technology which could serve as an illustration of levels of attainment or as a celebration of pupils' achievements. There is very little evidence of the use of information and communication technology in the work pupils undertake in other subjects.

## MUSIC

111. Provision for music has improved since the last inspection, when there was no active coordinator. The subject is now coordinated and taught effectively throughout the school, and pupils reach standards in line with expectations for their age in Key Stage 1 and in Year 4. The standard in singing depends on the level of support available for the pupils. When given a suitable starting note or a musical accompaniment, they sing well, keeping in tune and putting good expression into their voices. In Year 4, the pupils have a reasonable sense of rhythm, and keep a steady beat, although some of the boys in the group find it difficult to do this. On the other hand, some individual boys showed great aplomb when singing solo parts in preparation for a forthcoming production. All the pupils appreciate the difference between various styles of music and the moods that can be created. There was no evidence on which to base judgements about the pupils' composing skills.
112. Pupils respond very positively to music. They enjoy the lessons and join in the singing and activities enthusiastically. They behave well, though on some occasions, when they are sitting in the same formation for long periods, some boys tend to disengage from the lesson. The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' personal development by giving them opportunities to perform in public and motivation to practise and improve their skills.



113. The standard of teaching was good or very good in the small number of lessons seen. The coordinator teaches all classes throughout the school, and her lively and stimulating teaching engages the pupils' interest and promotes very positive attitudes and good learning. Although not a specialist, the coordinator has become very well informed through in-service training, and this has enabled her to make steady improvements in teaching and standards throughout the school. Relationships in the classroom are very good, and the teacher manages the pupils very effectively. Pupils with special educational needs, including behavioural difficulties, receive good support and are fully included in all lessons. The teacher keeps a careful eye on individuals during activities in order to assess their understanding and skills, and intervenes to offer appropriate support and guidance. For example, pupils who are experiencing difficulties keeping a steady beat are given opportunities to practise individually in order to be able to join in with the group.
114. The curriculum is well organised so that the pupils experience a balance between all the different aspects of music. The coordinator's enthusiasm and dedication contributes enormously to the standards achieved and the opportunities available. The pupils are currently preparing for a summer performance, for example, that will involve parents and the wider community in active roles, giving the pupils an invaluable insight into the potential life-long rewards of musical activities. In addition to the school curriculum, the pupils also have the opportunity to learn to play a musical instrument. Currently violin and recorder lessons are offered. There is also an after-school country-dancing club which attracts a good number of pupils. Currently most of these are girls, but there is an open-door policy and in the past plenty of boys have attended.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

115. Only two physical education lessons took place during the inspection. As no dance or gymnastics lessons were observed, it is not possible to compare current standards in these aspects of physical education with those found at the time of the last inspection. The school has, however, maintained high standards in swimming, and the pupils continue to show enthusiasm for their physical education lessons. Pupils achieve standards which are appropriate for their age in athletic activities at Key Stage 2 and in ball-control skills at Key Stage 1.
116. The quality of the teaching in physical education is satisfactory. A soundly planned lesson at Key Stage 1 helped the pupils to make satisfactory progress in developing their ball-control skills, and to learn the importance of being alert and dodging when playing small-sided games. The pupils were given appropriate activities and provided with a clear explanation and demonstration of how to dodge opponents. The closing activities were allowed to go on for too long, which diminished the overall effectiveness of the lesson. At Key Stage 2, the pupils were given clear explanations and opportunities to practise events planned for the school's forthcoming sports day. The pupils learnt some important points about different techniques to use when running short and long distances. The presence of assistant staff ensured a good level of supervision, which kept pupils actively engaged throughout the lesson. However, the teacher's own time was used ineffectively for much of the lesson, timing individual pupils as they did short sprints. This could have provided a good opportunity for pupils to develop responsible attitudes by organising the races, and undertaking and recording the timing, thus freeing the teacher to observe pupils' performance and provide greater teaching input.
117. The quality of learning in physical education is satisfactory. The most positive feature is the pupils' willingness and enthusiasm to participate. Some of the races in the Key Stage 2 lesson developed a healthy sense of competitiveness, and an incident in which a leading runner fell enabled the teacher to reinforce concepts of good sportsmanship, to which the other pupils responded well. Some unnecessary chatter from pupils in both lessons, and the occasional minor squabble amongst the older pupils detracted from the generally positive atmosphere of the lessons.
118. The school places particular emphasis on swimming and there are regular swimming sessions during the first two terms for all pupils. As a result, pupils quickly gain confidence in water. By the time they leave school, nearly all pupils achieve the standards expected for the end of Key Stage 2; they swim 25

metres unaided and know the principles and skills of water safety and survival. Many pupils have progressed beyond these standards and swim much longer distances.

119. The school has started to introduce self-assessment tasks for pupils in physical education. From the few examples seen, the practice is effective in that it helps pupils to evaluate their own performance, reflect on what they have learnt and assess how they might be able to improve. However, teachers miss opportunities to develop pupils' literacy skills through this simple exercise. Mistakes in pupils' writing are not corrected and the same mistakes can be seen repeated in written work produced for other subjects.
120. The school provides an appropriately balanced programme of physical education, which is enhanced by extracurricular activities run by the staff for pupils in Key Stage 2, with occasional help from parents. The school recently inaugurated and hosted a festival of football for other small schools in the area. Despite the sloping nature of the playing field, the school's outdoor accommodation for physical education is good. Indoor accommodation for gymnastics and dance is totally inadequate as there is no school hall. The school compensates for this lack by using the local village hall. These shortcomings will be rectified when the school moves into its new accommodation next year.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

121. Pupils reach standards in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus at the end of Key Stage 1 and in Year 4. They have a good knowledge of their own and other religions, and an awareness of how religious ideas can affect their own and other people's lives. For example, they link four important events in their own life with the important events as celebrated by religious festivals. The pupils' written work demonstrates an appropriate level of knowledge and understanding of different religions for their age. Older pupils demonstrate an ability to think for themselves about how other religions compare with Christianity, illustrated by the questions a Year 4 pupil prepared for an interview with a Jewish person. The questions showed a good appreciation of the significance of festivals and customs in a religion.
122. The pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They engage enthusiastically in discussions and show a willingness to express their own ideas, for example in the form of prayers or thoughts for assemblies. In a Key Stage 1 lesson, the pupils showed great interest in all the different aspects of the local church following a visit, particularly when the teacher used their observations as the basis for discussion.
123. Only one lesson was observed during the inspection, in which the quality of teaching and learning was good. The evidence from discussions with pupils and scrutiny of the work in their books is that the quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school. The subject is mostly taught by the coordinator, who is very knowledgeable and committed. She communicates her enthusiasm effectively to the pupils, and generates a lively interest in all aspects of the subject. Resources have been improved since the last inspection, and are well used to support learning. There are now artefacts in the school, for example, to help make the teaching about other religions interesting and relevant. The teacher also makes some effective use of new technology, for example in taking digital images of the church visit from which the pupils can develop their written work. Relationships are good between the pupils and between the teacher and the pupils, and the pupils show courtesy and respect.
124. Lessons are planned to provide a balance between knowledge of the religions selected by the syllabus and an understanding and appreciation of how religious beliefs affect people's lives. Pupils with special educational needs receive appropriate support and make good progress along with their peers in their knowledge and understanding. Although the pupils' work is marked, this strategy is not used effectively to improve the standard of their grammar, punctuation or spelling, or to extend their powers of self-expression. Repeated grammatical errors are sometimes ignored, for example, and there is little evidence of pupils being asked to redraft and extend their written work to make improvements. The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' personal development by engaging them in debate on important issues and encouraging them to reflect on their own and other people's values and beliefs.