

INSPECTION REPORT

ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Christchurch

LEA area: Dorset

Unique reference number: 113848

Headteacher: Peter Thomson

Reporting inspector: Rob Crompton
7230

Dates of inspection: 8th – 11th May 2001

Inspection number: 194990

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

| | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Type of school: | Infant and junior |
| School category: | Voluntary aided |
| Age range of pupils: | 4 - 11 |
| Gender of pupils: | Mixed |
| School address: | Dorset Road Christchurch Dorset |
| Postcode: | BH23 3DA |
| Telephone number: | 01202 485976 |
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| Appropriate authority: | The Governing Body |
| Name of chair of governors: | Fr. Michael McGhee OMI |
| Date of previous inspection: | 17 th February 1997 |

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Team members | | | Subject responsibilities | Aspect responsibilities |
|--------------|-------------------|----------------------|--|---|
| 7230 | Rob Crompton | Registered inspector | Science Art and design Information and communication technology Music | How high are standards? <i>The school's results and achievements</i> How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? |
| 11096 | Margaret Davie | Lay inspector | | How high are standards? <i>Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development</i> How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents? |
| 10207 | Akram Khan-Cheema | Team inspector | English Geography History Special educational needs English as an additional language Equal opportunities | |
| 17456 | Angela Smithers | Team inspector | The Foundation Stage Mathematics Design and technology Physical education | How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? |

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is a medium sized voluntary aided Catholic primary school for boys and girls four to eleven years old. It has 219 pupils. Pupils are mainly drawn from the local parish in Christchurch but many come from neighbouring areas. Their attainment on entry is broadly typical of that found nationally. An average proportion (16 per cent) of the pupils have special educational needs, including specific learning difficulties, behavioural problems and physical disabilities; two have statements of special educational need. Almost all pupils are white. Twenty-one pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. No pupils are learning to speak English as an additional language.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school, where pupils benefit from a broad and balanced curriculum. They enjoy school and the vast majority do well. The reception class provides a good start to children's learning. Very effective teaching leads to good standards in English and science. Attainment by eleven-year-olds in mathematics is more variable but is broadly typical of this age group. The headteacher provides good leadership and is well supported by the deputy head and senior staff. Governors and staff work well together to improve the school and maintain good standards. Parents hold the school in high regard and there are strong links with the parish. The school gives good value for money

What the school does well

- Good teaching leads to above average standards in most subjects
- Pupils' positive attitudes and good behaviour contribute to their learning
- The broad curriculum provides a rich experience for pupils and enhances their personal development
- The caring ethos means pupils feel valued and secure
- Parents are regarded as partners in their children's learning and make a valuable contribution to the life and work of the school
- The headteacher provides effective leadership and is well supported by staff and governors in moving the school forward

What could be improved

- Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are below expectations at Key Stage 2
- The highest attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged in some mathematics lessons

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Improvement since the last inspection in February 1997 has been very good. Standards have been maintained during this period. The provision for the youngest pupils was a weakness and is now a strength. The quality of teaching has improved considerably, particularly in Key Stage 1, where weaknesses had been identified. The number of classroom assistants has increased significantly and is contributing to improving standards. The role of the senior management team has been more clearly defined and it plays an increasing part in monitoring teaching and pupils' progress.

STANDARDS

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

| Performance in: | compared with | | | |
|-----------------|---------------|------|------|-----------------|
| | all schools | | | similar schools |
| | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2000 |
| English | A* | A | A | A |
| mathematics | A | B | C | D |
| science | A | C | C | D |

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C D

below average

well below average E

Standards are good overall. Children make good headway through the foundation stage¹, most achieving the early learning goals in all the recommended areas of learning. This rate of progress continues through the infants where National Curriculum assessments of seven-year-olds in reading, mathematics and science have generally matched national averages and have been close to those of similar schools in recent years.

The number of eleven-year-olds working at the expected levels in English and science is above average, although standards in writing are weaker than in reading. Good standards are achieved in art and design, and geography. Very good standards are achieved in history. Attainment in mathematics, music and physical education is at least sound. Pupils have good computer skills and seven-year-olds reach the expected standards. Although eleven-year-old pupils are confident in ICT, overall standards at Key Stage 2 are below expectations. Too little work in design and technology was seen to judge standards.

Most pupils do well through the school but higher attaining pupils do not always reach their potential in mathematics. Those with special educational needs generally make good progress towards their individual targets.

Although standards are still above average, results in mathematics and science have not kept pace with national trends over the last three years. However, the results in 1998 were unusually high; also, the size of each year group is relatively small, which means the year-to-year variations are not significant enough to determine overall school trends. Using its knowledge of each year group, the school sets appropriately challenging targets for pupils. Through effective teaching and their own hard work, most pupils rise to these expectations and reach their potential.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect | Comment |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Attitudes to the school | Pupils are very enthusiastic about their work and show a great interest in activities. |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms | Behaviour is very good. Pupils move around the school sensibly and behave well at playtimes and lunchtimes. They are polite and courteous to adults. |

¹ The foundation stage is from a child's third birthday to the end of the reception year. Early learning goals are the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the foundation stage. They refer mainly to achievements children make in connection with six areas of learning: personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical and creative development. There are many goals for each area of learning, for example, in language and literacy, children should be able to write their own name and other things such as labels and begin to write simple sentences.

| | |
|--|---|
| Personal development and relationships | Relationships are very good and pupils generally support each other well. Pupils are keen to help the school run smoothly by taking on individual responsibilities. |
| Attendance | Attendance is satisfactory. Absences are mostly accounted for by illness and there is very little lateness or unauthorised absence |

TEACHING AND LEARNING

| Teaching of pupils: | aged up to 5 years | aged 5-7 years | aged 7-11 years |
|----------------------------|--------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Lessons seen overall 41 | 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 overall quality of teaching is good and this leads to effective learning and good progress across the school. In 80 per cent of lessons, the teaching was good or better. Fifteen per cent were excellent, 31 per cent were very good and 31 per cent were good; there was no unsatisfactory teaching. Very good teaching features in each year group. The quality of teaching is exceptionally strong in the Year 4 and Year 5 classes.

The reception class teacher plans stimulating lessons and, together with the support assistant, helps the children establish good learning habits. Children have a very good grounding for later work.

English and mathematics are taught well. Teaching of basic skills is effective, particularly in literacy and numeracy. Good planning means that expectations are raised each year; pupils consolidate and extend their learning in each class. Teachers work very effectively in partnership with the classroom assistants and this produces a good level of effort by the pupils. In the best lessons, they structure lessons very well and make the learning intentions clear; skilful questioning means that pupils often have to think carefully and deeply, which leads to very good learning. In a few lessons, the introductions are too long, which limits the time pupils have to work on the set tasks. Teachers generally provide work at different levels but occasionally higher attaining pupils are insufficiently challenged. The use of resources is imaginative, which sustains pupils' interest well. There is good support for pupils with special educational needs.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect | Comment |
|---|---|
| The quality and range of the curriculum | The curriculum is carefully planned to cover every subject. The areas of learning in reception are organised very effectively to stimulate children's imagination. The curriculum provides a challenge for both girls' and boys' interests. Assessment systems are comprehensive. |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs | The curriculum and teaching for these pupils is good. Individual education plans are detailed and used well to track pupils' progress. Support assistants are organised carefully and work sensitively to encourage pupils to extend their learning. |
| Provision for pupils with English as an additional language | Pupils with English as an additional language are at a similar level of English as other children. They do not require special provision and are fully integrated into the work and life of the school. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | Provision for spiritual, moral and social development is very good. Spiritual development is promoted through planned opportunities for reflection in assemblies and lessons. Pupils gain a very good understanding of right and wrong and abide by their own rules. The curriculum for developing understanding of pupils' own culture, and for developing multi-cultural awareness is good. |
| How well the school cares for its pupils | The school provides a very caring context for learning. There is a very high degree of concern for pupils' welfare. |
| Partnership with parents | Parents are positive about the partnership. They are given plenty of information about their child's curriculum and the life of the school. Parents who help in school contribute to pupils' learning and most parents provide good support for their own children. The parent teacher association makes a valuable contribution to school life. |

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|---|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | The headteacher provides good leadership and works effectively in partnership with the deputy. They are determined to raise and sustain standards using an imaginative curriculum within a caring and supportive context. Co-ordinators play an important role in developing their areas of responsibility. |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities | Governors have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They play an active part in the life of the school. |
| The school's evaluation of its performance | Monitoring systems are effective. Senior staff have formal opportunities to observe colleagues teaching; planning is monitored carefully to ensure progression through the year and from class to class. |
| The strategic use of resources | The governors and headteacher make strategic use of resources. The development plan identifies targets and how they are to be met in financial, material and personnel terms. The school continuously strives to achieve best value from all its resources. |
| Staffing, accommodation and learning resources. | The wide-ranging expertise of staff is used well and there are good opportunities for further training. Accommodation is generally spacious, well maintained and used effectively. Learning resources are plentiful except for some shortages in ICT. |

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Twenty-seven per cent of parents return the questionnaire. Nineteen parents attended the parents' meeting.

| What pleases parents most | What parents would like to see improved |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children like school, behave well and make good progress. Teachers are very effective and expect pupils to work hard. The school keeps parents well informed about how their children are doing. The school is open and welcoming and works in close partnership with parents. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some parents would like more activities outside lessons. |

Inspectors agreed with parents' positive views. Because many pupils come to school by bus, clubs are limited to lunchtime and these, together with outings to support work in various areas of the curriculum, are completely appropriate.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1 Standards are good overall. Attainment varies from year-to-year, depending on the nature of the pupils in each year group, but the picture at both key stages is generally positive; the inspection found that standards are good in English and science, and broadly average in mathematics. Most higher attaining pupils reach their potential in English, but some do not do so in mathematics. Pupils make good headway in literacy and numeracy and apply these skills well in other subjects.

2 The number of eleven-year-olds working at the expected levels in English is above average. Results of the 2000 National Curriculum in English were well above average, and performance in mathematics and science was below the national figure. When averaged out over the last three years, results indicate that pupils were about a term ahead in mathematics and science and almost a year ahead in English. When performance is compared to similar² schools, the 2000 results were well above average in English, above average in mathematics and below average in science. Within English, results in writing are below those in reading. The performance of seven-year-olds in National Curriculum assessments in reading, mathematics and science have generally matched national averages and have been close to those of similar schools in recent years.

3 Most pupils have good computer skills and seven-year-olds reach the expected standards. Although generally confident in information and communication technology (ICT), eleven-year-olds cannot meet the expected standards because the school does not yet have the necessary resources to teach some aspects of the subject. For this reason, standards at Key Stage 2 are below expectations.

4 At both key stages, very good standards are achieved history; attainment in art and design, and geography is above average. Attainment in physical education and music is at least sound. Provision for design and technology is good but too little work in was seen to judge overall standards.

5 As they start school, most children have acquired a level of literacy and numeracy that is broadly typical of the age group and they have good social skills. They make good progress through the foundation stage and most achieve the early learning goals in the recommended areas of learning for this age. Some children are ready to begin work on the first levels of the National Curriculum before the end of the reception year.

6 The rate of progress in reception, which was slow at the time of the previous inspection, is now good. Teachers in Years 1 and 2 successfully build on this secure foundation, taking learning forward at a good rate. This quality of learning continues through Key Stage 2 so that the majority of pupils achieve as well as could be reasonably expected and frequently better. Pupils with special needs generally make good progress towards their individual targets, although the progress of some higher attaining pupils is hindered by a lack of challenge. There is no marked difference in the performance of girls and boys.

7 Drawing on assessment information, the school sets appropriately challenging targets for pupils. Through effective teaching and their own hard work, most pupils rise to these expectations and reach their potential.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

² Comparisons are based on the number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.

8 Pupils' of all ages have very good attitudes to learning. Their behaviour is also very good and this makes a significant contribution to how well they achieve. They are keen to come to school and enthusiastic about learning, generally settling down quickly at the start of the day ready to do their best. They listen to instructions carefully and work hard at their tasks.

9 Good teaching leads to very positive attitudes. In a Year 5 lesson, children were stimulated and challenged, animatedly discussing and sharing ideas for working out the correct answers. They concentrated throughout because of the teacher's energetic delivery, which kept the pace of learning at a high level. Equally, because the teacher has built up strong personal relationships with her pupils, they have developed trust and respect and want to do their best. Similarly, in a Year 1 geography lesson, the teacher's very strong classroom management ensured that pupils' behaviour was perfect throughout. Her quietly assertive and insistent manner together with liberal use of praise meant that they paid attention and made excellent progress.

10 Pupils behave very well all around the school. This makes a very significant contribution to how well they can be taught and endorses parents' overwhelming opinion that behaviour is very good. Pupils move around the building in a sensible manner and are very polite. They play happily, are compassionate and very good at sorting out little tiffs on the playground. This was clearly demonstrated by a group of younger boys who had upset one of their playmates. They immediately sorted it out without adult intervention by making a fuss of him and giving him a cuddle to make him feel better. They were soon all playing again happily. Meals' supervisors report that behaviour at lunchtime is mostly very good, that children are friendly and respond appropriately to discipline. While there is very little bullying, pupils made are aware of what it is and how it will be dealt with. They share their thoughts and concerns about it freely with teachers in circle and prayer time, and know that they should tell an adult if they feel harassed or threatened. There have been no exclusions.

11 Personal development is very good. Pupils work well together. In a Year 3 mathematics lesson for example, a few who were having a bit of difficulty remembering and getting on with their nine times table were skilfully paired with and well supported by others who were more confident. Pupils are keen to help with daily routines, particularly in classrooms where they act as monitors, organising resources, tidying up and taking messages. They have strongly developed relationships with the local church where they participate in various religious festivals such as the Advent carol service and partake in sacraments such as their First Communion. Year 6 pupils show their growing maturity particularly well by the sensible way they carry out their added duties. Each one of them takes some responsibility during the year, be it house captain, helping in the dining hall, monitoring the doors during playtime and helping to set up for assembly or mass. They also respond well to increased opportunities to be more independent in their learning. Pupils' growing independence was demonstrated well during a science lesson when they were searching for and collecting insects from the school grounds. There is, however, scope for improvement in this aspect of their development, for example by making better use of the new library to encourage personal research skills.

12 Attendance is about the same as the national average and is satisfactory. Absences are mostly accounted for by illness, and a few children who are taken out of school during term time for family holidays. There is very little lateness or unauthorised absence.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

13 The overall quality of teaching is good, and this is the main factor contributing to the good learning and progress of the majority of pupils. Because of their good attitudes, their good behaviour and the very good relationships that permeate the school, pupils respond well to teaching.

14 In almost half the lessons, the teaching is very good or excellent and in a third, it is good. No teaching is unsatisfactory. This is a very significant improvement on the previous inspection, when the quality of teaching was described as satisfactory overall; only one lesson was judged as very good and there was some unsatisfactory teaching.

15 In the foundation stage, the teacher plans stimulating lessons which appeal greatly to the children. Her skilful questioning draws on their existing experiences and imagination. For example, using an attractive variety of animal puppets she developed a story with the whole class. The children were totally absorbed and keen to offer suggestions; the whole experience was enjoyable and purposeful. The teacher, effectively supported by the learning assistant uses a good range of strategies to teach the basic skills of literacy and numeracy very well.

16 Teachers in Key Stage 1 develop warm relationships with pupils and use a variety of approaches effectively. They teach English and mathematics well. There is a very good range of expertise and pupils benefit from teachers' very good knowledge of science, geography and music. This was illustrated during a very successful music lesson in Year 1 where the teacher's underlying understanding meant expectations were high and she could successfully support pupils in meeting these. In many lessons, the pupils pick up the teachers' infectious enthusiasm. Most lessons move at a brisk pace and with a sense of purpose – as seen in a Year 1/2 mathematics lesson when pupils were encouraged to apply themselves, stay on task and tackle the demanding work.

17 The quality of teaching at Key Stage 2 is similarly effective. It is exceptionally strong in the Year 4 and Year 5 classes where eight of the nine lessons observed were very good, including four that were excellent. Teachers structure lessons very well and ensure that pupils know what the work is leading to. Rather than simply setting work, they make the reasons behind it very clear. This motivates pupils to rise to the challenges. Skilful questioning means that pupils often have to think carefully and deeply before responding. This process, together with the need to express themselves clearly when answering, has a very good effect on pupils' learning.

18 Across the school, teachers plan meticulously in order to meet the needs of most pupils, including those with special educational needs. Very good liaison between teachers, support staff, and the special needs co-ordinator means that work is set at an appropriate level in lessons and extra tuition is sharply focused on individual needs. Lessons provide a challenge for both girls' and boys' interests.

19 Teachers need to make fuller use of all the information they gain from marking pupils' work and assessing it during lessons to help pupils learn even more effectively. In some lessons, particularly in mathematics and science, planning needs to ensure that the highest attaining pupils are given more demanding work earlier in the lesson, rather than extra tasks when they have finished more routine work. Occasionally, although satisfactory overall, lessons have too little emphasis on the specific knowledge pupils are intended to gain or the skills they are meant to develop and practise. In some literacy lessons, the introduction is too long, which does not allow sufficient time for the main body of the lesson. Teachers increasingly include ICT in lessons and are generally confident in the subject. Teachers in Key Stage 2 however, need more training in using computers for control, modelling and monitoring.

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

20 The school provides a broad range of opportunities for all its pupils. The curriculum meets statutory requirements except in aspects of ICT at Key Stage 2, and not all pupils have the opportunity to go swimming. The time allocated to teach English and mathematics exceeds national guidelines but the time for foundation subjects³ - although generally adequate – is a rather limited. A greater balance between subjects could be achieved through a more rigorous approach to time throughout the school day.

21 The curricular provision for children in the foundation stage is good. The good range of stimulating, practical learning activities and the curriculum covers all the areas of learning as specified in the national guidance.

22 Effective strategies for the teaching of literacy and numeracy, in line with the national guidance for those subjects, are evident in practice. This is having an impact on improving standards. Literacy is used very effectively across the curriculum; for example, pupils write about and debate historical scenarios. They have opportunities to use numeracy while measuring materials for their models and in a variety of aspects of science. Younger children are encouraged to use attendance figures to undertake simple calculations.

23 Good quality planning provides pupils with a range of interesting and challenging tasks. This is particularly evident within the areas of learning for children in the foundation stage, and in history, geography and art. The school makes good use of specialist provision, whereby visitors and specialist staff provide for specific experiences, which enhance the day-to-day provision. For example, the secondary school drama teacher-in-residence worked with older pupils. Curriculum planning provides a range of work for pupils of differing abilities but does not always fully challenge the highest attainers.

24 There is a good range of extra-curricular activities, which are undertaken mostly at lunchtime, as a significant number of pupils need a bus for the journey to and from school. The clubs include a choir and opportunities to learn the guitar. A visiting specialist also enhances the music provision by teaching the violin. . There are good opportunities for boys and girls to play a variety of sports. The sports teams play competitively and pupils have a very good record of success both within the near locality and the county. There are extra-curricular clubs for rugby, football, netball and cricket, and stamp collecting and environmental clubs.

25 The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good. Pupils have opportunities to be involved in 'circle time' where they discuss a broad range of issues, supporting and helping one another. Teachers provide good role models for their pupils and the caring Christian ethos of the school provides an atmosphere in which pupils are secure and feel able to question and learn. Through science, physical education, and personal and social education sessions, pupils learn about the importance of health. Year 3 pupils are taught specifically about dental health and gain a certificate on the completion of a special course. There is good provision for sex education spanning Years 5 and 6. Older pupils are taught directly about the use and misuse of drugs; it is taught within other subjects for the younger pupils.

26 Pupils' learning is enhanced through good links with the community. Local and national businesses have contributed funds, expertise and materials for the development of the outdoor area of the school. As part of the Healthy Schools Scheme, parents constructed a gazebo to provide shade and a quiet social area for pupils. Each year local council representatives visit the school to promote 'Ecology Week'. A community policeman has talked to pupils and an ex-

³ The foundation subjects are art and design, design and technology, geography, history, music, information and communication technology, and physical education. Religious education is inspected separately in a church school.

train driver has alerted pupils to the dangers of playing near railways. The school regularly takes part in the *Superschools* scheme when pupils meet national athletes.

27 The school has constructive relationships with other Catholic schools. There is a yearly joint staff development day and pupils are prepared appropriately for their transfer to the secondary stage of their education through liaison and visits.

28 The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall. The spiritual dimension is very effectively supported through the caring, Catholic ethos, which promotes respect and reverence. The parish priest supports pupils' personal and spiritual development during his frequent visits. There are many opportunities for pupils to reflect on their lives and consider the lives of others. Assemblies are a joyful and uplifting experience. Pupils experience an excitement in learning through the provision of stimulating tasks in subjects such as history and art.

29 The pupils gain a clear sense of right and wrong from day-to-day lessons, assemblies and the school's successful promotion of fairness. They have collaborated in the formulation of classroom rules. Understanding and tolerance is promoted during visits from a local community theatre group, which includes adults with learning difficulties. The school regularly collects for various charities both as whole school and class initiated projects. The provision for pupils' social development is very good. There are frequent opportunities for pupils to collaborate and work together. For example, pupils in Year 6 and reception work together to produce Aboriginal art. Older pupils enjoy a residential visit.

30 The provision for cultural development is good. Cultural development is promoted through visits to places of interest, for example, the Year 6 visit to the Millennium Dome. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 visited the British Museum to enrich their understanding of ancient Egyptians and Greeks so widening their perspective of different cultures. There is a wide range of activities to promote pupils' understanding of different cultures through history, music, art and dance. They learn about the lives of children in India and South America through their studies in geography. In music, they listen to African music and try composing pieces of a similar style.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

31 Teachers know their pupils very well and are therefore clear about what they need to do to support their academic and personal development. Parents feel very strongly that the school is effectively supporting their children and that members of staff are approachable and happy to discuss any problems. There is a very high degree of concern for pupils' welfare and this is a strength of the school. Parents strongly endorse this view.

32 Teachers and welfare assistants supervise pupils attentively during lessons, and meals supervisors ensure that they receive the same high level of attention when they are playing outside. Parents are particularly happy with supervision arrangements at the end of the day, and while most are conscientious about picking their children up on time, a small number are regularly late and leave them in teachers' care for up to half an hour past the end of the school day. This is a waste of teachers' time, keeping them from getting on with preparations for the next day's teaching.

33 Clear planning guides classroom helpers while they are supporting individuals or small groups of children. However, their expertise and knowledge of specific pupils' could be better utilised if they were more fully involved in the planning process and invited to staff meetings dealing with care and welfare. The building is well maintained and classrooms are pleasantly enhanced by samples of children's work providing a stimulating learning environment. In the reception classroom for example, Jack's beanstalk grows up the side of the play-house right to the ceiling, helping to fire the children's imagination.

34 Good behaviour is very well promoted and monitored. The school is successful at implementing its aim of providing an education where each child grows academically, spiritually, socially and emotionally in a Catholic, Christian environment. Adults provide very good role models and consistently refer to and remind children of the few simple, *golden rules*. Positive praise is used liberally to encourage both good behaviour and achievement and makes a significant contribution to pupils' self esteem and how hard they work. Stickers, house points and certificates are much sought after and proudly displayed. A sensible range of sanctions is used when a child's behaviour falls below the expected standard.

35 Assessment practices have improved since the time of the last inspection and are now good. A consistent system is used across the school to assess progress in English, science and mathematics and staff are working together to produce a workable whole school system for all other subjects. Subject folders have been built up in consultation with staff and advisors to ensure that everyone is assessing accurately against national standards. The *page a child* records are used effectively to keep track of achievement in foundation subjects and personal development. Every child in school has a tracking sheet, which is used well to help set challenging targets for assessments at the ages of seven and eleven.

36 Teacher's use of assessment information has improved since the last inspection and is now satisfactory. Planning sheets have been redeveloped to include assessment criteria, and the resulting information, along with bullet points from individual education plans, is used when planning lessons and differentiating work to meet pupils' needs. Some teachers refer to individual targets in lessons but this is not yet done consistently enough across the school to have an impact on attainment. Information is not always used as well as it might be to plan for the higher attaining pupils. In some mathematics lessons, for example, they are required to complete tasks well within their capability simply because it has been set for the rest of the class, rather than immediately being given tasks which are more challenging and closely linked to their ability.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

37 Parents' views about the school are positive. They are justified in thinking that teaching is good and helping their children to make good progress. Parents are given plenty of general information about the curriculum and the life of the school. Newsletters are frequent and informative, and the brochure and governors' annual report are both helpful and easy to read. Annual reports on pupils' progress are satisfactory. They outline strengths and weaknesses in all areas of the National Curriculum and give parents a clear idea of what their child needs to do to improve. Many of them are, however, very similar in content and do not give parents a clear idea of what their child is achieving in relation to what might be expected for his or her age. Reports are issued in plenty of time for parents to discuss them with teachers before the end of the school year. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

38 Strong support from the parent teacher association is instrumental in maintaining good links with parents. It organises many social activities such as the summer fayre, sponsored swim and barbecue and acts as a forum for the exchange of information between home and the school. The uniform was changed last year and an independent after school French club has been started as a result of parents' wishes. A substantial sum of money is raised every year and put to good use to provide additional resources for the children. An auction of promises raised significant additional funds for the new library, and children are enjoying a wide selection of new outdoor play equipment paid for by fund raising. Reception children are well supported with learning at home but support is more variable as pupils get older. Despite variable attendance, every effort is made to keep lines of communication open by inviting parents to open evenings, consultations and meetings about literacy, numeracy and standardised testing. Parents are very supportive of all social activities such as sports days and last year's Millennium Arts Week.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

39 The headteacher provides good leadership. He has a clear view of what the school is trying to achieve and what needs to be done to realise its aims. The deputy head, other members of the senior management team and subject coordinators share this view. All teaching staff are involved in identifying priorities for development to raise standards and ensure that the best possible provision is made for all pupils. They have a shared vision, which helps to create the strong inclusive ethos in which each child is valued. A programme of monitoring of teaching and learning, by the headteacher, deputy and subject co-ordinators has been successful in maintaining and raising standards. Subject co-ordinators are effective, particularly in those areas that have been priorities and where they have been allocated time to monitor.

40 The governing body has an effective committee structure and meets its statutory responsibilities well. Governors make frequent visits to the school and have a very good idea of its strengths and weaknesses; all staff are consulted about future priorities. This enables the school to establish targets for each year and over a longer period. The development plan clearly identifies financial implications, success criteria and responsibilities for monitoring progress towards these objectives. Governors are well informed about the school's performance in relation to national and local trends. They make every effort to ensure best value from the available resources. For example, when thinking about the appointment of additional support staff, they considered the likely effect on standards against the increase in staffing costs.

41 Financial planning is very good and day-to-day administration of the budget is thorough. The funds available are comparatively low (at least 75 per cent of schools nationally receive more income per pupil) but the school monitors expenditure carefully to ensure that the limited funding is used effectively. The school makes good use of specific grants such as those for the National Grid for Learning and for pupils with special educational needs.

42 Staff are well qualified and experienced; their collective expertise enables them to meet the wide ranging needs of pupils. Teachers have good opportunities for further training and this is having a noticeable impact on children's learning, particularly in literacy and numeracy. The school has good systems for the induction of new staff, including those who are in their first post. It also provides good support for student teachers through its involvement in school-based initial training. Both groups appreciate the warm support they receive from teachers already in the school. The school has good arrangements for the appraisal of staff and the monitoring of their performance. Support staff have had some training but they would welcome further opportunities for extending their expertise.

43 The accommodation allows the curriculum to be taught effectively. Most classrooms are spacious and enhanced by attractive displays. They are clean and maintained well. The

hall provides a good space for physical education, assemblies and musical activities, and the outside areas offer very good facilities for recreation, sport and environmental studies. The cleaner-in-charge takes justifiable pride in the school and its appearance.

44 Resources for learning are good overall. The new library provides an attractive and welcoming space for study and browsing. A small computer suite is being established in the library. So far, this has been wired up but further central funds are awaited for the supply of the computers. Resources for most subjects are good and this has an important effect in maintaining standards. However, there are gaps in computer software and peripherals, which means the full ICT curriculum cannot be taught.

45 Very good use is made of new technology to maintain assessment records. Many teachers now use information technology to produce policies, curriculum schemes and weekly plans. The Internet and email are increasingly used for administration purposes and to extend the learning opportunities for pupils. Taking into account the standards achieved, the good quality of education provided, the good leadership and management and the low cost per pupil, the school provides good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

46 In order to improve standards further, the school should:

- Improve standards in information and communication technology (ICT) at Key Stage 2 (paragraph 99) by:
 - i. acquiring the resources to teach pupils how to use sensors to monitor and record changes in temperature, light and sound;
 - ii. training teachers in the use of these resources;
 - iii. fully implementing plans for assessing pupils' progress and attainment in ICT.
- Provide further challenges for those pupils who have the potential for attaining very well in mathematics (paragraph 69) by setting them more challenging work earlier in lessons, rather than extra tasks when they have finished more routine work.

Minor points for improvement.

- i. Standards in writing are weaker than those in speaking, listening and reading (paragraph 65). This is identified in the school development plan;
- ii. Some literacy lessons are too long and silent reading after lunch is often not very productive (paragraph 66).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

| | |
|--|----|
| Number of lessons observed | 41 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils | 30 |

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| 15 | 31 | 31 | 21 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

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

Information about the school's pupils

| Pupils on the school's roll | YR – Y6 |
|---|---------|
| Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils) | 219 |
| Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals | 6 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

| Special educational needs | YR – Y6 |
|---|---------|
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs | 7 |
| Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register | 36 |

| English as an additional language | No of pupils |
|---|--------------|
| Number of pupils with English as an additional language | 7 |

| Pupil mobility in the last school year | No of pupils |
|--|--------------|
| Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission | 11 |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving | 10 |

Attendance

Authorised absence

| | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 5.4 |
| National comparative data | 5.2 |

Unauthorised absence

| | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 0.1 |
| National comparative data | 0.5 |

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

| | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year | 2000 | 17 | 13 | 30 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | Reading | Writing | Mathematics |
|---|----------|---------|---------|-------------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | 15 | 13 | 17 |
| | Girls | 12 | 12 | 12 |
| | Total | 27 | 25 | 29 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 90 (89) | 83 (89) | 97 (86) |
| | National | 83 (82) | 84 (83) | 90 (87) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | 15 | 17 | 17 |
| | Girls | 12 | 12 | 12 |
| | Total | 27 | 29 | 29 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 90 (92) | 97 (92) | 97 (75) |
| | National | 84 (82) | 88 (86) | 88 (87) |

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

| | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year | 2000 | 15 | 18 | 33 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | 14 | 12 | 15 |
| | Girls | 17 | 11 | 15 |
| | Total | 31 | 23 | 30 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 94 (80) | 70 (80) | 91 (86) |
| | National | 75 (70) | 72 (69) | 85 (78) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | 12 | 13 | 14 |
| | Girls | 17 | 14 | 15 |
| | Total | 29 | 27 | 29 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 88 (74) | 82 (80) | 88 (86) |
| | National | 70 (68) | 72 (69) | 79 (75) |

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 | 3 |
| Indian | 0 |
| Pakistani | 0 |
| Bangladeshi | 0 |
| Chinese | 0 |
| White | 191 |
| Any other minority ethnic group | 0 |

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

| | |
|--|------|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 9.0 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 24.3 |
| Average class size | 27.3 |

Education support staff: YR – Y6

| | |
|---|-------|
| Total number of education support staff | 9 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 112.6 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Financial year | 1999-2000 |
| | £ |
| Total income | 324567 |
| Total expenditure | 319502 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 1387 |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 4042 |
| Balance carried forward to next year | 9107 |

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 219 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 58 |

Percentage of responses in each category

| | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school. | 60 | 31 | 7 | 0 | 2 |
| My child is making good progress in school. | 64 | 29 | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| Behaviour in the school is good. | 55 | 41 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home. | 45 | 47 | 9 | 0 | 0 |
| The teaching is good. | 71 | 29 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on. | 62 | 31 | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 72 | 28 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best. | 67 | 29 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| The school works closely with parents. | 60 | 33 | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| The school is well led and managed. | 64 | 24 | 7 | 2 | 3 |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible. | 62 | 34 | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. | 22 | 43 | 14 | 3 | 17 |

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

47 There have been considerable improvements in the provision for children in the foundation stage since the previous inspection. A new classroom has been set up and the curriculum revised, which, combined with the good teaching, is having a positive impact on children's learning. Children enter the school with the knowledge, skills and understanding expected for their age. The majority achieve well so that, by the start of Year 1, they attain the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, and creative and physical development; a significant minority exceed the goals. In communication, language and literacy there are high expectations and good teaching and almost all children exceed the goals. Children with special educational needs make particularly good progress.

Personal, social and emotional development.

48 Children make good progress in developing their personal, social and emotional skills within the secure supportive environment. They play and work well together. They show consideration – for example, by asking the class teacher if she had a good lunchtime, and concern towards each other. During class assemblies, they are encouraged to reflect on how they can help one another and through the caring ethos, many have the confidence to lead the class in prayer. They enjoy the responsibility of being a helper and undertaking daily jobs.

49 The teaching is good. Adults provide good role models for the children treating them with courtesy and respect. There are good systems in place so that younger or less confident children are paired with older more confident ones. Children are involved in and aware of the class rules and make every effort to gain rewards within the school system and are very proud when they receive a certificate. Good classroom organisation and teaching methods supports learning well; children select an activity of their choosing on entry to the classroom in the morning and have opportunities to plan, carry out and review their tasks during other sessions. This provides them with opportunities to become independent and make decisions about their own learning and progress.

Communication, language and literacy

50 Very effective teaching leads to good standards in this area of learning. Children listen attentively for long periods, and speak clearly and with a good use of appropriate vocabulary. The majority converse in simple sentences and can communicate their ideas. For example, working as a whole class, children developed a story about animals. This session was enhanced by the skilful use of questioning and good resources in the form of animal hand puppets. The majority of children know a good range of phonic sounds and many can string them together to make words, for example *rat* and *pat*. Many of the higher attainers make very good attempts at writing words using their knowledge of the sounds, for example *wasp* and are aware of some of the irregularities that occur such as the silent *k* in *knee*. All children make sensible attempts while spelling words for themselves and the majority have the confidence to try without support. The majority of children read simple sentences or use pictures to tell the story.

51 Elements of the national literacy framework are used well and this promotes high standards. Groups attaining at different levels are all catered for through a range of challenging tasks. Children make good progress because of the high expectations and appropriate methods, which take full account of the way young children learn. Generally, the plenary

(summing up) session is used appropriately to check children's understanding but it is sometimes overlong and children lose interest.

Mathematical development

52 Most pupils are in line to achieve the goals in this area of learning. The majority know the words and join in with counting songs such as *Five Little Ducks* and *Ten Fat Sausages*. They can count backwards in ones while the number of ducks is decreasing and more confident children can deduct two during the song about the sausages. All children can count to ten and many can count beyond. They are able to identify numbers that are bigger and smaller than other numbers between one and ten and can add small numbers using practical apparatus. They are beginning to see patterns and can devise them for themselves.

53 Through the very good teaching and the use of elements of the national strategy for numeracy, children make good progress in developing an understanding of the relationships between numbers. The good use of time, and the appropriate length of numeracy lessons, allows children to be fully engaged throughout. Clear and structured explanations enable children to develop an understanding of patterns and the practical examples provided enable children to see them in a wider context so linking aspects of learning. Planning is good and there are frequently links between the objectives covered in timetabled sessions and activities available at other times of the day. For example, children's understanding of shape is extended when they make patterns from large construction bricks.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

54 Children start school with some knowledge and understanding of the world and this is successfully built upon through effective teaching. Children have a good awareness of mini beasts and talk about them animatedly. They know that their home is called a habitat and can describe some of their features. Their enthusiasm is harnessed through stimulating activities. Children show an understanding of change and time when talking about different photographs and clothes from when they were babies, toddlers and school children. Children are beginning to use the computer and some can control the mouse and they recognise the functions of some of the keys on the keyboard.

55 This area of learning is well developed through the stimulating resources available. The very good displays show the children that their work is valued and reinforces learning. Most tasks use first hand experiences; for example, children grow seeds and learn that they need light and water. Good use is made of the surroundings both indoors and outdoors, and effective links are made with other activities, for example, children grow beans in conjunction with the theme of Jack and the Beanstalk. Children can select resources and use simple tools safely to construct and build. They have a good sense of how things are joined together and are often imaginative in the way designs can be improved.

Physical development

56 Through effective teaching, children make good progress in the development of their physical skills. They can run, jump, balance and climb using a good range of equipment and show awareness in the needs of others in the space around them. Daily activities provide good opportunities for children to develop fine motor skills and most acquire a reasonable level of control in using pencils, scissors and classroom tools.

57 The outdoor play space is used regularly for short periods with a range of activities being taken outside. The hall and playing field are used for specific teacher-directed sessions, which enable children to systematically learn new skills.

Creative development

58 Children make good progress in the development of creative skills because this area of learning is taught well. They explore shape and form while modelling snails and spiders from clay. They experiment with colour and texture while selecting materials to design a habitat for their mini beasts. They co-operate to make collages using a wide range of well-chosen resources and enjoy painting.

59 The organisation of the role play area as Jack's cottage enables children to use their imagination and re-enact the popular story of *Jack and the Beanstalk*. The theme of the role play area is changed regularly and provides a good stimulus. Music features regularly in the school day; children sing tunefully with a good sense of rhythm. Most respond well during music and movement sessions, interpreting the mood of the music with appropriate actions.

ENGLISH

60 The school continues to teach English well and good standards have generally been maintained since the last inspection. Standards in reading and in speaking and listening are better than those in writing at both key stages.

61 Building on the good practice during the foundation stage, six and seven-year-olds learn to listen attentively, to speak with confidence and to ask questions thoughtfully. For example when a Year 1 pupil asked if a narrator's words within a story could be described as 'non-speech' or 'speech', an informed discussion resulted in all pupils understanding the meaning of the word narrator and the difference between direct and indirect speech. Most pupils can read aloud simple texts intelligently. Pupils with learning difficulties who find it hard to ask questions or contribute to discussions make at least satisfactory progress. Key Stage 2 pupils extend their speaking and listening skills and develop their understanding of the purposes and importance of talk. They successfully build on earlier work and develop their ability to structure an argument, express a point of view and listen to others' responses to a good standard. For example, during a Year 4 lesson on the use of connectives, which was linked to work in history, pupils working in pairs generated a very good quality of sentences. They used *moreover, therefore, clearly, because of the resulting consequences*, demonstrating their understanding of the learning objectives and indicating their relatively high levels of achievement.

62 By the age of eleven, pupils enjoy reading, have good attitudes to books and are able to express some preferences about what they read. By the age of seven, most pupils recognise a range of common words by sight and make appropriate use of skills such as blending sounds together to help them read words they do not know. Higher and average attainers often correct themselves if they make mistakes whilst reading, showing that they are constantly trying to make sense of the text. These pupils also try hard to read expressively, responding to punctuation and other messages in the text, for example, by raising their voice when they see an exclamation mark. Less confident readers recognise most letter sounds and try hard to sound words out. They make good use of illustrations and have learned to recognise some common words, which supports their reading.

63 All pupils are developing a technical vocabulary with which to talk about books; for example, they know and use words such as *title, author, illustrator* and *contents page*. All pupils read a variety of texts including poems, information books and plays. Most pupils have a secure understanding about the difference between fiction and information books and of how to use contents and index pages. They use these skills effectively for independent research in subjects such as history and science. By the age of eleven, higher attaining pupils have an understanding of a range of texts, are able to identify different layers of meaning as they read.

They are able to select sentences and phrases to support their views on key features and characters.

64 Pupils are helped and encouraged to read in a variety of ways. These include the weekly use of sounds or letter strings in Years 1 and 2 and a 'focus sound a day' approach in older classes. The home reading scheme is well organised and the new library introduces pupils to the loan system of public libraries by issuing tickets. Monitoring and assessment of reading helps to maintain the high standards throughout the school.

65 The successful implementation of the literacy strategy is beginning to have a positive impact on writing. Standards are improving and are broadly average at the end of both key stages. Although most pupils achieve a reasonable standard of competence by the end of each key stage, their rate of progress in writing does not match that which they achieve in speaking, listening and reading. Most pupils at eleven use redrafting skills to improve their work and know how to check spelling by using dictionaries and other sources of support. Handwriting of most pupils is legible and well developed and many have begun to understand how to present their work for varying purposes and for different readers.

66 The quality of teaching is mostly good or very good. Lessons are well planned and objectives are clear and always shared with pupils. Teachers make generous use of praise to good effect and give very good support to individual pupils. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject, including how to teach the various elements of the literacy hour, is very good. In most lessons, whole-class instruction includes good questioning of pupils that encourages them to express opinions for example, "What do you think?" and "What would you do?" Teachers involve all pupils in answering questions and they use effective methods to ensure that pupils with differencing levels of attainment have opportunities to take part in oral work. In some literacy lessons however, the introduction is too long, which does not allow sufficient time for the main body of the lesson. The majority of lessons move at a brisk pace and expectations are high. Challenging tasks are completed independently or with support from the teacher or other adults. All teachers use a variety of approaches to assist pupils in developing their reading skills well. In a minority of lessons, there is a weakness in the organisation of independent whole class reading sessions. During these periods, the pace of learning offers insufficient challenge and this results in pupils losing concentration.

67 Teachers' day-to-day assessment is now good and allows them to match work to pupils' needs. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Teachers mark work regularly and mostly include positive and encouraging remarks. However, opportunities to write remarks that would help individual pupils to improve the standard of their creative writing are sometimes missed.

68 The co-ordinator has worked effectively to implement the National Literacy Strategy and has had the co-operation of colleagues in steering the whole school policy and its implementation. This has had a significant impact on improving the quality of teaching and learning and widening the range of effective teaching strategies. For example, teachers regularly analyse pupils' written work and attach a record sheet to indicate the level reached. This careful tracking of progress is beginning to have a very positive impact on standards achieved. Strengths or weakness are identified and this information is used in later lessons.

MATHEMATICS

69 Pupils at seven and eleven attain the standards expected for their ages and a significant minority exceeds them at the end of Key Stage 1. Standards are higher in Years 4 and 5, where there are fewer pupils with special educational needs and the teaching is very good or excellent. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress, but the progress of some higher attaining pupils is too slow.

70 Pupils in Year 1 have a good understanding of subtracting number bonds from ten. They build on their previous knowledge of two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes and learn about the faces, edges and corners using the correct mathematical vocabulary. Year 1 and 2 pupils develop a satisfactory level of numeracy and are increasing their range of strategies for solving problems mentally – for example, when doubling or halving numbers up to 100. Year 2 pupils work cooperatively and follow instructions, plotting a route around the page. They are able to use these strategies to guide a programmable toy around a pre-selected route.

71 Year 3 pupils explore the numerical patterns found within the nine times table. They use this information to predict whether a three-digit number is divisible by nine. Year 4 pupils can subtract two three-digit numbers and higher attainers are beginning to use subtraction strategies effectively. Year 5 pupils convert fractions to percentages and Year 6 pupils are beginning to write problems as algebraic sentences. By the age of eleven, most pupils have a reasonable degree of numeracy and a small minority has above average understanding and skill.

72 The quality of teaching is good overall. It is good at Key Stage 1 and ranges from sound to excellent at Key Stage 2. Teachers are familiar and secure with the National Numeracy Strategy, which they apply effectively. Teachers clearly define what is to be learned in the lesson and always share this with pupils, providing them with a clear understanding of the purpose of their learning. Pupils respond well and the majority successfully meet the challenges provided. The oral and mental calculation sessions are delivered with a good pace and there is a high expectation of participation. Pupils show good mental agility and high levels of concentration – for example, Year 6 pupils quickly and successfully pass algebraic questions around the class in a 'loop', starting and finishing with the same mathematical expression. In each class, the three-part lesson structure is soundly established and planning is good. However, the use of clear questions at the end of the session to assess what pupils have understood is not a strong feature of the teaching, nor is the use of ongoing day-to-day assessment. As a result, tasks are not always pitched at exactly the correct level, particularly for the highest achievers.

73 The main teaching activities involve pupils practising their skills following an introduction by the class teacher. Where explanations are very clear and structured pupils make very good progress in their learning. This happened in an excellent lesson in Year 4. Pupils were estimating by rounding to the nearest hundred, then subtracting two three-digit numbers, before checking the answer against the estimate by using inverse addition. Where ideas and strategies are not as clearly explained, pupils are less successful, for example pupils had some difficulty in learning how to construct an algebraic sentence from a real-life problem. During all sessions, teachers manage pupils and resources efficiently.

74 The subject is co-ordinated very well. The co-ordinator has a clear understanding of the standards, strengths and weaknesses within the subject and has correctly identified improving the use of the plenary (summing up) session as an area for development. The school uses a good range of assessment opportunities, including standardised and non-statutory tests. The results are recorded and analysed and pupils' progress is tracked regularly.

SCIENCE

75 Standards in science are good. Although the results of National Curriculum assessments were below average in 1999 and 2000, eleven-year-olds have achieved better than average results over the last five years and the current eleven-year-olds are attaining good standards. These differences are due to the wide variations in each year group, particularly the proportion of pupils with special educational needs, which varies considerably. Seven-year-olds have done well in the teacher assessments, with a well above average proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels. The work seen during the inspection mirrors these results and the school is successfully maintaining the upward trend in science. This improvement is due to a number of factors. The stimulating curriculum reinforces an understanding of scientific ideas through practical, problem-solving activities. Progress is also linked to the good teaching, the very good pace of learning in most lessons and pupils' positive attitudes. However, some higher attaining pupils are not progressing as well as they should because the level of challenge in some lessons is well within their capabilities. For example, investigations are mostly structured for pupils, which means they have too few opportunities to describe how scientific explanations can be provided by the joint use of creative thinking and evidence from experiments.

76 Seven-year-olds have an understanding of a range of scientific ideas. They are taught to use scientific language correctly and to investigate features of the natural world in a scientific manner. Year 1 children understand how toys are operated by push and pull forces after being involved in a number of practical activities, well organised by staff. Pupils show an awareness of scientific investigation during, for instance, their work on floating and sinking. Teachers set high standards for pupils' written work and this is illustrated by much of the work on display. Clearly presented work on seed germination and healthy eating illustrates a good level of understanding and use of vocabulary. Year 2 pupils can explain the function of a simple circuit, and have examined materials to consider which are good insulators. A focus by teachers on prediction and scientific investigation extends understanding, resulting in pupils reaching the higher levels of achievement. For example, pupils made good predictions about the effect of a lack of water and different conditions on plant growth. They are good at explaining that in a fair test only one variable at a time is altered.

77 Good progress in the pupils' learning continues in Key Stage 2, especially in Years 5 and 6. Challenged by effective questioning, pupils' ability to predict continues to be good. All but a few of a Year 3 class could comment on what would happen when a range of materials were immersed in water; work in their books indicated a good understanding of physical processes such as reflection and how shadows are formed. Pupils record in a variety of ways. Teachers continually relate science to the real life experiences of the pupils, and this has a positive effect on learning. For example, Year 4 pupils consider bone growth, measuring pupils of different ages and recording their findings as a graph. Learning accelerates in Year 5 as pupils find out about solids, liquids and gases and discover which substances dissolve. They study vibration and the structure of the ear, carefully drawing diagrams to record their findings. Year 6 pupils talk knowledgeably about the heart and name the main arteries and veins as well as other organs of the body. Teachers motivate pupils well by organising a range of scientific investigations, such as examining pulse rates at rest and after exercise, repeating the process and recording carefully. By the age of eleven, most pupils interpret their findings logically and can draw sensible conclusions from their data, which is well presented through tables, charts and graphs.

78 Through effective teaching, pupils' develop good attitudes, which contribute significantly to their learning. Mature and responsible attitudes facilitate good investigative work. For instance, pupils in a Year 6 class co-operated well, exchanged ideas and learned from each other when experimenting in groups to find the preferred habitats of wood lice and earthworms. They were absorbed in the activity and showed an increasing awareness of scientific methods.

79 The quality of teaching is good or better. This highly effective teaching throughout the school has a number of features in common. Lessons are very well structured and begin with very good references to previous learning, which enables pupils to make links and build on their earlier understanding. For example, during a sequence of lessons on human growth, pupils in Year 2 were very well prepared for a visit by mothers with their babies and toddlers. Good references are made to pupils' experiences outside the school in order to increase their understanding, for example, Year 3 pupils discussed everyday sources of light in order to learn about their similarities and differences. Pupils are encouraged to describe things in their own words; when learning about skeletons, one wrote, 'If you didn't have bones then you will be on the floor and have floppy everything'. Teachers clearly communicate to pupils what they want them to learn and frequently set tight time targets to encourage concentration. Pupils respond positively, encouraged by the high expectations that teachers have for both work and behaviour. The good practice of reinforcing scientific ideas through practical investigations helps all to learn easily, especially those with special educational needs. The mixed age classes in Years 1 and 2 are taught in separate year groups and this is effective. Teachers often set work at different levels but the school is aware of the need to ensure higher attaining pupils are more systematically challenged in order to achieve their full potential.

80 The subject is managed well. The co-ordinator's drive to increase practical investigative work has paid dividends. Additional training has given teachers more ideas and increased their confidence. Visits to an outdoor centre and local places of scientific interest, such as Mudeford stream, provide good opportunities for direct experience and pupils' skills have improved significantly since the last inspection. The subject makes a positive contribution to the teaching of literacy and numeracy. ICT is increasingly used in science lessons to produce tables and graphs.

ART AND DESIGN

81 Pupils progress well and achieve good standards at both key stages. Standards at Key Stage 2 have been sustained since the last inspection and those at Key Stage 1 have improved. Portfolios and displays around the school indicate a good level of graphical skill, composition and use of colour. Seven and eleven-year-olds have a good knowledge of a range of artists and the styles associated with them. Building on the good foundation in reception, teachers throughout the school introduce pupils to a range of media. They have opportunities to work in pencil, paint, oil pastels, charcoal and clay, and to use a painting program on the computer. Subjects are varied and stimulating. For example, Year 1 pupils used charcoal or crayon to represent various emotions following a discussion about feelings. The Year 2 class looked at paintings by Seurat and made good attempts at using the pointillism technique – thoroughly enjoying painting with brushes or their fingers.

82 Much work is vibrant and bold, indicating a good level of confidence and well-established artistic techniques. For example, a display in Year 5 contained excellent pictures in the style of Monet. They were accompanied by imaginative writing, describing what might have happened just before the scenes depicted in the pictures. The pupils' attempts to replicate the artist's technique indicate a good level of skill; original works had been closely observed and the pupils' efforts captured the essence of Monet's style.

83 Due to timetable arrangements only a little direct teaching of art and design was observed. Discussion with pupils and the quality of recent work suggests that the good standards in these subjects owe much to effective teaching.

84 The subject is managed effectively. The co-ordinator has maintained the profile of art during a period of major innovations in other subject areas. A Millennium arts week, organised by the deputy head, was very popular and enabled pupils to try out a wide range of techniques including batik, tie-dye and screen printing. Art and design adds to the richness of pupils'

school experience and the study of artists from around the world adds to their cultural awareness.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

85 Design technology was not being taught during the period of the inspection and it is not possible to judge the standards achieved. Judgements about the teaching and learning were drawn from discussion with staff and pupils, a scrutiny of the school planning, teacher records, photographs and work completed by pupils. These show that the provision is effective.

86 Staff plan effectively for coverage of the knowledge, skills and understanding of the subject, stating clear objectives that are known to the pupils and enable them to see the progression in their learning. Teachers provide stimulating activities that encourage pupils' creative efforts; for example, Year 5 pupils design and make interesting objects in the style of Gaudi. They use a variety of materials to make a mosaic desk, a stained glass window, and a papier-mache model of a building. They used the skills required to measure, saw wood, and cut very thick card. Younger pupils in Year 1 were given opportunities to work co-operatively making a class 'pop up' book. Their interest was successfully harnessed through this project which is linked to the 'Olympics Day' held in the school and they combined painting with the skill of cutting and sticking card. Teachers employ an effective range of teaching methods that enable pupils to acquire an understanding of the subject in relation to the real world. Year 1 pupils visit a playground prior to designing and making their own model playground. Year 6 pupils make use of advertisements to inform their construction of boxes to carry pizza and the design of logos.

87 Teachers frequently link projects with other curricular themes; for example, Year 4 pupils plan, make and review a design for an alarm system while they are learning about electrical circuits and see connections and relevance in their learning. Younger pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 decorate their lunch boxes and make paper hats for Christmas and have opportunities to experience food technology by making a Christmas pudding. Whole school initiatives effectively promote the subject as exciting and relevant. For example, design projects were included in the Millennium arts week and there is an ongoing community project to develop the outdoor area of the school. Year 5 and Year 6 pupils made a significant contribution to this by designing a wildlife garden.

88 The school has adopted the national guidance as a scheme of work and intends to develop this to make it more relevant to the needs of the pupils' within the school. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and experienced but is new to the post and has additional responsibilities that have required prior attention. Other members of staff are also informed and enthusiastic and through shared expertise, the majority of the staff are confident and plan for appropriate teaching and learning. Assessment and recording ranges from the very good practice of identifying all the learning objectives within a topic and recording coverage and understanding for individuals, to the satisfactory process of noting significant strengths and weaknesses where relevant. Currently there is no formal monitoring of teaching and learning which means that the activities planned are not always covered during the allocated time and there are no strategies to ensure the skills missed are systematically covered at other times. Planning needs to reflect more closely the time available.

GEOGRAPHY

89 Planning and organisation of the geography curriculum has improved since the last inspection and standards achieved by both seven and eleven-year-olds are higher than expected and are improving through out the school.

90 Following their study of the local area, pupils in Year 1 confidently discussed what they knew and understood about the area where they live and where their school is situated. The record of pupils' work based on the structured programme of local and distant visits indicates a very good standard of work. Pupils know about the similarities and differences between various locations and their knowledge and understanding of local places is thorough. When looking at photographs, they recalled what they had learned from their visits to Avon Beach, Mudeford, Leeson House, The River Piddle, Bournemouth and other local places of interest. Pupils talk about *Barnaby Bear's* visits to Sri Lanka, South Africa and other parts of the world and are able to point out where these places are on the map of the world prominently displayed in their class. Most pupils are confident when talking about places much further a field.

91 Although only two lessons were observed, the quality of pupils' work throughout the school indicates good teaching. The teaching observed in Year 1 and Year 5 was excellent, challenging pupils with interesting content, activities and variety of resources. For example, Year 1 pupils were provided with direct experience of the local area, observing passing cars and road markings, before working on a large-scale map with model cars to replicate what they saw. This outing was digitally recorded and used as part of a presentation on a lap top computer in order to enhance pupils' understanding. This resulted in pupils showing a remarkable degree of knowledge of double and single yellow lines, zigzags, 'keep clear' signs and what constitutes sensible parking.

92 Year 5 pupils understand, use and interpret scale on Ordnance Survey maps. They are comfortable at using four-figure grid references to develop their own creative patterns on a grid paper. They can identify places on a ordinance survey map by following written and oral instructions and locating symbols for footpaths, bus stations, wood, quarry, church, sand, car parking and a number of other features used in the key to the map. A good use of ICT in the subject occurred when pupils used their own post codes to download maps of their locality via the Internet.

93 The co-ordinator for geography is very enthusiastic and provides effective guidance to other teachers. The review of the policy and schemes of work with external help have strengthened the teaching of geography throughout the school considerably. The schemes of work offer good coverage and the long-term curriculum plan incorporates links with a number of other subjects. Pupils' work indicates that the National Curriculum requirements are being covered more than adequately. The three levels of orienteering trails set up in the school grounds have heightened pupils' interest and abilities in map work. New resources, stored in easily accessible topic boxes are helping to ensure continuity and progression, and contribute to the good standards achieved.

HISTORY

94 The standards in History are very good as a result of the quality of planning and teaching. Pupils recall with ease the main events of the periods they have studied and make some links between what happened and what the results were. They are aware that the way we see history changes according to who is telling the story. Most pupils are aware of how things were different a long time ago and they can say why. Year 1 pupils spoke with great interest about the toys in different times and used expressions such as 'long ago', 'before then', 'old', 'now' with confidence. For example they spoke about homes 'long ago' which were

not warm or which were too close to each other and made of wood mostly. Year 2 pupils understand how the great fire of London affected peoples' lives.

95 Eleven-year-olds have good knowledge of the periods that they have studied. They identified the names of Henry VIII's wives and remembered how they died. They recalled learning about the Tudors, the Stuarts and the Victorians and are equally happy to talk about the Egyptians, Greeks and the Romans. They recalled the events leading up to the Great Fire of London and vividly described how and where the fire started; how the densely packed wooden structures were 'afame with fire in no time' and described how people managed to escape via the river; some 'plunging into the water' whilst others jumping on to the nearest boat. Pupils understand and explain how citizens of London reacted and the impact of the fire on the community. They are learning about World War II and have developed an awareness of the past and a good sense of chronology.

96 The teaching in the only lesson observed was very good. Year 4 pupils were thoroughly absorbed in the study of Henry VIII. Their level of understanding was demonstrated when they offered opinions about the break from the Roman Catholic church; "I think it was good that everyone could learn about Jesus because the Bible was translated"... "It was bad because they took away all the candles and all those things which help me to concentrate on my prayers". As the teacher reviewed what they had learned, pupils showed a remarkable degree of knowledge and understanding of the Tudor period and clearly knew the difference between opinion and fact; not least that 'facts' are less clear with passage of time.

97 Pupils' interest in history is high, as this lesson demonstrated. They show willingness to learn and an enjoyment in the exploration of events in history. They express their thoughts very clearly and are happy to share their understanding of the 'story' of the past. They are well motivated because their work is marked regularly with some encouraging comments. As a result, most work is neatly presented.

98 The subject is managed well. Good planning ensures full curriculum coverage and teachers successfully bring the subject to life through their imaginative provision and the good links made between events of the past and the present day. Pupils have good opportunities to develop their literacy skills during class discussions and when reading and writing about historic events.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

99 Seven-year-olds attain the standards expected at this age. Eleven-year-olds are confident when using computers. They are skilled in word-processing, desk-top-publishing and competently use a database, but the school lacks the software to enable pupils to cover the full National Curriculum. Overall standards are therefore below expectations at Key Stage 2 and pupils do not achieve as well as they should.

100 Pupils in Year 1 use the classroom computers on a rota basis and develop sound ICT skills. They use a word-processing program to write about 'Myself', choosing fonts, changing colour and size and centering the text. They create pictures using a paint program, confidently using the *autoshape*, *spray* and *fill* tools. They have recently established contact by email with a school in Christchurch in New Zealand and have a good grasp of how computers are used at school and at home. Building on earlier work with pictograms, Year 2 pupils asked other classes about their holiday destinations and created a bar graph to illustrate their findings. They learn about simple programming by entering a sequence of commands into a floor robot.

101 By the time they are eleven, most pupils are very confident in using the computer for word processing and making pictures. For example, Year 6 pupils used a professional level program to produce their own posters about the voyage of Ellen McArthur. These include

imaginative layouts, with appropriate fonts used for titles and headings. Clip art, together with pictures created using a graphics program, feature in this and in other work on display around the school. Good examples of the use of ICT in other subjects were seen – such as accounts of a recent visit to Corfe Castle and poems about the weather, which had been composed and set out attractively using a range of presentation techniques. Pupils access information from CD-Rom sources and the Internet and use this in their presentations.

102 Pupils develop satisfactory skills in handling information. The Year 5 class had produced pie charts about traffic flow and inserted these into a word-processed document. They were being introduced to a professional spreadsheet program in order to create graphs recording pulse rates. They quickly learned how to enter data and, without prompting, chose the appropriate line graph format. This is a good example of how teachers integrate ICT into their day-to-day work.

103 Significant progress has been made since the school increased the number of modern computers. All teachers have begun a training programme and this is helping to increase their confidence. Although very little direct teaching was observed during the inspection, the quality and range of pupils' current work indicates that the teaching is at least satisfactory. Pupils' interest and enthusiasm contribute much to their learning and increasing rate of progress. However, the school has yet to acquire the resources to teach pupils how to use sensors to monitor and record changes in temperature, light and sound. This means that they cannot acquire the skills necessary to meet the requirements of the ICT programme of study.

104 The co-ordinator has successfully led recent developments. Central grants have been used to acquire new equipment and to connect the school to the *National Grid for Learning*. The school is in the process of developing an assessment system to track pupils' progress from year to year.

MUSIC

105 Seven and eleven-year-olds achieve standards that are broadly in line with national expectations. Pupils learn new songs quickly, and enthusiastically join in singing in class lessons and in larger groups in the hall. During a hymn practice for all the junior classes, pupils sang tunefully and with good diction. Under the skilful direction of the deputy head, they varied the dynamics to express the moods of the hymns. Pupils in Year 6 made sensible comments when listening to music of various types around the theme of rivers. They made good attempts at describing the differences between *Old Man River*, *The Skye Boat Song*, *Dock of the Bay* and *Steel River*. Good listening skills were also evident in a Year 5 lesson when pupils heard extracts from various sources and were asked to suggest occasions for which the music would be appropriate. Although the teaching in both these lessons was satisfactory, there was rather too much emphasis on the lyrics instead of the elements of music such as pitch, genre, tempo, dynamics and structure.

106 The quality of teaching is at least satisfactory, but teachers vary in expertise and confidence. Where they have a musical background, the teaching is more successful. The two lessons observed in Key Stage 1 were highly effective. They were very well structured and taken at a brisk pace. Pupils in the Year 1 class and the mixed Year 1/2 class were good at clapping a steady pulse, at the same time changing the dynamics from very soft to loud. They created their own graphic notation (squiggles and small pictures) to indicate changes in volume over a two-bar measure. This provided a good basis for future work on standard musical notation. Individual pupils 'conducted' and the other children followed their direction well. The Year 1 children sang *The Animals came in Two-by-Two* very well, and enjoyed applying their earlier learning about dynamics as they sang different verses quietly or loudly. Year 1/2 pupils sang *Melody and Harmony* with gusto, at the same time consolidating their musical vocabulary.

107 Except for some introductory rhythm work in Key Stage 1, it was not possible to observe pupils attempting to create their own simple compositions, but planning indicates that this is built into the whole-school programme. The curriculum is enhanced by instrumental tuition; over sixty Key Stage 2 pupils are involved, learning the violin, recorder or guitar and as members of the choir. Pupils have good opportunities to make a personal response to music and to listen to music from different cultures. Musical activities add to the sense of community. Parents are invited to assemblies led by each class and Christmas productions are very well attended; parents talk in glowing terms about the school's production *AD* that marked the new Millennium.

108 Currently there is no co-ordinator for the subject. However, those teachers with musical expertise help colleagues willingly and effectively. Planning needs to be up-dated to take account of recent changes to the National Curriculum and to ensure a clearer progression of skills through the school.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION (PE)

109 The majority of observations during the inspection were of Key Stage 2 games activities. In these sessions, standards were broadly average. Long term planning indicates that pupils in Key Stage 2 are given opportunities to participate in the five areas of activity as required by the National Curriculum but not all pupils go swimming. There has been some improvement in the provision for swimming since the last inspection and the school now targets pupils who are unable to swim but this does not fully comply with requirements. Pupils make steady progress in PE across the school.

110 At Key Stage 1, staff plan a varied and progressive programme of activities. Their planning is supported by a comprehensive scheme compiled by the co-ordinator, so skills are taught systematically. Seven-year-old pupils have appropriate control and co-ordination while throwing and catching balls, they can kick a ball through a slalom and send and receive a ball using a bat. Teachers' records indicate that they have a satisfactory level of competence in dance, games and gymnastic activities.

111 The quality of teaching ranges from sound to very good and is good overall. In a Year 3 lesson, the teacher provided a good role model for the pupils, fully participating in all the sequences encouraging pupils to sustain their physical activity. Effective teaching meant that pupils selected actions, applying them with co-ordination and control. The lesson was tightly structured, gradually building to the point where the practiced sequence could be put to music. Pupils make steady progress but could make more if they were given greater opportunities to evaluate their learning – for example, when Year 5 pupils were given an excellent explanation of how to bowl a ball over arm. In a Year 6 lesson, some pupils worked as part of a team but this was not a significant group. Others worked as individuals, demonstrating over boisterous behaviour at their own achievements.

112 At Key Stage 2 planning does not ensure a consistent approach to the development of skills and there is a lack of ongoing assessment to target and build up pupils' skills as they move through the school. Pupils are not sufficiently encouraged to take responsibility for improving their performance.

113 The subject is led enthusiastically by the subject co-ordinator. The school participates in a good number of competitive sporting fixtures for both boys and girls. It is very successful enabling the pupils who participate to take a pride in their achievement and their representation of the school.

