

INSPECTION REPORT

BRANKSOME HEATH MIDDLE SCHOOL

Poole

LEA area: Borough of Poole

Unique reference number: 113703

Headteacher: Mr J Royle

Reporting inspector: Mr D J Curtis
20893

Dates of inspection: 5th – 8th November 2001

Inspection number: 216919

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Middle
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	8-12
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Livingstone Road Parkstone Poole Dorset
Postcode:	BH12 3DX
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Jane Foster
Date of previous inspection:	September 1999

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr D J Curtis 20893	Registered inspector	Information and communication technology Design and technology Physical education	What sort of school is it?
Mr B Jones 9542	Lay inspector		How high are standards? (attitudes, values and personal development, attendance) How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mrs J Bavin 16038	Team inspector	English	How high are standards? (the school's results and achievements) How well are pupils taught?
Mrs S Metcalfe 20003	Team inspector	Special educational needs English as an additional language Science Music	
Mrs E Pacey 25925	Team inspector	Art Religious education	How good are curricular and other opportunities?
Mrs L Thorogood 29988	Team Inspector	Equal opportunities Geography History	
Mrs A Webber 3838	Team inspector	Special educational needs (hearing impaired pupils)	
Mr J Palethorpe 20671	Team inspector	Mathematics Modern foreign languages	How well is the school led and managed?

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	10
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	13
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	16
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	18
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	21
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	22
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	26
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	28
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	32

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Branksome Heath Middle School is situated in Parkstone in the unitary authority of Poole and takes pupils from 8 to 12 years. There are 593 pupils on roll in 20 classes, with 299 boys and 294 girls: this is bigger than most other middle schools. The percentage of pupils from homes where English is not the first language is slightly higher than average. There are 195 pupils on the school's register of special educational needs; as a proportion this is well above the national average. Of these, 14 pupils have a statement of special educational needs, which is a percentage close to the national average. Two pupils are designated 'Travellers' and 63 pupils claim free school meals. Standards on entry are well below national averages.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a rapidly improving school, which is providing its pupils with a satisfactory standard of education. The leadership and management of the newly appointed headteacher are very good. He has successfully raised staff morale very quickly and is ably supported by the deputy headteacher and assistant teachers. He has successfully gained the trust and support of parents as well as teaching colleagues. Teaching is satisfactory and improving. Teachers and senior colleagues are working effectively together to improve pupils' attitudes to learning. While standards are well below expected levels, the improvements in teaching and pupils' attitudes already in place are consistent with future standards rising. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- By the age of 12, in Year 7, pupils' standards in physical education are good.
- Pupils' enthusiasm and their relationships with all teachers and teaching assistants are good.
- The leadership and management of the headteacher are very good.
- The teaching, management and support for pupils with special educational needs are good.
- Provision for pupils' moral and social development is good.
- Procedures for child protection and ensuring pupils' welfare are good.

What could be improved

- Standards in English, mathematics, information and communication technology, and art and design.
- The consistent quality of teachers' marking and their use of assessment to influence their planning.
- The attendance and punctuality of a significant minority of pupils.
- The quality of teachers' planning to ensure that the National Curriculum requirements are met and that it supports pupils' progression and their spiritual and cultural development.
- The quality of information for parents, especially in pupils' annual written reports.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made satisfactory improvement since it was previously inspected in October 2000. The strong leadership of the recently appointed headteacher has been instrumental in the good progress in addressing pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning, in improving the quality of teaching, and in improving attendance rates. The consequence of these improvements is an improved school ethos of shared aspiration. The school has begun to improve standards in science, but has not made sufficient progress in improving standards in English, mathematics and information and communication technology.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
English	D	D	E	D	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Mathematics	E	E	E	D	
Science	E	E	D	C	

Similar schools are those with more than 20 per cent and up to 35 per cent of pupils entitled to free school meals.

When pupils leave the school at the end of Year 7, standards are well below expected levels in English and mathematics and below expected levels in information and communication technology. Standards meet expected levels in science. In religious education, standards meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. In art, standards are below expected levels for pupils at this age. Standards in physical education exceed expectations for this age group. In design and technology, French, geography, history and music, standards meet expectations for pupils of this age.

Current inspection findings judge that by the end of Year 6, standards in English and mathematics are well below average, but are showing a year-on-year improvement. Standards in science have improved significantly and are now average. In information and communication technology, standards are below national expectations. In religious education, standards meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Standards in art and design are well below expectations for pupils of this age. In design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education, standards meet expectations for pupils of this age.

Pupils with special educational needs make good progress as measured against the targets in their individual education plans. Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress in their learning.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have satisfactory attitudes to work in most lessons. They now enjoy school and this has a positive impact on their learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory; most pupils behave sensibly in classrooms and in the playground. A significant minority of pupils demonstrate challenging behaviour in a few lessons.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are good. Pupils trust one another. Friendships stretch across the ethnic groups. Pupils have developed initiative and responsibility to a satisfactory level and they are taking the increased opportunities offered by the school.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory but improving, with punctuality unsatisfactory (3 per cent of pupils are, on average, late each day).

Parents recognise and welcome the significant improvement in behaviour in the school. Attendance and punctuality, however, are unsatisfactory and have a negative impact on pupils' learning.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Years 4 - 6	Year 7
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

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.

During the inspection the quality of teaching was satisfactory overall. However, the proportion of good, very good and excellent teaching observed signifies a considerable improvement in teaching since the last inspection. Since then, senior managers have successfully raised staff morale while monitoring the teachers in the classroom. These successes have clearly improved the quality of teaching. Strengths of good teaching include good relationships, planning to meet the needs of different groups of pupils, and identifying and sharing with pupils clear learning intentions. When teaching is unsatisfactory, it is because expectations of work and behaviour are too low.

The teaching of literacy is satisfactory. Throughout the school, teachers usually use the recommended National Literacy Framework effectively to stimulate pupils' interest in reading, writing and extending their vocabulary. A strength of teaching in literacy is that groups of pupils in each class have specific targets to aim for in their written work. In the best lessons, teachers remind pupils of these targets and encourage them to evaluate to what extent they have achieved them. Teachers mostly use these targets to adapt the tasks for different groups of pupils and so meet their needs effectively.

The teaching of numeracy is satisfactory. Teachers mostly use the recommended National Numeracy Strategy to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of numbers effectively. The arrangements to teach pupils in groups according to their level of mathematical understanding mostly helps teachers to meet pupils' needs. However, within these groups teachers tend to have the same expectations of all pupils, when it would be beneficial to modify work further.

The teaching of pupils with special educational needs, and of those for whom English is an additional language, is good. Pupils are supported effectively by teachers, learning support assistants, the co-ordinator for special educational needs and specialist teachers for English as an additional language.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Unsatisfactory; the school is failing to meet National Curriculum requirements for the teaching of information and communication technology. Policies and schemes of work are not in place for all subjects. The organisation of the timetable means that some lessons are too long.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good; pupils receive effective support from the school and its very strong links with outside support agencies.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good; pupils are supported effectively in lessons and by the specialist teaching they receive. As a result, they make good progress in their learning.
Provision for pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for moral and social development is good and has a positive impact on significantly improved attitudes to learning and behaviour. For spiritual and cultural development, provision is unsatisfactory. The school provides too few planned opportunities to develop pupils' awareness in these areas.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good; the school places a strong emphasis on supporting its pupils. The day-to-day care and welfare of pupils are a strength.

The school has regained the support, trust and confidence of parents in its drive to raise standards. It does not meet statutory requirements for the teaching of information and communication technology and, as a result, standards are below national expectations. The

appointment of a full-time pastoral care assistant is a significant feature of the school's support for pupils.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good; the headteacher, supported ably by the deputy headteacher, has gained the support of teachers, pupils and parents in his clear vision and his determination to raise standards and improve the quality of education for pupils.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory; they have a clear understanding of the needs of the school and are supportive of the headteacher. However, they are not meeting statutory requirements for the teaching of information and communication technology or in the prospectus and annual report to parents.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good; the headteacher and governors have a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. In particular, they have recognised the need to improve behaviour and attitudes to learning as a prerequisite for standards to rise.
The strategic use of resources	Good overall. Efficient use is made of funding, including that for pupils with special educational needs. However, computers in classrooms are under-used.

The school has adequate accommodation, staffing and learning resources to support pupils' learning. High turnover of teaching staff and long-term illness remain difficulties for the school. The headteacher has made a significant impact on improving pupils' behaviour and raising staff morale. The sentence, "It's as though a cloud has been lifted" was used time and time again during the inspection.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school is well led and managed. • The school has high expectations of their children. • Teaching is good. • The school helps their children to become mature and responsible. • Behaviour is improving. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information about their children's progress. • The school working more closely with parents. • The amount of homework. • Behaviour.

Twenty-eight parents attended the meeting with the registered inspector prior to the inspection and 196 questionnaires were returned. Inspection findings support the positive views of parents. Findings judge that homework provision is good and that behaviour is improving. Inspectors agree that the quality of annual written reports to parents on their children's learning needs to be improved.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

Years 4 to 6 (Key Stage 2)

1. Pupils enter the school with standards that are well below average in English, mathematics and science.
2. The results of the 2001 National Curriculum assessments for pupils in Year 6 were well below the national average in English and mathematics and below average in science. When compared with those in similar schools¹, standards were below average in English and mathematics, but average in science. However, as measured against the standards they achieved at the age of seven, pupils make satisfactory progress in English and mathematics, with progress in science being good.
3. The school's results in 2001 when compared with those in 2000 show a marginal increase in the proportion of pupils achieving the expected Level 4² and the higher Level 5 in mathematics. In science, there was a significant increase in the proportion of pupils achieving at both the expected level (Level 4) and at the higher level (Level 5). In English, fewer pupils achieved at both Levels 4 and 5 and there was an increase in the proportion of pupils achieving the lower standard Level 3. A significantly higher proportion of boys than girls achieved Level 3 in writing. Taking the results from the years 1998 to 2001 together, standards are gradually increasing in all three subjects for boys and girls. Additionally, over the last two years, pupils have exceeded expectations based on their attainment at the age of seven in English and science.
4. There are a number of significant contributory factors which have had a negative impact on the low standards in the school; these include:
 - significant weaknesses in the leadership and management of the school (these have been addressed successfully since the appointment of the current headteacher in April 2001);
 - significant weaknesses in pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning, with the result that pupils made insufficient progress in their learning;
 - low staff morale, together with long-term absence of staff and a high turnover of teaching staff in the last two years;
 - the number of pupils on the school's register of special educational needs, particularly boys;
 - the number of pupils who join or leave the school at times other than of normal admission or transfer;
 - unsatisfactory levels of attendance and poor punctuality among a significant minority of pupils.
5. Current inspection findings judge standards to be well below average in English and mathematics and average in science. The improvement in science is because there have

¹ [Schools with more than 20 per cent and up to 35 per cent of pupils entitled to free school meals. The local education authority does not provide a school meals service.](#)

² [It is the national expectation that pupils should achieve Level 4 in the National Curriculum assessments at the age of 11.](#)

been suitable opportunities for investigative and experimental work and because teachers use assessment findings to plan pupils' science work. A contributory factor to the low standards in mathematics is the lack of sufficient opportunities for pupils to handle data and use the computer to support their learning. In English, the lack of a co-ordinated, whole-school approach to spelling and developing pupils' speaking skills is a significant contributory factor to the low standards.

6. Standards in information and communication technology are below national expectations as a result of pupils not being taught the subject to the full National Curriculum requirements. Additionally, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to use computers to support their learning in other subjects. Standards in art and design are well below national expectations because teachers lack sufficient knowledge and confidence to teach with suitable expectations. Standards in religious education meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. In design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education, standards meet expectations for pupils of this age.

Year 7 (Key Stage 3)

7. Inspection findings judge that standards are well below expected levels in English and mathematics and below expected levels in information and communication technology. Standards meet expected levels in science. These judgements mirror the situation for pupils between Years 4 and 6, and the same contributory factors apply. In art and design, standards are below expected levels for pupils at this age, which represents an increase in standards early in Year 7, accounted for by an increase in teacher confidence with these classes. Standards in physical education are good and exceed expectations for this age group. In religious education, standards meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. In design and technology, French, geography, history and music, standards meet expectations for pupils of this age.
8. Standards achieved by pupils on the school's register of special educational needs are below those expected for pupils' ages. No significant differences were observed between the achievement of boys and girls. Standards are in line with pupils' prior ability and their special educational needs.
9. When pupils are given specific and targeted support in lessons, such as in literacy and numeracy, standards are similar to those of lower ability pupils within classes. Progress is usually good. Those pupils on the register of special educational needs for emotional or behavioural needs make progress in line with their prior ability due to the quality of support given within lessons. When pupils are unsupported in other curriculum areas, standards are below expectations for their year group. Teachers ensure that tasks are matched carefully to the range of pupils' abilities. In addition, they teach in mixed-ability groups to support those with weaker skills, with the result that progress is satisfactory. The standards achieved by pupils with emotional or behavioural difficulties are low when they are not given specific or targeted support by adults, and their progress overall is slow.
10. Pupils, who are withdrawn for ALS (additional literacy strategy) support, make good progress. The learning support assistant who runs the programme offers good, systematic support for the development of pupils' literacy skills.
11. Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress in their learning. They are supported effectively by class teachers and learning support assistants who work in effective partnership with the specialist visiting EMTAG (Ethnic Minorities and Travellers Achievement Grant) teacher.
12. Standards, as judged against the findings of the previous inspection report, have declined in English, but have not changed significantly when compared with previous test results.

Standards in mathematics were judged to be well below national averages in the previous report. They have improved slightly, although they are still well below expected levels. Standards in science have improved. At the time of the previous inspection they were judged to be well below national averages, whereas evidence from this inspection indicates standards that meet expected levels.

13. Standards in the school are improving, but are still not high enough. The staff and senior management team share a good understanding of the school's priorities for development. Inspection evidence is consistent with the school currently providing its pupils with an acceptable standard of education and being in a good position to secure recent improvements and raise standards further. The headteacher has the support of staff, pupils and parents in the drive to raise standards. With rapidly improving attitudes and behaviour, pupils are well placed to improve their learning over time rather than just in individual lessons. The school now has the capacity to meet its targets.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

14. Previous inspection reports judged that pupils' attitudes and behaviour were unsatisfactory and had a negative impact on their learning. In addition, parents were particularly concerned about behaviour in the school. The headteacher recognised on his appointment that this was a major area of concern and has worked hard, with the support of the deputy headteacher and staff, to improve pupils' behaviour and attitudes towards learning.
15. Current inspection findings judge that pupils' attitudes to the school and their work are satisfactory overall. Their attitudes were very good or better in 20 per cent of lessons seen and good in a further 41 per cent. Attitudes were unsatisfactory in 8 per cent of lessons. Improved teaching since the previous inspection is creating a more purposeful atmosphere in classrooms. Most pupils concentrate and work hard in lessons. Increased support from teachers and well trained learning support assistants enables pupils with emotional difficulties to take a fuller part in lessons. For example, an assistant took a pupil who was feeling 'down' out of a mathematics class for 10 minutes. He came back in, worked hard on the problems and achieved a high number of correct answers. Pupils show satisfactory interest in activities. They are proud of their school and value it as part of their community. They represent it with credit when they go out on educational visits. Adults commented on their excellent and friendly behaviour on recent trips to Corfe Castle and a nearby country park.
16. Pupils' behaviour has improved to the point where it is satisfactory. They welcome visitors courteously and respect the school environment. However, the previous inspections identified poor behaviour by a significant minority of pupils. When the present headteacher joined the school in April 2001, he found a few pupils who were aggressive and disaffected. Pupils' behaviour is improving in response to the school's efforts to give them better support. Last year, the school made 29 fixed-period exclusions. Boys accounted for 17 exclusions and girls for 12 exclusions. The proportion of girls is unusually high. Most exclusions were the result of pupils confronting teachers and other adults. In the first half of this autumn term, there has been one fixed-term exclusion. The school is free from racism and sexism. At the pre-inspection meeting some parents expressed concern about bullying. Pupils interviewed say there is much less bullying now than in the recent past. The school has increased supervision and facilities for play in the playground. Pupils are calmer in their break times and enjoying them more.
17. Relationships are good. Pupils share feelings and discuss problems in 'Circle Time'³ lessons. They trust one another. Friendships stretch across the ethnic groups. Pupils

³ During Circle Time pupils discuss personal and general issues. One pupil at a time speaks in turn, and no-one interrupts. Pupils feel confident that they can talk freely and openly, and that the teacher and other pupils will listen.

from the ethnic minorities have successfully stood for election to the school council. Boys and girls work together well in groups. Pupils in Year 7 act as 'buddies' to pupils in Year 4 who have just joined the school. They make sure they are not short of friends. Pupils relate well to their teachers and other adults in the school. The headteacher and deputy headteacher keep in close touch with pupils at breaks and before and after school.

18. Pupils' have developed initiative and responsibility to a satisfactory level. They are taking up the increased opportunities offered by the school. Two pupils represent each class on the school council, to which the school has given a budget of £250 to spend on facilities in the playground. Council members discuss options with their class and present ideas to the council. They consider the practicalities. Pupils in Year 7 run the school stationery shop and act as monitors at lunchtime. Last year they won a design and technology award for playground development. In addition, pupils in Year 7 worked with a leisure company and won the 'Mayor's Award' for a plan to develop the school grounds. Pupils collect for national and local charities. They develop teamwork and leadership in the sports teams. In the past year, the school has won local leagues in soccer and volleyball. Year 7 boys reached the final of a national competition organised by Manchester United. The girls' cricket team reached the county final. Pupils build their self-esteem with lively participation in the performing arts. They present concerts, plays, pantomimes and talent contests at school. The orchestra and a flute ensemble played in assemblies during the inspection.
19. Attendance is unsatisfactory and, although improving, has a negative impact on pupils' standards. The school's 92.3 per cent attendance was well below the national primary average of 94.4 per cent in 1999/2000, the latest year for which the national average is available. The rate improved marginally in 2000/01. However, families are now responding to the school's efforts to improve attendance. In the first half of the autumn term in 2001, attendance is 93.3 per cent. This figure is close to that achieved by primary schools with Year 7 pupils.⁴
20. Punctuality was a concern reported in the previous inspection report. Teachers now take the registers promptly. Almost all pupils arrive in good time. Pupils arriving late report to the school office. In the week of the inspection, 15 to 20 pupils were late each day. This is a reduction since the previous inspection. The school is working hard to improve punctuality further. However, persistent lateness by a significant minority of pupils has a negative impact on their own learning and that of fellow pupils.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

21. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. During the inspection 58 per cent of teaching was good, including the 21 per cent that was very good or excellent. The quality of teaching was unsatisfactory in 8 per cent of the 99 lessons observed, and in the remaining 34 per cent teaching was satisfactory. This represents a significant improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection one year ago. Nearly half of the unsatisfactory teaching observed was attributable to temporary staff.
22. The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection when inspectors reported that teaching was good in 24 per cent of lessons, satisfactory in 60 per cent and unsatisfactory in 16 per cent of the 25 lessons observed. During the previous inspection, the quality of teaching was significantly stronger in English than in mathematics or science. This reflected the school's emphasis on this subject and teachers' confidence with it. Current inspection findings indicate that these strengths in teaching English have been maintained and are beginning to have a positive impact upon pupils' achievement.

⁴ Over 40% of 'middle deemed primary' schools recorded attendance of 93% or lower in the National Data Summary annex for 1999/2000.

23. Examples of excellent teaching were seen in English in Year 4, and in Year 7 in mathematics, and design and technology. These outstanding lessons proceed at a cracking pace because they are highly organised. For example, in an excellent English lesson, pupils respond to high expectations of their efforts through a series of activities with an impressive sense of both urgency and care. They develop their vocabulary with pride and begin to thoughtfully analyse a poem about bullying. Teachers also successfully inspire pupils. For example, in the excellent design and technology lesson on working with acrylic, pupils are reminded, "You can't skip this stage. You must get it bang on!" This encourages pupils to strive for high standards and learn an exceptional amount about the materials they use. Additionally, examples of very good teaching were seen in literacy, numeracy, science, music and physical education.
24. Examples of good teaching were seen in all subjects except art and French. In the best lessons, strengths in teaching promote positive attitudes to work from pupils who then learn effectively. These strengths include:
- teachers having good relationships with pupils and managing their behaviour skilfully. As a result, boys and girls keep working at a good pace;
 - teachers planning carefully to adapt work to challenge different groups of pupils. Consequently, they successfully help each pupil to develop their understanding and skills;
 - teachers sharing the purpose of the lesson with pupils. As a result, pupils understand what they are aiming for and strive to achieve independently. This allows the lesson to remain focused.
25. Teachers also challenge pupils good-naturedly, but effectively with comments and questions such as:
- "I am not going to help you" (to draw a geometric shape);
 - "How do we do this?" (while sharing a question from a previous National Curriculum test paper);
 - "Why then is a jumper the best insulator? Which materials were less successful and why?" (while drawing a practical science lesson to a close);
 - "Why is this a good costume which can be seen on the stage?" (encouraging pupils to analyse designs before creating their own).

These strengths in teaching are having a positive impact upon pupils' attitudes to learning.

26. Whilst the teaching of English is satisfactory, a particular strength of the teaching of literacy is that groups of pupils in each class have very clear targets to aim for in their written work. These targets are recorded in the front of their books and on cards that they use as bookmarks. In the best lessons, teachers remind pupils of these targets and encourage them to evaluate to what extent they have achieved them. Teachers mostly assess pupils' work against these targets and where necessary adapt the tasks for different groups of pupils, both to meet their needs effectively and reset their targets. Throughout the school, teachers usually use the recommended National Literacy Framework effectively to stimulate pupils' interest in reading, writing and extending their vocabulary.

27. The teaching of numeracy is satisfactory. Teachers mostly use the recommended National Numeracy Strategy to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of numbers effectively. The arrangements made to teach pupils in groups according to their level of mathematical understanding mostly help teachers to meet their needs accurately. However, within these groups teachers tend to have the same expectations of all pupils, when it would be beneficial to modify their work further. The teaching of geography and history is good because most teachers are confident with these subjects.
28. The teaching of information and communication technology (ICT) and art and design is unsatisfactory overall. This has a direct and detrimental effect on the standards attained by pupils, which are unsatisfactory in ICT throughout the school. Pupils' standards in art and design are poor by the age of 11 and unsatisfactory in Year 7. In the four lessons observed in the ICT suite, teaching was consistently good. However, the weakness in the teaching of this subject lies in the lack of planning for pupils to use, develop and extend their knowledge and skills in other subjects. Significant weaknesses in teaching art and design were identified in:
- teachers' confidence with the subject and therefore their teaching of basic skills;
 - the usefulness of teachers' planning;
 - teachers' expectations of pupils;
 - teachers' means of knowing what pupils know, understand and can do.
29. These weaknesses mean that pupils do not work at a high enough standard or make sufficient progress. When teaching is unsatisfactory in other subjects it is mostly because teachers do not have sufficiently high expectations of pupils' work or effort. This means that pupils become bored and misbehave and the teachers do not have sufficient control of a significant minority of them. However, in one unsatisfactory lesson with low expectations and insufficient preparation, pupils behaved well, working together co-operatively.
30. The quality of teaching and support for learning within classes is good for pupils with special educational needs. Teachers carefully plan a range of activities that will enable pupils to practise skills, share and add to existing knowledge, and develop an understanding of a wide curriculum. Teachers plan well with learning support assistants so that even when pupils are taken out of the classroom for additional support, the curriculum they follow matches that of the class. When a learning support assistant is not available, most teachers carefully plan the composition of groups or the range of tasks that offer support to slower learners. Specialist teaching for older pupils is successful in supporting their special educational needs and those of less able pupils. This is because teachers know details of their abilities and are aware of targets from individual educational plans.
31. The teaching done by the co-ordinator for special educational needs offers very good support to meet pupils' needs. She carefully ensures that pupils work at an appropriate pace to improve their learning, develop skills and build confidence in their ability to complete tasks. She checks frequently that pupils get the support they need, if necessary working individually with them, but mostly in small groups of pupils with similar needs. Pupils with low confidence develop self-esteem through such strategies. When the co-ordinator teaches pupils away from their own class it is usually for literacy. These lessons are linked to the class programme of study and are appropriately developed to deal with weaker areas and focus upon individual and specific needs. The co-ordinator also withdraws very small groups for intensive language reinforcement, assessment and

social and emotional support, encouraging the development of concentration and raising self-esteem.

32. The quality of teachers' marking is inconsistent. It varies widely in its usefulness to pupils. Examples of helpful marking that is both encouraging and constructive include comments such as, "What a fantastic effort! It would be much clearer if you started a new line when each person spoke." However, too often there is no, or very limited, evidence of a teacher having looked at work. The habitual use of stickers that applaud work indiscriminately is of limited value in helping pupils to develop their skills and make progress in their learning.
33. Similarly, while some teachers adapt their planned work to reflect their assessment of what pupils have learned and where they need further practice, others do not. Therefore, this is unsatisfactory. Not all teachers systematically adjust work in the light of pupils' learning. This contributes to a situation where pupils do not fully benefit from the many strengths in teaching. They may often make good or satisfactory progress within lessons, while their achievement over time remains unsatisfactory. While the quality of teaching continues to improve overall, these inconsistencies slow down the positive impact of this teaching upon standards. However, the findings of this inspection endorse parents' views, described graphically by one parent as, 'It's as if the sun has come out from behind the cloud now'.
34. Since the last inspection, senior managers have successfully raised staff morale while monitoring the teachers in the classroom. These successes have clearly improved the quality of teaching. Simultaneously, senior members of staff are supporting teachers to bring the potentially disruptive behaviour of a minority of pupils under control. Consequently, pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are improving on a daily basis throughout the school. Inspection evidence indicates that, as teaching and pupils' attitudes to learning improve in tandem, there is a growing positive impact on standards.

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

35. The curriculum provided for all pupils is broad and includes all the subjects of the National Curriculum, including sex education, education about drugs misuse, and personal and social education. Religious education is based on a blend of the locally agreed syllabus and a commercially produced package. French is taught to the oldest pupils in the school. However, statutory requirements are not being met in information and communication technology because pupils are not given opportunities to work on all aspects of the curriculum, particularly in data handling and simulations. This indicates little progress in the development of the information and communication technology curriculum since the last inspection report. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are given appropriate emphasis and are beginning to have an impact on standards.
36. The curriculum is not well balanced. More time is allocated to the teaching of history and geography than to subjects such as design and technology or religious education. As a result, pupils have fewer opportunities to develop skills, knowledge and understanding in some subjects than in others. The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is a very positive, recent contribution to the curriculum. However, the organisation of the timetable for personal, social and health education is significantly restricting the amount of time available for all other subjects. As a result, it is having a detrimental impact on standards, especially in English and mathematics.
37. The curriculum co-ordinators and year leaders work together to plan the curriculum in blocks of work for each half term. However, there is no whole-school curriculum plan to show how subject knowledge and understanding should progress from year to year or

how subjects might link together. As a result, because not all teachers know what has been learnt before, they are unable to build on pupils' previous learning and insufficient progress is made. Some curriculum areas, such as design and technology and science, have clear topic grids to show when the statutory curriculum is taught to all pupils in the school. However, not all subjects have such clear overall plans and they are not always shared with other teachers. Nor do all subjects have policies or schemes of work. As a result, teachers have insufficient support or advice about the skills, knowledge and understanding to be expected from pupils as they progress through the school. Their expectations of what their pupils can do are not high enough and attainment is too low, particularly in art and design.

38. All pupils have equal access to the same curriculum, including pupils with special educational needs and those with English as a second language. The curriculum provision for pupils with special educational needs and those with English as a second language is good. Their individual education plans reflect their needs and they are provided with good support from classroom assistants and teachers. As a result, they make good progress. Although there are booster classes and additional literacy lessons, none of the more-able pupils are identified or have any specific activities planned for them.
39. The school provides a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities, including netball, football, recorders, choir, orchestra, dance and a homework club. Seasonal activities include rugby, hockey, athletics and cricket. A craft club is organised before festivals such as Mother's Day, Christmas and Easter. Boys and girls both take part in the activities. Satisfactory use is made of visits and visitors to support work in the curriculum, for example visits to Corfe Castle to support work in history, and the use of the local area for work in geography. A residential visit to France for the oldest pupils provides a good opportunity for their personal and social development as well as to practise their French language skills. Homework is set to support the current work in class and to prepare older pupils for the next stage of their education. Outstanding links are maintained with the secondary school. The liaison between the schools is impressive. Secondary colleagues have a very high profile and visit the school daily to work alongside pupils in lessons and in the playground. This provides very good opportunities for both pupils and teachers to get to know one another and makes the transition to the secondary school very efficient.
40. Although the school has continued to make progress in providing opportunities for spiritual development in assemblies, the provision for it across the curriculum is still unsatisfactory. The headteacher and deputy headteacher lead lively and interesting acts of collective worship that capture pupils attention and imagination. However, in every assembly for Years 6 and 7, just as teachers are successfully creating an atmosphere of reflection, a bell announcing the end of a lesson shatters the mood. Further intrusions occur when people walk through the hall. These interruptions are a great pity as the assemblies are instrumental in developing pupils' self-awareness and self-esteem, and are beginning to be successful in encouraging them to reflect upon values in the world around them. The good work in collective worship is not continued in lessons, where the only planned opportunities to develop an awareness of the spiritual side of life occur in religious education. This continues to be an area for development.
41. Provision for pupils' moral development is good. The school has a good behaviour policy, which is known and understood by all of the pupils. Teachers use this policy to help pupils understand the difference between right and wrong. However, not all teachers use the policy consistently. All members of the school community work hard to improve pupils' understanding of how their actions affect other people. Incidents of inappropriate behaviour are dealt with quickly and the pupils involved are helped to understand why their actions are unacceptable. Pupils know that they will be dealt with fairly and are

beginning to follow the good examples set for them by all the adults who work in the school.

42. The school makes good provision for pupils' social development. The good relationships within the school are based on mutual respect and a growing understanding of the need to accept rules. This is an improvement since the last inspection report. When they are given the opportunity, pupils work well together and demonstrate responsible attitudes. For example, the oldest pupils run their own shop. The high level of provision for the pastoral care of the pupils is proving to be very effective. The majority of pupils are beginning to respond to it well, developing a sense of pride in themselves and their school. The recent introduction of lessons in personal, social and health education is encouraging pupils to think about other people's feelings, such as loneliness. The citizenship lessons for the oldest pupils provide opportunities for them to discuss issues such as the relationship between rights and responsibilities.
43. Provision for pupils' cultural development is unsatisfactory. Although pupils study other religions in religious education, there are few other planned opportunities for them to study either their own culture or that of other people. There are no regular visits by artists, authors, musicians or other performers to enrich the curriculum for all the pupils. One class attended the opening of the local gallery, but only a selected group of pupils visited to work with an artist. There are missed opportunities to develop an awareness of the diversity of other cultures when studying different places, such as the Caribbean or when looking at Aborigine art. Insufficient opportunities are taken to develop an understanding, or reflect on the nature, of modern multi-cultural Britain.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

44. The school provides good care for pupils in respect of welfare, child protection, and health and safety. The premises committee includes a governor with extensive professional experience of health and safety. The committee checks the premises regularly. The site manager chairs the committee. He checks for health and safety each day, correcting minor concerns immediately. He is refurbishing the school progressively. His team of cleaners keep the school in good, clean condition. However, there is a health and safety concern. A pond in the courtyard does not have adequate fencing or a lockable gate. Arrangements for first aid are good. Three members of staff have current first-aid certificates. A supervisor is available in the medical room throughout lunchtime. The school notifies parents in the event of a head injury. The deputy headteacher is the designated teacher for child protection and for the care of looked-after children. He ensures that all staff are aware of current issues and requirements.
45. The school makes satisfactory arrangements for monitoring pupils' academic and personal development. It provides satisfactory educational and personal support and guidance. When the new headteacher arrived, an early priority was to improve procedures to promote good behaviour and reduce bullying. The school has done this successfully.
46. The school has good procedures for monitoring the attainment and progress of pupils in English, mathematics and science from the time they enter the school. The assessment co-ordinator is building up a bank of data to inform teachers how year groups, classes and groups are achieving. The results of national tests provide the foundation for the assessment procedures, and a range of non-statutory tests, including computerised tests in Year 7, supplement this information. Test results are analysed by the assessment co-ordinator to set targets for the school and to identify differences in attainment between boys and girls and between year groups. These improvements and developments in assessment are slowly beginning to have a positive effect on standards. The co-ordinator has analysed errors made by pupils in the tests so that teachers know which areas of

weakness require additional work. For instance, it has become clear that test results in both mathematics and science were depressed by a weakness in data handling, so this will now become a focus for teaching. This is a recent development and has not been in place for a sufficient length of time for benefits to be evident.

47. Portfolios of pupils' work have been compiled in science so that examples of different levels of attainment are available to support teacher assessments. Firm plans are in place to develop similar portfolios for mathematics and English. Assessment in information and communication technology and other subjects against National Curriculum requirements is less secure. Teachers are not always sure what pupils have achieved in earlier classes. For instance, in art and design, pupils in the higher classes are not given tasks and activities that draw upon and extend skills learned previously, which restricts their learning and attainment in the subject.
48. The good procedures are not having a sufficiently strong impact on achievements at the end of Year 6 and Year 7 because they are not used consistently through the school to guide teachers' planning. Test results are used to divide pupils into ability sets for mathematics teaching, but nothing similar happens in English and science. Some teachers plan for a range of ability groups within classes or sets and annotate their planning to give good levels of information about pupils' learning, but this practice is not consistent throughout the school. The use of assessment information to match individual pupils' tasks to their developing levels of ability is also inconsistent. For instance, it is seldom used to set sufficiently challenging work for the most able pupils. Although there are examples of good practice, the marking of much of the work is of a poor quality. It does little to help pupils to improve their work and is not used as an effective tool for assessment. Some teachers offer only praise and encouragement, which, whilst appropriate in some cases, does not suggest how the pupil could do even better and is not linked to personal targets.
49. Monitoring of pupils' personal development is satisfactory. It operates at several different levels. Teachers and learning support assistants keep a close eye on how pupils in their class are maturing and becoming more responsible. The headteacher knows the pupils well. The pastoral care worker provides a listening ear for pupils with personal difficulties.
50. The school has set up good support for pupils' personal development. It has established 'Circle Time' sessions in which pupils develop a closer understanding of one another. The school council is having a positive effect. The two elected representatives from each class feel a sense of responsibility. The other pupils welcome the chance to express their ideas. Year 7 pupils benefit from the opportunity to be monitors. Managing and running their own stationery shop at lunchtime help them prepare for the adult world. Within the past six months, the school has greatly extended the facilities in the playground. Pupils can choose from a large draughts boards, magnetic noughts and crosses, skipping ropes, a fenced soccer area and bright new benches where they can sit and read.
51. The school has a very good policy to encourage positive behaviour. The October 2000 inspection report noted an improvement since a low point at the time of the previous report in 1999. It added, however, that procedures had not had enough time to have an impact. When the new headteacher arrived at the school there was still some very challenging behaviour. Several adults asked him, "What are you going to do to improve behaviour?" He canvassed opinions from teachers, support staff, pupils, parents and governors on the issue of pupils' behaviour. Pupils now feel that the behaviour policy belongs to them. The 'Golden Rules' are based on respect, acceptance and care for those in school, the community and the wider world. A priority is to extend the social inclusion of all pupils, even when they are finding it hard to participate in a lesson. There are scales of rewards and sanctions. The school has firm procedures to deter bullying. Most importantly, pupils now feel that someone will listen to them if they have a problem. A

Year 5 girl said, "My brother was bullied a lot when he was in Year 5 three years ago. It really is much better at school now."

52. The school backs its new procedures to improve behaviour by investing in additional support staff. Four extra learning support assistants and a pastoral care worker were appointed from the beginning of the current school year. The care worker comes from a Christian charity that was already helping the school with playground games. He effectively helps pupils celebrate their successes, as well as supporting them when they have problems. The school has 11 lunchtime supervisors, which contributes to improvements in pupils' behaviour. From the start of this autumn term, all adults in the playground at lunchtime wear luminous jackets. Pupils can see that there are more people to take care of them.
53. Procedures to promote attendance are good. Class teachers take registers correctly and promptly. If any parents have not let the school know the reason for an absence, the clerical assistant contacts them on the first day. This has had the effect of cutting down the amount of unauthorised absence in the past year. At the pre-inspection meeting, parents said that the school values good attendance and does all it can to encourage it. If parents do not explain an absence, the administrative assistant contacts them promptly. She is confident with the computerised system. She quickly prints out whole-school and individual patterns of attendance for the management team. The school works hard to discourage families from taking reduced price holidays in term time. It has improved procedures to encourage punctuality and now has a 'late book'. It sends notes to parents of persistent latecomers. It reminds all parents in newsletters. As a personal touch, the headteacher and the deputy headteacher are at the front of the school when pupils arrive in the morning. They communicate very clearly that the school values good punctuality.
54. Pupils with special educational needs undertake all class assessments and ongoing assessments are made of progress through the English and mathematics curriculum. This is in addition to, for example, the end-of-topic assessments in science, history and geography.
55. After a pupil is identified by a class teacher or parent as having a learning problem, the co-ordinator for special educational needs plans and conducts a range of tests to assess their specific needs. These include high frequency word checks, writing and numeracy assessments. Assessments by outside support agencies are made when necessary.
56. Teachers from the local special school visit to make observations and help draw up programmes of study, as does the teacher for the hearing impaired. Staff from the local education authority support services, including speech therapists and literacy and numeracy support, contribute to the identification of pupils' specific needs. The educational psychologist also conducts a range of tests and assessments to help identify pupils with special educational needs. These are used to draw up statement of needs and targets for pupils' individual educational programmes to match these needs.
57. The co-ordinator for special educational needs monitors pupils' progress through the targets on the individual educational programmes, using 'word walls' and 'phonic snakes', for instance, to frequently check language and literacy developments. These are usually done in weekly sessions where pupils work in small groups away from their own class on specific language activities, such as 'tile placement', 'language master' and computer programs.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

58. Parents have a good opinion of the school. They recognise its effective and very recent improvements. At the pre-inspection meeting a father said, "The sun has come up from behind the clouds". Parents value very highly the impact of the new headteacher. They

feel he is approachable and visible, "Nothing is too sensitive to discuss now". A parent at the meeting paid tribute to the improvement in management made by the deputy headteacher when he acted as headteacher during the past school year. A mother said that her daughter feels that teachers are listening more now. Another parent's son told her, "We're learning more and having more fun". A parent described a fall and then a recovery in parents' confidence in the school, "The school had a high reputation in the past. A year ago, many parents were disheartened and fed up because they saw problems with bullying, with things going missing and the poor condition of the buildings. Today parents can see that improvements have happened".

59. However, some parents still have worries. At the meeting, some parents said their children had suffered bullying. Parents say there are inconsistencies in the way teachers make themselves available and in how they set homework. These parents are not fully aware of the recent improvements. Parents say that last summer's annual reports on their children lacked information on what they know, understand and can do. The inspection team finds that this criticism is correct.
60. The school now has good and effective links with parents. There are three formal meetings with the class teachers in the autumn, spring and summer terms. Teachers, support staff and members of the senior management team meet parents informally at the end of each school day. The school is an open school. It willingly arranges an appointment if parents have a concern. The school is making good use of the home/school agreement. The school also sends cards home to parents of pupils who deserve praise for good behaviour. Parents come to Christmas concerts and other dramatic and musical performances. Parents and former parents play a big part in the Friends of Branksome. This association runs a lively programme of events and parents support it well. The summer fete is the major money raiser. It funds extra facilities to extend play and learning. Pupils help to run stalls at the fete, building their commercial and organisational experience.
61. The supply of information to parents over the past year has been unsatisfactory. Last summer's reports on children's progress were disorderly and unattractive. In some classes, a subject covered a whole page; in other classes it was half a page. Some subjects had ticks in boxes to indicate attitudes and progress; some ticks were missing. The prospectus and the governors' annual report are attractively presented. However, the governors' report lacks one item required by statute. The prospectus lacks several. The school is aware of these weaknesses. A governor recalls that when the headteacher came to the school he undertook 'to drown parents with information'. The flow of information to parents has already increased. The school issued two clear newsletters to parents in the first half of the autumn term. Class teachers send a curriculum information sheet each term, showing what pupils will be learning and how parents can help. Parents of pupils with special educational needs participate in discussion of targets and reviews. The school has undertaken to rectify the statutory omissions in the prospectus and the governors' annual report. It is devising a system to improve next summer's annual reports on pupils and to ensure they are consistent.
62. Parents contribute satisfactorily to their children's learning. The homework policy makes clear the school's expectations of homework. Teachers set and mark homework regularly and parents know when to expect it. Parents and teachers make use of the homework diaries to communicate with one another.
63. Parents with children who are on the school's register of special educational needs are fully involved with the drawing up of statements and individual education programmes to implement the statements. Termly reviews are held with parents to evaluate achievements and plan further targets for the individual education plans.

64. Parents of pupils who have individual education plans for behaviour and emotional development have immediate access to the co-ordinator for special educational needs, learning support assistants and class teachers. This ensures the consistency of approach between home and school; rewards and sanctions are shared with pupils and parents. The co-ordinator has a 'drop in' session on Fridays for parents who wish to discuss their child's progress, share information and raise concerns.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

65. The leadership and management of the school are very good. This is a great improvement since the last inspection and has come about with the appointment of a new headteacher. He is providing clear direction for the work and development of the school and is taking it forward at a remarkable pace. He leads from the front and displays to staff, pupils, parents and governors his intentions for the school. His inspiration is infectious and secures the commitment of nearly all of those around him. The school aims and mission statement were already in place, but the difference now is that parents, governors and staff support these aims and they are at the heart of what the school is trying to achieve. Through its school improvement plan, to which subject leaders have contributed, the school is now addressing key areas of weakness in a systematic and planned way. Not everything can be done at once and the school is not meeting all its aims, but the identified priorities are totally appropriate. The improvement plan is short term to enable the new management team to make immediate inroads into school development. It is intended that all staff and governors will use their vision of where they want the school to be in future, to set longer-term goals.
66. The headteacher is building an effective team who share his vision and enthusiasm for improving all aspects of the school. He has encouraged them to take an active role in sharing responsibility for its future development. For example, subject leaders now have clear job descriptions and are allocated a budget to enable them to resource teaching in their subject. Their monitoring role is very limited at present, but plans are for this to develop considerably. The senior management team, year leaders and curriculum leaders are all well aware of their roles and responsibilities and contribute enormously to the school's improving status. Together with the governors and the pupils themselves, they are contributing to the greatly improved ethos and its positive effect on all who have connections with the school. Some of this improvement started in the last two years with the very effective contribution of the two acting headteachers, one on secondment from a local school, and the other the present deputy headteacher. Their work has been taken on by the new headteacher and, together with his own vision and ability to manage change, they have enabled the school to rise from the 'serious weaknesses' status it had before. The improved relationships with staff and governors and the improved quality of the school environment have encouraged everyone to take a pride in themselves and the school. The report by HMI (Her Majesty's Inspectors) in October 2000 indicated that it was a critical time for the school, with much hinging on the appointment of a new headteacher. The new appointment has been extremely successful and the school is being driven forward, with the result that behaviour has improved and pupils enjoy learning and make better progress.
67. The governors are now taking a much greater part in helping to shape the direction of the school and they are proving to be very effective. They are involved in strategic planning through their input into the school improvement plan. Their responses to the previous inspection are well documented and appropriate. They are committed to improving their own knowledge and understanding of how best to help the school, and regularly attend training sessions. They have a number of strategies for finding out about the school's strengths and weaknesses, ranging from the headteacher's report to a link system, with a curriculum leader for every governor. They fully understand their roles and responsibilities and largely fulfil these well. However, there are some missing details in

the school prospectus and information and communication technology is not taught according to the full requirements of the National Curriculum, both of which are statutory requirements. Governors' committees are well structured and have appropriate terms of reference. Governors are very supportive of the headteacher, with whom they have established good relationships.

68. The headteacher is well aware of the quality of teaching in the school, which ranges from excellent to some which needs improvement. He has had staff morale very much at the forefront of his mind, as the past two years without a substantive headteacher have been a strain on all concerned. He has attempted to find the right balance between building staff morale and confidence at the same time as improving the school's overall performance. He has put into place a number of strategies to support teachers. For example:
- teaching has been monitored by local education authority advisers, the headteacher and the deputy headteachers;
 - colleagues from other schools have been invited to come into classes to support;
 - an extra teacher has been appointed to reduce teachers' workload;
 - extra classroom assistants have been appointed to support in the classroom;
 - a pastoral care worker has been appointed to work with pupils experiencing a range of emotional and behavioural difficulties;
 - performance management has been introduced to identify teachers' training needs and set targets.
69. All these initiatives are contributing to higher staff morale and improved performance, and are having a positive impact on learning. However, being at such an early stage, they have yet to impact significantly on standards. Newly qualified teachers are well supported in the school. They take advantage of the provision offered by the local education authority and have the deputy headteacher in school as their mentor. In practice, they are able to access their year leaders more easily and they are giving good support. The school lacks more formalised documentation that would be of benefit to new teachers to the school.
70. The unit cost per pupil in the school is high. This is partly due to the status of the school as 'middle deemed primary' and partly because of increased funding for the high number of pupils with special educational needs. The school makes good use of its money. The cost of initiatives and priorities are identified at an early stage and appropriate money is allocated. The principles of competition and best value are used well. For example, when purchasing hardware for the new computer suite, best value principles were applied by:
- visits to neighbouring schools to compare provision and discuss advantages and limitations;
 - invitations to a range of companies to visit the school, meet staff and governors, and assess the proposed accommodation before submitting quotations;
 - having received the quotations, decisions were made based upon cost, quality of hardware, range of software packages, installation and after-sales care.
71. The money allocated for specific grants is monitored meticulously to ensure that it is spent for the correct purposes. There are efficient control systems in operation that are used very effectively by the administrative staff. Information is always readily available for the headteacher or governors to indicate the financial state of the school and day-to-day administration is good. There is a much higher than usual carry forward of funds. This is largely due to the temporary nature of senior management during the past two years. They were reluctant to spend money before the appointment of the new headteacher. This is very well justified, although this principle was stretched somewhat with such a large carry forward. However, the benefits are now being reaped by the whole school, with the headteacher and governors being able to afford to fund new

initiatives, such as the increase in the number of teaching and support staff. New technology is used well for such matters as attendance, assessment and the transfer of records to other schools.

72. Even at such an early stage in the revitalised school's development, its effectiveness is satisfactory, as is its value for money.
73. The school has sufficient suitably qualified teachers to teach the curriculum, but at the time of the inspection six of the teachers were on temporary or supply contracts. There are curriculum co-ordinators for all subjects and an assessment co-ordinator, a co-ordinator for special educational needs and a mentor for newly qualified teachers. In the past the school has had a high teacher turnover and difficulty in attracting and retaining good temporary and permanent staff, partly because of the context of the school. The recent appointment of an additional deputy headteacher and plans to retain some of the effective temporary teachers currently in place represent an improvement in the staffing position. A good number of experienced and qualified support staff work very effectively alongside the teachers. These include several specialist assistants who support pupils with special educational needs, a librarian, a library assistant and a member of staff with responsibility for pupil welfare and counselling. The administrative staff provide an efficient and friendly welcome to the school.
74. Accommodation is good and allows the effective teaching of the curriculum. The buildings are welcoming and are enhanced by colourful displays. There are several rooms dedicated to specific subject teaching, which are not used as class-base rooms. These include rooms for art, design and technology, information and communication technology, and science. Although generous, the accommodation is not always appropriate for its designated use. For example, the science room, whilst well equipped, is designed and furnished in such a way that only the oldest pupils can use it comfortably and safely. The library shares its accommodation with the information and communication technology suite, which limits its potential for the development of study skills and restricts pupils' access for much of the day. The hall provides suitable accommodation for collective worship and physical education. The buildings are in good decorative order and well maintained. The caretaker and cleaning staff work hard to achieve high standards of cleanliness. The outdoor areas are satisfactory and provide adequate space for physical education and play. However, the size and condition of the school field are inadequate for a school of this size. Improvements to the outside areas include quiet areas, tables and seats.
75. Resources throughout the school are just adequate to support the teaching of English, mathematics, science, and art and design. Plans to reorganise the timetable so that literacy and numeracy are taught throughout the day instead of only in the mornings will ease demand on resources and ensure that equipment is not in short supply. Resources for teaching information and communication technology are good because the school's main resource priority has been on developing the computer suite. However, these are not used efficiently, particularly in classrooms to support pupils' learning. Resources for teaching other subjects are satisfactory. In music, the limited number of instruments available for pupils to borrow prevents some who would like to learn to play an instrument from doing so.
76. The school library supplements the book supply in the classroom book corners and is open for pupils to borrow books at lunchtimes. Not all pupils take advantage of this facility. At present the supply of books is not extensive, but the range is satisfactory, including poetry, fiction, non-fiction and reference texts. More books have been ordered and the library action plan indicates that more stock will be borrowed from the schools' library service when the library moves from its present shared accommodation to a large room in the near future. This will also extend the use of the library as a learning centre

and allow class library sessions to take place. The librarian has trained several Year 6 and 7 pupils to use the computerised catalogue and these pupils act as 'assistant librarians' at busy times. This has enhanced the literacy skills of the pupils concerned.

Special educational needs

77. The management of special educational needs is good and a strength of the school. Pupils with special educational needs are under the direction of the full time co-ordinator who is also an assistant headteacher of the school. She supports teachers effectively with advice and resources. She selects and supports learning support assistants to enable them to work with pupils with specifically identified needs. She makes useful assessments of their progress and their needs, drawing up individual educational programmes and planning the use of resources to support their needs.
78. The special educational needs co-ordinator liaises with various support agencies involved with pupils' learning. She invites support and advice from such as the staff of local special schools, the service for the hearing impaired, the EMTAG service and the secondary school. Literacy and numeracy support staff are also involved with the work of the school. With the hearing impaired unit previously attached to the school now closed, only one pupil from the unit is still at the school. The co-ordinator for special educational needs monitors this pupil's progress and liaises with the visiting specialist teacher to ensure that the targets on her individual educational programme and provision match needs. There is full inclusion in class, with extra support being given by the teacher and learning support assistants. Radio aids are used to support learning.
79. The co-ordinator for special educational needs keeps exemplary records of all pupils, monitoring their progress through the targets on their programmes of study. She takes pupils for direct teaching and monitoring, not just during the literacy period, but at other times of the day, giving such pupils an opportunity to work individually and in small groups. The teacher collects information for statements, supports staff in class and regularly discusses pupils' progress with learning support assistants. The teacher for special educational needs writes pupils' individual educational programmes in consultation with class teachers, support assistants, pupils and parents, drawing up targets that are shared with all. These are kept on the computer, facilitating the refining of programmes of study. The co-ordinator is able to refine targets, select specific learning outcomes and do away with the need for frequent and time-consuming rewriting of the documentation for each pupil.
80. The co-ordinator highlights and encourages training courses for staff, teaching and support staff alike, to develop understanding of pupils' needs and management strategies for learning. All teachers and staff have had positive behaviour management training; even lunchtime staff have the opportunity for training to assist with communication with pupils. All support staff have done, or are to do, teaching or classroom assistant courses and induction training. Many are working for or have achieved NVQ2 or City and Guilds learning support qualifications.
81. Learning support staff have undertaken training to meet the needs of the specific children they support, such as Aspergers Syndrome, Dyslexia, Dyspraxia and British Sign Language. Most have undertaken teaching assistant courses as well as courses for children learning science, supporting pupils with speech and language difficulties, and springboard mathematics.
82. The governor with responsibility for special educational needs works for the local social service department and is therefore experienced and fully able to support the work in the school. She is frequently in the school, keeping up to date with developments, meeting with the co-ordinator for special educational needs, and keeping the governing body

abreast of changes, training and other matters relating to special educational needs. She ensures that the budget is allocated and spent appropriately.

83. Some pupils, especially those with emotional or behavioural problems, do not cope well with larger numbers of pupils. Consequently, they often join the co-ordinator for special educational needs at lunchtimes and some breaks, to share lunch, play board games and chat.
84. The school has a good range of resources to support pupils' work. The budget is carefully managed, with the bulk of money being spent upon staff and staff training to match pupils' specific needs. Hearing aids and transmitters are stored in the special educational needs room for charging. The teacher for hearing impaired pupils checks equipment regularly and a learning support assistant ensures that all are charged frequently, keeping them ready for instant use.
85. The accommodation within the school offers good support to special educational needs work. There is a classroom that is the base for special educational needs teachers. Groups also use the library and workrooms off classrooms for additional literacy support and small group work. Pupils with a physical handicap have access to a disabled toilet and wheelchair access to most areas of the building. Specialist teaching rooms are at ground floor level and classes are allocated ground floor classrooms as needs dictate. Care has been taken with regard to the acoustics of the building to assist those with a hearing impairment.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

86. In order to raise standards and improve the quality of education, the headteacher, staff and governors should:

(1) raise standards in **English** by:

- improving pupils' speaking and listening skills and widening their vocabulary;
- improving spelling skills;
- improving reading comprehension skills;

raise standards in **mathematics** by:

- reviewing and updating the school policy for the teaching of mathematics;
- increasing the monitoring role of the subject leader;
- improving the quality of planning;
- reviewing and developing resources for teaching mathematics;
- improving assessment linked to key objectives;

raise standards in **information and communication technology** by:

- ensuring that the school meets the National Curriculum requirements for the subject;
- writing a scheme of work to identify the knowledge, skills and understanding to be taught as pupils move up through the school;
- ensuring that teachers plan opportunities for pupils to use computers to support their learning in other subjects, particularly numeracy;
- developing an assessment system to record pupils' progress in the subject;

raise standards in **art and design** by:

- writing a scheme of work to clearly identify the knowledge, skills and understanding to be taught in each year group;
- improving the range of resources to support pupils' learning;

(paragraphs 2-7, 28, 35, 67, 75, 87-88, 90-98, 102-107, 110-112, 123-127, 145-151)

(2) improve the quality of teachers' marking and use of assessment to plan pupils' future work by:

- more effective monitoring of the implementation of the school's marking and assessment policies;
- (paragraphs 32-33, 48)

(3) improve the attendance and punctuality of pupils by:

- continuing to remind pupils and parents of the need for regular attendance and good punctuality in order for pupils to make good progress in their learning;
- (paragraphs 4, 19-20)

(4) improve teachers' planning by:

- developing detailed schemes of work for all subjects;
 - reviewing the length of lessons;
 - reviewing the timetabling of PHSE;
 - providing more planned opportunities to support pupils' spiritual and cultural development;
- (paragraphs 36-37, 40, 43)

(5) improve the quality of pupils' annual written reports by giving parents a clear understanding of what their children know, understand and can do in each subject.

(paragraphs 59, 61)

In addition, the governing body may wish to include the following for inclusion in its action plan:

- ensuring that the school prospectus and annual report to parents meet statutory requirements; (paragraphs 61, 67)
- ensuring that the school pond does not pose a health and safety risk to pupils; (paragraph 44)
- working with all appropriate agencies to improve the school's playing field provision. (paragraphs 74, 164)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	99
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	40

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	3	18	36	34	6	2	0
Percentage	3	18	37	34	6	2	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Y4 – Y7
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	593
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	63

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Y4 – Y7
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	14
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	195

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	50
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	50

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.7
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	71	77	148

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	39	42	64
	Girls	56	48	62
	Total	94	90	126
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	64 (70)	61 (52)	85 (68)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	37	47	63
	Girls	56	55	64
	Total	93	102	127
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	63 (67)	69 (63)	86 (72)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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	2
Black – other	5
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	3
Chinese	0
White	580
Any other minority ethnic group	3

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	29	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: Y4 – Y7

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	28
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21
Average class size	30

Education support staff: Y4 – Y7

Total number of education support staff	30
Total aggregate hours worked per week	605

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	1,226,293
Total expenditure	1,132,409
Expenditure per pupil	1,910
Balance brought forward from previous year	63,041
Balance carried forward to next year	156,925 ⁵

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	12
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	13

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	2
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	2

FTE means full-time equivalent.

⁵ [The reasons for this high carry forward are explained in paragraph 71.](#)

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate 33%

Number of questionnaires sent out

593

Number of questionnaires returned

196

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	36	52	7	3	2
My child is making good progress in school.	31	52	10	1	6
Behaviour in the school is good.	20	56	14	1	9
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	29	55	13	2	1
The teaching is good.	31	58	2	1	8
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	18	46	25	4	7
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	42	47	7	1	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	40	49	5	1	5
The school works closely with parents.	21	53	13	3	10
The school is well led and managed.	31	54	3	0	12
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	30	55	7	1	7
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	20	46	14	3	17

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

ENGLISH

87. Standards in English are well below national averages. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are below, and their reading and writing skills are well below national averages by the age of 11 and in Year 7. However, inspection findings confirm the school's analysis of recent standards in English that they are gradually increasing pupils' standards in the subject. Although standards have declined against the findings of the previous inspection report, they have improved slightly against the National Curriculum standard assessment tests.
88. For the last two years, the school has exceeded pupils' expected levels in reading and writing by the age of 11 years, given their attainment at the age of 7 years. This indicates that recent developments in the school are having a positive effect, but have not had enough time to raise standards in Year 6 or by the end of Year 7. These strategies include the development of the National Literacy Strategy, alongside programmes of extra English to help lower-attaining pupils. They also include senior staff monitoring teaching, setting targets for groups of pupils and tracking individual pupil progress.
89. The subject is taught satisfactorily throughout the school and in lessons pupils make sound progress. The school is providing good support for the significant minority, 36 per cent, of pupils who have special educational needs. The significantly higher proportion of boys than girls who have special educational needs (which reflects the national picture) accounts for the lower attainment in boys' writing. The school is using the National Literacy Strategy (NLS) successfully to contribute to boys' and girls' learning and build their skills systematically. However, there has not been time for the recently developed strengths in the teaching and for the strengths in the leadership of the subject to have an impact on standards in Years 6 and 7.
90. Most boys and girls speak very informally and with a restricted vocabulary. They do not develop their ideas in extended or complex sentences. They answer adults' questions but find it difficult to make their ideas and views clear. While most teachers are good role models for speaking, there are occasions when adults do not take sufficient care to provide pupils with examples of clear pronunciation and a suitably wide vocabulary. The school has recently increased opportunities, such as the school council with 40 pupil representatives, and assemblies that celebrate pupil achievement, to use language in formal situations. The recently developed programme of discussions for personal and social education also provides good opportunities for pupils to articulate ideas and listen to each other carefully. Most pupils are still becoming accustomed to all of these occasions and so the full impact of the school council and personal and social education lessons is still evolving. Teachers make reasonable plans to include drama and role-play in lessons, such as English and history, to encourage pupils to speak. However, when teachers ask questions that have more than one answer, they do not always give pupils sufficient time to provide a full response.
91. This term the school is implementing a new policy to promote good behaviour. This is beginning to have a positive impact upon pupils' behaviour and therefore, their listening skills. However, this is too recent to have had a full and positive impact on standards. During the inspection, lessons were observed when pupils spoke in front of each other effectively and listened to each other politely. For example, in a religious education lesson pupils retold a story from the New Testament conscientiously and logically, while their classmates mostly listened courteously. This opportunity included a pupil for whom English is an additional language who spoke carefully and clearly. However, throughout

the school it is very rare for pupils to demonstrate that they have listened to each other thoughtfully by responding to another's ideas.

92. Teachers work hard and effectively to encourage pupils with special educational needs to participate in full class lessons and use their oral skills. They develop their self-esteem and confidence in expressing themselves in small groups with the co-ordinator for special educational needs. In a literacy lesson, a group of pupils with special educational needs returned from such a group and together with the co-ordinator read the poem that they had just created in clear voices.
93. The limitations of pupils' oral skills constrain their reading skills and standards in reading are well below national averages. By Year 6 and in Year 7, most pupils lack the expected level of confidence and independence in drawing inference from what they read. While most pupils have greater fluency and accuracy than skills of analysis, and enjoy reading, they do not demonstrate expected levels of maturity in reading. The school is successfully using the National Literacy Strategy to introduce pupils to a suitably wide range of reading material and they are clearly familiar with poetry, fiction and non-fiction work.
94. Most pupils enjoy sharing a book and reading in small groups within their classes. More-able pupils are developing personal preferences that they are beginning to identify; for example, "I like a book with a good plot" and "I like 'Goosebumps' because they're not too scary".
95. Pupils in Year 7 enjoy historical plays, for example 'One in the Eye for William' written by the English co-ordinator, because it is 'interesting' and 'very real'. However, they find it difficult to categorise genre and compare work by the same author or to compare different authors. The range of books available to them in the school library and in their class book corners impresses and pleases pupils of all abilities and of different ages. Pupils in Year 7 comment that the supply of books has improved and is continuing to improve. However, their experience of stories from other cultures is limited. They are familiar with the idea of using books or the Internet as sources of information, but their understanding of library systems is limited. Throughout the school, pupils have regular access to the school library at lunch times, but they do not have regular lessons timetabled in there.
96. Standards in writing are well below national averages throughout the school. While the school lacks a co-ordinated approach to teaching elements of writing, such as spelling, most teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to write for different purposes. This includes work that uses their historical knowledge. For example, in Year 7 pupils write persuasive letters from 'Aelfreda' urging 'Edward the Martyr' to visit Corfe Castle, with incentives such as, 'our brother has spotted wild boar for you to hunt'. A minority of more-able pupils also make a reasonable attempt to enliven their writing by recreating the style of the period, 'Greetings to you this fine summer month'.
97. Most teachers place a suitably high emphasis on developing pupils' writing style and vocabulary. This is reflected in the 'sentence' and 'word' targets for different groups of pupils. For example, when pupils in Year 6 write 'autobiographical' accounts, as if they were Nelson Mandela, the most able strive to meet their target of using more complex sentences, 'When I was only nine my family was struck by the tradgic (*sic*) death of my father'. Similarly, in Year 5, pupils concentrate on making the opening of their stories immediately catch the reader's imagination; for example, 'The spot on Jack's face burst' or 'Bang!!! It was thunder and lightening and raining pretty bad in London'. In Year 4, pupils enjoy producing 'Cinderella's diaries' and lively play scripts that retell Cinderella's story using direct speech, 'We know you're up to something'.

98. In spite of the effort that most teachers make to extend pupils' vocabulary and encourage them to develop their ideas on paper, most pupils do not manage to express themselves with the breadth of vocabulary and 'turn of phrase' expected for their age. They remain more dependent on adult intervention and encouragement than pupils working at average standards do. Their writing reflects the informality, colloquialisms and hesitancy of their speech.
99. The considerable strengths in teaching are undermined across the school by a lack of consistency in teachers' expectations. The school does not share a co-ordinated approach to spelling and writing. The greatest impact of this is that pupils' spelling is below expectations for most and weak for a significant minority. Most pupils make insufficient progress in increasing the accuracy of their spelling. While most pupils write using legible, joined letters most of the time, too many periodically lapse into printing. Most pupils make good progress in the neatness of their writing.
100. The quality of English teaching is satisfactory. During the inspection, of the thirty lessons seen, teaching in 57 percent was good, including 27 percent that was very good and one excellent lesson. In one observed lesson, the teaching was unsatisfactory and in the remaining 40 per cent it was satisfactory. The strongest teaching arises from suitably high expectations and planning that ensures that all pupils are challenged whatever their ability. These lessons have a momentum that helps to maintain pupils' interest and endeavour and eradicates the potential for disruptive behaviour from the minority of pupils who need very clear boundaries. On the rare occasions when teaching is unsatisfactory, expectations of behaviour and the level of work are too low.
101. Teachers have a sound understanding of the literacy hour. Planning to organise lessons this way is having a positive impact on pupils' progress in reading and writing within the vast majority of lessons. Positive and constructive marking provides clear guidance for pupils and helps their learning, but it is not sufficiently consistent throughout the school. The recent introduction of planned time for discussions is helping pupils to voice their ideas, and the development of their speaking skills is a vital element in raising the standards of reading and writing. Teachers make insufficient use of information and communication technology to support pupils' learning, for example to develop pupils' spelling skills. However, other subjects make a reasonable contribution to pupils' literacy skills and teachers use history effectively to encourage imaginative and creative writing. The subject co-ordinator has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses within the subject and is working closely and effectively with the senior management team to raise standards.

MATHEMATICS

102. By the end of Year 6, and when they leave the school at the end of Year 7, standards are well below those expected. This is a similar judgement to that of the last inspection. The school has put forward several reasons for this situation:
- the very low level of attainment when pupils enter the school;
 - the high percentage of pupils with special educational needs - at 30 per cent in the last Year 6 which took the National Curriculum assessments;
 - the disruption to teaching caused by staff absences and a number of supply teachers taking the classes;
 - the poor level of behaviour of a significant number of pupils that affected the learning of many.
- These reasons are well founded and convincing. The areas that can be changed by the school, namely behaviour and staff absences, are both being addressed. Additional help is being given to pupils through 'Booster' and 'Springboard' classes, which give specific help to overcome problems, although these have not had a significant impact on standards.

103. In a number of lessons, particularly in Years 6 and 7, the work produced by pupils was in line with that expected for their age. However, in discussion with the pupils, it was evident that their understanding of the concepts was superficial and when discussing work they had done a few weeks earlier, they could not remember what to do. Pupils with special educational needs, and those with English as an additional language, are well supported and fully included, and as a result are making very good progress. However, in some lessons work is not well matched to all pupils' ability, particularly the more-able pupils, causing some under-achievement. At the higher levels, boys are achieving far better than girls and the reasons for this are being investigated. Pupils' literacy skills are developed through mathematics, particularly when solving problems written in words and through an emphasis on correct mathematical vocabulary, such as 'product', 'numerator' and 'denominator'. Pupils develop their numeracy skills in other subjects. For example, in history they work out how long someone has lived from the dates on a tombstone; in geography they compare the Caribbean with Poole by using temperature charts and hours of sunshine, and in design and technology they use various measures.
104. A heavy emphasis is placed on numeracy; that is pupils' proficiency and confidence with numbers. This is quite appropriate, for development of this facility allows pupils to make progress in other areas of mathematics. By the end of Year 6, many pupils multiply and divide two- and three-digit numbers. They understand fractions, including equivalent fractions, cancel to reduce a fraction to its simplest form, and calculate fractions of sums of money. They understand decimals and percentages and change fractions to decimals. At the other end of the scale there are too many pupils who make basic mistakes with simple addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. This means that they have difficulty with work on fractions, decimals and percentages, as a sound basic facility with numbers is required. By the end of Year 7, many pupils develop their understanding of place value to multiply whole numbers and decimals by 10, 100 and 1,000. They sequence, add and subtract negative numbers, and use all four mathematical operations to two places of decimals.
105. In shape, space and measures, by the end of Year 6, many pupils can name and describe the properties of a number of two- and three-dimensional shapes. They name angles, such as acute, obtuse and right angles, and know that there are 180 degrees in a triangle. They find the perimeter and area of geometric shapes and some know the formula for finding the perimeter of a rectangle as ' $l + w \times 2$ '. Some pupils find the symmetries of two-dimensional shapes. However, those pupils with poor numeracy abilities have difficulty in working out area and perimeter. By the end of Year 7, some pupils find the circumference of a circle and the volume of a variety of three-dimensional shapes, whilst others still have difficulty with perimeter and area.
106. In data handling, by the end of Year 6, many pupils collect data and represent it in a variety of forms, such as block graphs, bar charts and line graphs. For example, they created bar charts to represent their data on their favourite television soaps and on how they travel to school. They interpret information from graphs and charts. There is no evidence of pupils using information and communication technology to present their information in a variety of forms. In Year 7, pupils begin to use mode and range when describing data sets, although they should know this in Year 6. Often, pupils are given work that is below the level recommended for their age. Whilst this is justified in many instances, it is not always the case, and on these occasions pupils are not sufficiently challenged and consequently underachieve.
107. Pupils are encouraged to use and apply mathematics by trying different approaches when solving problems and overcoming difficulties. A particularly good example of this was seen in Year 7 when pupils had to design and make a container from a piece of A4 card to give the largest possible volume. This was an excellent lesson that challenged their

thinking and they were eventually able to explain their reasoning through diagrams and calculations. However, this area of mathematics is under-developed, with too few opportunities for pupils to develop their own strategies for problem solving.

108. Teaching in Years 4 and 5 is satisfactory, but in Years 6 and 7 is good. Overall, the range is from excellent to unsatisfactory. The best lessons were characterised by:
- thorough planning with clear and appropriate learning objectives that were shared with pupils at the start of the lesson and checked for achievement at the end;
 - a good pace in the introductory activity which was maintained throughout the lesson;
 - activities that were well chosen to motivate the pupils and achieve the objectives;
 - different work being provided for pupils with different abilities and being well matched to their needs;
 - very good relationships with a confident and positive working atmosphere;
 - effective questioning which verified and extended what pupils know and understand.
109. Where all or most of these factors were present, pupils showed enthusiasm for their work, tried very hard with the challenges, and made good, and sometimes very good, progress. However, there were weaknesses that were apparent in some observed lessons and in the scrutiny of pupils' work. Amongst these were:
- the chosen activity not being suitable to achieve the lesson objectives;
 - a low level of challenge, causing pupils to become restless and inattentive;
 - weaknesses in controlling the class;
 - too much teacher talking and insufficient pupil involvement;
 - poor marking, with no indication to pupils of how they can improve, or sometimes work not being marked at all.
110. Where these factors were present, pupils did not make sufficient progress, leading to under-achievement. The contrasts in teaching quality had a direct impact on pupils' interest and achievement. For example, in a Year 6 group the teacher had high expectations and all pupils were challenged appropriately. The pupils were attentive, enthusiastic and made very good progress. In a Year 4 group, the activity did not challenge the pupils and they spent most of the lesson chatting, gaining very little from the lesson.
111. Mathematics has a recently appointed leader who displays enthusiasm and vision. However, having been in post since September, she has not had time to make much of an impact on the subject. She knows that mathematics has suffered in recent years, with several co-ordinators within a short space of time. She has already identified her priority in the school improvement plan as raising standards in mathematics by:
- reviewing and updating the school policy for the teaching of mathematics;
 - increasing the monitoring role of the subject leader;
 - improving the quality of planning;
 - reviewing and developing resources for teaching mathematics;
 - improving assessment linked to key objectives.
112. The inspection team supports these priorities with further developments to include:
- a thorough analysis of test results to identify strengths and weaknesses, followed by use of the analysis to inform planning;
 - the development of a scheme of work in Years 4 to 6, similar to that operating in Year 7, to give greater structure and cohesion to pupils' work;
 - increased use of information and communication technology to support and develop pupils' learning;
 - a slight change in emphasis within mathematics to include more data handling and opportunities for pupils to use and apply their mathematical skills for problem solving.

SCIENCE

113. By the end of Year 6, standards in science are average and show a significant improvement as measured against the findings of the previous inspection report and against the results of National Curriculum assessments in previous years. By the end of Year 7, standards meet expectations for pupils of this age. Improvement in the subject is the result of effective implementation of the key issue from the previous report, which was to raise standards in the subject. The key factors contributing to improvement are:
- the effective management of the subject by the co-ordinator;
 - a revised policy to identify how science should be taught;
 - a revised scheme of work to identify the knowledge, skills and understanding to be taught as pupils move up through the school;
 - improved planning to support teachers' subject knowledge;
 - stronger assessment of pupils' learning to identify what needs to be taught next.
114. Although boys outscored girls in the 2001 tests, the scores for both boys and girls are converging and during the inspection there was little difference in the standards achieved between the sexes. Pupils with special educational needs achieve in line with their prior attainment and, when given specific and targeted support, many achieve highly. Pupils for whom English is an additional language and those from different ethnic backgrounds also make appropriate progress; language is not a handicap to their learning in science because of the support received from teachers and learning assistants.
115. In lessons, the focus for pupils' learning is the asking of science-based questions with the emphasis on the development of investigative, experimenting and observational skills. Teachers emphasise that pupils should learn how to evaluate results and the skills of applying their findings to science and other areas of the curriculum. The school is specifically teaching the language of science. Teachers share with pupils not only the learning objectives for each lesson, but also the correct scientific vocabulary. The timetable allows two shorter and one longer science lesson a week for most classes. Teachers devote one of these sessions to practical work, with an emphasis on predicting, planning and carrying out investigations and experiments. The second session is focused on how to record the results of experiments, the analysis of results and the drawing of conclusions, with suggestions for further developments and experiments. All the above give very good support to pupils' learning and contribute to improving standards.
116. By the ages of 11 and 12, pupils have a satisfactory grasp of scientific vocabulary and a secure base of knowledge. They make well-informed predictions, carry out fair tests and base conclusions on a sound understanding of scientific processes. Before undertaking any work in the laboratory⁶, pupils undertake a health and safety analysis; they identify points for safe working and highlight the key factors to be taken into account when evidence gathering. Older pupils in Year 7 have a good knowledge of forces. They identify correctly the effects of forces, such as wind, upthrust and gravity on moving objects. During the inspection, they measured the effects of different surfaces on moving objects and investigated how frictional forces are useful to cyclists and motorists. Pupils plan and construct experiments using, for example, Newton meters and a range of materials, including cloth, carpet, smooth papers and plastic to investigate and measure the force needed to overcome friction. Pupils show good skills in their recording, fair testing and identification of 'variables'. In addition, they know how to make the results of their experiments more accurate by using their numeracy skills to average their results. They show a good understanding of which is the most suitable Newton meter to use when measuring. Pupils build successfully on their previous work when they investigate energy sources by linking work on kinetic energy, energy transfer, storage and conservation to work on life processes and living things. In particular, they investigate the

⁶ [The school benefits from having a specialist teaching area for science.](#)

importance of food as a fuel, especially to maintain body heat and temperature in different climatic conditions.

117. During the inspection, pupils in Year 6 investigated materials. They experimented by sorting and separating materials using equipment, including sieves, and decided whether substances were soluble or not by using solubility in separation experiments. They built successfully on previous work when they studied the effects of evaporation as a sorting and separating method. Most pupils understand that change upon solids through heating and burning are irreversible, such as cooking eggs, but melting and cooling of, for example, chocolate and water/ice cubes are reversible changes. Earlier in the term, pupils in Year 6 studied the human skeleton, bones, muscles and growth. They show a good understanding of how digestive processes release energy. They understand the importance of healthy living and how this is linked to food groups. They know the effects of good nutrition upon bone growth and strength. Pupils record successfully the results of their experiments to identify the effects of exercise in charts and simple graphs.
118. In Years 4 and 5, teachers encourage pupils to focus on developing their investigative skills. Pupils in Year 5, for instance, investigate habitats and the natural environment. They show satisfactory classification skills to identify different types of leaves or minibeasts. They research food chains and know that virtually all food chains begin with a green plant. They understand that photosynthesis for energy transfer is linked to parts of plants. They know how plants protect themselves from predators, for example, by looking at cacti. As the inspection was early in the school year, the evidence of work in pupils' books was limited. However, the books show good evidence of the depth of study and the improving standards pupils achieve in their work. Pupils in Year 4 compare the skeletons of humans with those of different creatures and understand how muscles and tendons work together to support the movement of upright and four-legged creatures. During the inspection, these younger scientists enjoyed investigating the best materials to muffle the sounds of noisy toys, particularly 'Bob the Builder.'
119. The quality of teaching is good overall, with the teaching in Year 7 being stronger than that in other years. Teaching is stronger as the result of specialist teaching. Teachers extend pupils' understanding well, with the use of an appropriate curriculum drawn from the scheme of work for each age group. Good questions, instructions and explanations, and the accurate use of scientific terms, encourage pupils to explain and clarify their thinking. This provides motivation and tests pupils' understanding so that teachers know what they understand. These opinions and assessments are starting to be recorded to build up an ongoing picture of pupils' progress. In the more successful lessons, planning focuses on refining and improving the key skills of planning, experimenting, measuring and observing. Teachers hold high expectations of what pupils can achieve and understand. Marking for older pupils effectively guides them in how to improve their work. Pupils with special educational needs, and those from different ethnic backgrounds, including those for whom English is an additional language, are well supported and fully integrated into science lessons. They make good progress. Teachers make very good use of well-briefed learning support assistants. Although they are not involved with planning activities, they are well briefed, know exactly how to help with small group activities and make a good contribution to pupils' progress.
120. In lessons, teachers manage time and resources well. Good organisation ensures that pupils are kept busy and focused upon the tasks they are asked to perform. Pupils across the school show at least good and sometimes very good attitudes towards their work. The majority are enthusiastic and co-operate and concentrate with high levels of motivation on their tasks. Pupils' written work is frequently well presented, neat and easy to read. Diagrams are usually well drawn and clearly labelled. This ensures that when pupils look back at what they have achieved after a period of time, they can see their development as a scientist clearly for themselves.

121. The subject co-ordinator has worked effectively to raise standards since the previous inspection. She has a clear picture of what pupils need to develop in science and what the school needs to do to get there. The scheme of work is detailed and identifies clearly the knowledge, skills and understanding to be taught as pupils move up through the school. Teachers' plans are monitored regularly. Examples of pupils' work are collected ready for teachers to match it to the levels within the National Curriculum. In addition, the school has a portfolio of pupils' work through which teachers can identify good practice and refine their expectations of what pupils can achieve in the subject. Until recently, resources for science have been scattered across the school; now they are gathered together in the laboratory. This enables the co-ordinator to monitor their use and condition and in the future they can be purchased systematically and directly to implement the units of work appropriately. Test results are analysed carefully and trends identified. Staff training is planned to ensure that all pupils have access to a full and challenging curriculum.
122. The findings of this inspection show an improving picture overall. However, while pupils have satisfactory opportunities to apply their literacy and numeracy skills in the subject, they have insufficient opportunities to use information and communication technology to support their learning in science.

ART AND DESIGN

123. The standard of artwork attained by pupils at the age of 12 is below that expected for pupils of their age. Standards reached by pupils at the age of 11 are well below expectations. This represents a considerable decline in standards since the last inspection report, when attainment in art was reported to be above expectations throughout the school. The youngest pupils in the school produce work of a satisfactory standard. The oldest pupils develop satisfactory skills in some areas of art. However, standards in art are too variable due to many teachers' lack of subject knowledge and the lack of a framework to support them in the systematic development of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. As a result:
- many aspects of the curriculum are under developed;
 - teachers' expectations are too low;
 - basic skills are not taught consistently or well;
 - there is little constructive criticism of pupils' work to help them to improve;
 - very little serious work is produced during lessons and time is wasted.
124. Pupils in Year 4 design and make interesting prints, which they are proud to show. They look carefully at tropical fruit and use pastels to make accurate and colourful images for their work on the Caribbean. Pupils demonstrate a developing understanding of line and tone in patterns using pastels. Pupils in Year 5 study Aboriginal art with varying degrees of success. The better work is carried out in pastel and displays an understanding of the use of line and form in Aboriginal art. However, a significant group of pupils fail to grasp this and produce small amounts of low quality work during their lesson. The oldest pupils in the school make very attractive glazed pottery models of castles to accompany their work in history. However, there is little evidence of other pupils using clay or making any three-dimensional work. Pupils throughout the school draw self-portraits in pastels and pencils. However, few demonstrate an awareness of the shapes and proportions of facial features. Pupils in all year groups use paints. However, the skills and techniques of applying paint are poorly developed.
125. All pupils have sketchbooks. In a minority of classes, pupils learn to use them to record interesting ideas, such as trying to find shades and tones of blue. However, their use is under-developed throughout the school. Although the school has a good supply of prints by famous artists, there was little evidence of them being studied and few pupils could

name any artists. The exception to this is a selected group of pupils who visited the local art gallery to study the work of Picasso. The range of media made available for pupils' use is limited and they have few opportunities to select their own media. For example, there is no evidence of work in charcoal, water-soluble pencils, textiles or other materials to make collages. There is no evidence of the planned use of information and communication technology in art. The links between art and literacy, for example in discussions, and patterns and symmetry in numeracy are underdeveloped.

126. The teaching of art skills is unsatisfactory and as a result pupils do not develop pride in their work. Attitudes to work in art lessons become very casual. "It's boring. Splosh some paint on the paper. Voilà!" was one comment. Pupils have few opportunities to develop their own ideas. As a result, they do not find lessons in art and design stimulating or creative and all pupils make unsatisfactory progress, including those with special educational needs and those with English as a second language.
127. The quality of teaching was satisfactory in one of the lessons observed, half of the lessons were unsatisfactory and one lesson was poor. A large proportion of the staff have little art training and are unaware of the skills that need to be taught to pupils. They are supported by a policy but not a scheme of work to lay down a systematic framework of skills, knowledge and understanding that pupils should develop as they progress through the school. Consequently, the majority of teachers make insufficient demands on their pupils and little learning takes place. Where teachers spend too much time talking, insufficient time is spent on pupils' working and they begin to lose interest in the lesson. There is a lack of some resources, such as water-soluble pencils for fine work, and some teachers are not fully aware of what resources are available within the school. Teachers commonly hand out materials to pupils rather than allowing them to select their own. The school is fortunate to have a dedicated art room. However, the height of furniture in the room and current timetabling constraints mean that this is under-used. The subject manager expresses great personal interest in art, but has not been successful in raising the quality or profile of art within the school.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

128. By the ages of 11 and 12, standards meet expectations for pupils of this age. There is no significant variation between the achievement of boys and girls. Pupils' with special educational needs, and those for whom English is an additional language, make satisfactory progress in their learning.
129. Pupils make satisfactory use of their literacy skills in planning and evaluating their work. The use and application of numeracy skills are not sufficiently well-developed, nor is the use of information and communication technology to support pupils' learning.
130. In Year 4, pupils show satisfactory skills in their designs for making a purse, including the use of literacy skills on their planning sheets. They detail the materials and fastenings to be used, together with how the purse is to be decorated and its purpose. Skills in making the purses are satisfactory, including the development of sewing techniques. In Year 5, pupils show good making skills when they make musical instruments. They select materials carefully and use effective joining techniques to make a range of instruments. In Year 6, pupils show satisfactory use of individual research skills when they design a shelter. The selection of appropriate materials and the correct use of a range of joining techniques are shown in the finished product. In Year 7, in food technology, pupils enjoy the opportunity of planning and making a range of salads and show good awareness of the importance of hygiene. In textiles, pupils show imagination and interest when designing items for a particular age group, for example a case for a mobile phone. They show a good knowledge of suitable fabrics for their designs.

131. In the lessons observed, pupils enjoyed the subject, particularly in Year 7, where in the long-term absence of their regular teaching they benefited from the teaching of the local education authority adviser for the subject. Pupils' interest and involvement in making are stronger than in planning and evaluating.
132. Teaching in the lessons observed was good and in these lessons pupils made good progress in their learning. Teachers have strong subject knowledge and support pupils effectively in lessons. Learning support assistants make a valuable contribution to supporting pupils with special educational needs. Lessons proceed at a good pace; for example, in Year 7, where pupils were given a clear time allocation for each aspect of the lesson; this resulted in good concentration and application to the work in hand. The use of background music successfully helped create the mood of a 'design studio', which was part of the lesson focus.
133. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and has a clear action plan for the future development of the subject, including introducing individual pupil files that they will take with them as they move up through the school. Individual assessment sheets for each individual topic within the subject have been introduced successfully; these help teachers monitor and assess pupils' progress in the subject. In addition, in Year 6 there are planned links with information and communication technology when pupils' design and build controlled vehicles. Resources are adequate and support the school's scheme of work, which is based on the QCA (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority) scheme.

GEOGRAPHY

134. Standards achieved at the end of Years 6 and 7 are typical of those seen nationally for 11 and 12 year old pupils. The satisfactory attainment reported in the last inspection report has been maintained.
135. Teaching in geography is good or satisfactory in most lessons and this is a significant factor in the sound standards achieved. Pupils learn new skills, develop new ideas and, with the use of appropriate technical language, improve their understanding and increase their knowledge. By the end of Year 6, they read maps correctly, compare and contrast their environment with a rural one and have a good understanding of wider communities, including those in the islands of the Caribbean. In the younger classes, the progress of lower-attaining pupils is influenced by their under-developed literacy skills, including reading, handwriting and spelling. More-able pupils with sound literacy skills produce work that is well presented and learn more effectively because of better developed reading skills, which enhance their research ability. In all classes, pupils with special educational needs progress well in relation to their prior attainment due to skilful support offered by learning support assistants. Pupils who use English as an additional language work within ability groups or the class and make similar progress to others.
136. Younger pupils undertaking work about Jamaica successfully use reference books and travel brochures to discover facts about climate, landscape and food production. They use mathematical skills accurately to read charts and graphs about population, rainfall and temperature. Older pupils undertake research about weather and rocks for homework, several of them presenting data collected from Internet websites. Information and communication technology is not normally used to supplement the resources for learning in geography lessons. Links are made between geography topics and other curriculum areas, including science and history, in topics such as 'Farming'. Pupils produce project folders in which they clearly take pride. These contain sound standards of presentation, evidence of extensive personal research and independent use of correct geographical vocabulary, such as 'climate change' and 'soil erosion'.

137. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Good lessons are characterised by good subject knowledge, clear matching of tasks for the range of pupils' needs and good resource provision. Effective questioning of pupils in class is used to judge pupils' understanding. In lessons where teaching is unsatisfactory, this is due to lack of planning, low expectations, poor pupil management and overuse of duplicated worksheets.
138. The well-qualified curriculum co-ordinator has been in post for only a few weeks, but has already revised the whole-school long-term plans to include elements from the latest government approved guidelines. This represents an improvement in the breadth and balance of the geography curriculum, but is too recent to have had any noticeable effect on standards. The time allocated for the teaching of geography and history is greater than that allowed for other non-core⁷ subjects. This ensures thorough coverage of each topic studied. At present, no time allowance is made for monitoring teaching in geography and no assessment procedures are in place. The co-ordinator plans to offer staff development to colleagues and to improve the organisation of resources for the subject by preparing 'topic boxes' of books and other items for each topic included in the curriculum plan. She recognises the need to improve the use of information and communication technology to enhance teaching and learning. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory.

HISTORY

139. Only limited teaching of history was seen during the inspection and judgements are made largely on work analysed and interviews with pupils. Standards are satisfactory and consistent with expectations for pupils of 11 and 12 years. Sound standards have been maintained since the last inspection.
140. Attainment is influenced by the extent to which literacy skills are developed, with the pupils of lower ability achieving lower standards due to poor reading and writing skills. This is most evident in the younger classes. Work undertaken in history contributes effectively to the development of literacy skills as pupils' progress through the school. By Year 7, most pupils' reading and writing have improved so that they can undertake personal research and present work of an acceptable standard. More-able pupils complete significant quantities of work that is well organised and of sound quality. Those with special educational needs benefit from a good level of support and suitably planned tasks, so that most attain at a good standard in relation to their ability.
141. Pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of the passage of time and of different periods in the past. They have a detailed knowledge about the lives of people in Tudor times and know how their lives differed from those in the medieval period and modern times. They understand the contrast between the lifestyles of the rich and the poor and the effect of the development of machines and technology through time and in the modern world. Most pupils show a sound factual knowledge about aspects of differing periods in history. They have a good knowledge of ancient civilisations, including the Egyptians, and describe the process of mummification in great detail and with obvious fascination.
142. Pupils find out about the past from a range of sources and suggest consequences of and reasons for past events. They conduct their own research by consulting books, the media (notably The History Channel on television) and the Internet, which they use at home to research topics for homework. They understand how historical research is carried out by examining remains, artefacts, documents, buildings and pictures. Visits to places of historical interest such as Corfe Castle support learning.

⁷ [Art and design, design and technology, music and physical education](#)

143. The teaching observed was good. Teachers' knowledge of the subject is good and the use of questions encourages pupils to think carefully about the information presented to them. Enthusiastic teaching means that pupils enjoy learning about the past and that their attitudes to learning are good. Enthusiasm shows in pupils' eagerness to answer questions and participate in discussion. Information and communication technology is not used to supplement the resources for learning in history.
144. The subject is soundly managed by the recently appointed co-ordinator, who has revised the curriculum plan for history to improve coverage, drawing upon the most recent government approved guidelines. She has no time allowance for monitoring teaching and learning to ensure that pupils have the range of experiences required to cover the curriculum and to make satisfactory progress. There is no formal assessment of history. A satisfactory range of resources are available to support the teaching of the subject and the co-ordinator plans to audit and reorganise these. History, as well as geography, benefits from a greater amount of curriculum time than other subjects except English, mathematics and science. This contributes to the sound standards seen.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

145. Standards in information and communication technology are below national expectations by the age of 11 and at the end of Year 7 when pupils leave the school. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, make unsatisfactory progress in their learning because they have insufficient opportunities to use computers, particularly in the classroom. When taught in the 'ICT-Suite', pupils make satisfactory progress in individual lessons, but they do not have the opportunity to apply in other lessons the skills taught in the one lesson per week. Standards have not improved since the previous inspection. The school is not teaching the subject to the full requirements of the National Curriculum.
146. When given the opportunity, pupils apply their literacy skills successfully, particularly in word-processing. More-able pupils in Year 6 and Year 7 correctly apply their knowledge of paragraphs and punctuation when, for example, writing a record of a visit to Corfe Castle. In their study of 'Mediaeval Realms', pupils in Year 7 combine successfully their literacy and historical research skills to write accounts, for example, of 'The Murder in the Cathedral'.
147. Across the school, except in history, pupils have insufficient opportunities to use computers to support their learning in other subjects, particularly in numeracy. During the inspection, there was no evidence submitted to show that pupils use computers in numeracy lessons to support their work, particularly in data handling or the use of spreadsheets. Pupils have no opportunities to create or interrogate databases.
148. By the end of Year 7, pupils are confident in the use of the 'ICT-Suite' and know how to 'log on' and 'log off' using the school's network. Pupils know how to load, save and print their work. Skills in word-processing are secure with pupils knowing how to select and change fonts, borders and frames. They are competent in importing 'clip-art' and digital photographs into text, for example in their accounts of a visit to a country park. In a lesson in Year 6, pupils made satisfactory progress in using a program to control a lighthouse and most were successful in writing a simple set of instructions to turn the light on and off. In Year 7, after successful intervention of the teacher, pupils made satisfactory progress in producing a newspaper front page linked to their work in history.
149. In lessons in the 'ICT-Suite', the majority of pupils enjoy their work and show good application and concentration; they benefit from the very good provision of having their own computer and not having to share. However, for some pupils the provision of swivel

chairs is still a novelty and too much of a distraction, particularly when the teacher is giving instructions or demonstrations. As a result, they struggle to complete the tasks set.

150. Teaching observed in the 'ICT-Suite' is good. However, teaching overall is unsatisfactory as pupils are given too few opportunities to use computers in lessons. No teaching of the subject was seen in the 95 lessons that were taught in classrooms; four were observed in the 'ICT-Suite'. Teachers are not planning for the use of computers to support pupils' learning in other subjects, especially in numeracy; this is unsatisfactory. In lessons in the 'ICT-Suite', teachers show confident subject knowledge and the benefits of their NOF (New Opportunities Funding) training which they are currently undertaking. Demonstration skills are good and this contributes to the majority of pupils making gains in knowledge and skills within those lessons.
151. Currently, there is no scheme of work to identify the knowledge, skills and understanding to be taught as pupils move up through the school. In addition, there is no means by which pupils' progress is assessed or measured. These factors have a significant impact on standards not meeting national expectations. Teachers' daily, weekly and termly planning does not contain references to how the subject will support pupils' learning. The school currently has 105 computers, many of which are underused. This is inefficient. The school used its NGfL (National Grid for Learning) money to provide the 'ICT-Suite' and this is being used successfully for each class to have one hour per week of whole-class teaching. However, remaining computers are not used to enable pupils to develop and apply skills taught in those lessons. The subject is managed satisfactorily, although the co-ordinator spends too much time troubleshooting hardware and software problems rather than on effective management of the subject in relation to improving standards.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

152. French is started in Year 7. By the time the pupils leave the school at the end of the year, they make satisfactory progress and achieve standards that are in line with national expectations. This is a similar judgement to that of the last inspection. There is no significant difference in attainment or progress between boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs, and those with English as an additional language, are given adequate support within the lessons, enabling them to make satisfactory progress.
153. Most pupils listen well to spoken French, and have a good understanding of what they hear. The majority have confidence and competence in the appropriate use of a number of words and phrases when talking about themselves, and they have good recall of previous work. For example, they reply to questions about their name, how old they are, where they live, and the date of their birthday. When the teacher asks "Qu'est-ce qu'il y a dans la trousse?" (What is in the pencil case?), most reply with "Dans ma trousse il y a une règle" or "Il y a un stylo". Many are beginning to understand that there are masculine and feminine words and some use the correct adjective to agree with the noun, such as 'mon père' and 'ma mère'. Most respond to questions fairly well, albeit with an anglicised accent at the moment. They are developing their writing and reading skills appropriately to support their speaking and listening skills.
154. Two teachers take all the French in the year group. Too little teaching was seen to make a firm judgement, but teaching appears sound. However, there are strengths and weaknesses within the teaching. In the better teaching seen, pupils were well motivated with effective questioning that involved most of them. In this situation, pupils are interested, involved and enthusiastic. On other occasions, the activities are not well chosen to involve all pupils and some choose to exclude themselves, taking very little or no part, and becoming bored and restless. These differences have an impact on pupils' learning; positive in the first example, and negative in the second. Apart from these instances, all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with

English as an additional language, are included well. Pupils' written work is not always marked, allowing them to produce careless, scruffy work with no comment from the teacher. Pupils have two 55 minute lessons each week. These are long sessions for pupils and teachers alike, especially at an early stage of foreign language acquisition; this is inappropriate. Teachers do not plan their lessons carefully enough in order to provide a variety of activities to interest and motivate pupils.

155. Curriculum leadership is sound. There is a good scheme of work that is planned in consultation with local middle schools and covers all the required elements of the National Curriculum. This is being developed further with recent guidance from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. A self-assessment scheme is being developed which is based on pupils indicating, "I can do ...". Information and communication technology is used well at the end of the year when pupils use a 'pocket book' to write a booklet about themselves, but apart from this there are too few opportunities taken to use computer programs to develop pupils' French. The annual residential visit to France no longer takes place, although there is a visit to an activity centre in France. However, inspection evidence indicates that insufficient opportunities are taken to involve pupils in speaking French on this trip, as this is not the main focus for the visit, and no other opportunities are provided.

MUSIC

156. Standards meet national expectations for 11 and 12 year olds. At the time of the previous inspection, pupils' progress in the subject was good in learning about and making music. More-able pupils were not always making fast enough progress because some of the work was not well matched to their needs. Pupils, including those who have special educational needs, now make satisfactory progress throughout the school. Although few lessons were seen during the inspection, there was singing in assemblies and hymn practice, and performances in clubs, to show that there is satisfactory teaching and that pupils approach the subject with enjoyment. Evidence from planning and discussions shows that all aspects of music are taught appropriately and the requirements of the National Curriculum are met.
157. Pupils have a satisfactory understanding of high and low notes. They sing well and have a good repertoire of songs. Older pupils in particular sing well in unison with clear diction and a good sense of rhythm. Pupils enjoy making music together and are keen to follow a conductor and come in on time. In lessons, pupils begin to understand the idea of phrases in music and explore musical structures; this was particularly noticeable in a Year 7 lesson where the teacher used her flute to demonstrate compositional patterns. Pupils look forward to composing their own 'pop' music and becoming a 'pop' group in time for the end-of-year concert. Pupils recognise and name a good range of tuned and untuned instruments. When they explore sound, pupils confidently choose from their memory of instruments those that were used to create special effects in Saint-Saëns' 'Carnival of the Animals', including the 'Swan' and the 'Kangaroo'. Most pupils repeat patterns played by the teacher and their efforts improve as they listen to one another closely. Pupils listen well in assemblies, when a range of music from different cultures is played as they enter and leave the hall.
158. Pupils benefit from taking part in extra-curricular activities. They play the recorder or sing in the choir. The songs and pieces practised in these clubs extend pupils' knowledge and understanding in music. There is a feeling of commitment as pupils are prepared to practise at home. This impacts well on their musical skills.
159. Overall the quality of teaching is satisfactory. Pupils are challenged with interesting activities and there is a satisfactory pace to the lesson. The teacher uses questions well to consolidate and extend pupils' learning. The co-ordinator and specialist teacher have

good subject knowledge that helps them to introduce new musical terms to extend pupils' vocabulary. Class teachers are less knowledgeable but well supported by the co-ordinator. Relationships with pupils are usually good, ensuring that musical activities are conducted in an enjoyable atmosphere. Singing practice is led well so that pupils work hard to improve their performance. Music is well supported by a range of peripatetic lessons from the local authority music service.

160. The subject co-ordinator took over at Easter last year. He has audited the work within the school and, although part-time, has put in place a comprehensive policy and scheme of work to support teachers who do not have specific subject expertise. His work with the school choir and a recorder club has continued through the support of the county music service. The specialist teacher of music has taken over the other recorder club. Currently, there is no monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning or pupils' standards within lessons. Although teachers use the CD player and tape pupils' performances, work in information and communication technology is underdeveloped. Resources for music are adequate, with a good range of interesting instruments that originate from different cultures.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

161. By the age of 11, pupils meet expectations for their age. By the end of Year 7, when pupils leave the school, standards are good and exceed expectations for pupils of this age. In Year 7, pupils benefit from specialist teaching of the subject. In Years 4 to 6, progress is satisfactory and there is no significant variation between standards achieved by boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs, and those for whom English is an additional language, make satisfactory progress. In Year 7, all pupils make good progress in their learning. By the end of Year 6, 75 per cent of pupils meet the national expectation in being able to swim 25 metres unaided. Swimming is taught in Year 4 and Year 5; the current Year 6 missed a number of lessons because the roof of the swimming pool used was damaged in a storm. It is intended to give the 25 per cent who cannot swim the 25 metres unaided the opportunity to 'catch up' once they have completed their National Curriculum assessments in May 2002.
162. During the inspection, lessons were observed in gymnastics, dance, games and swimming. However, the school field was unavailable for the teaching of games due to the poor condition of its surface. From the very detailed schemes of work and teachers' planning it is clear that the school provides the full curriculum for the teaching of the subject, including athletics and outdoor pursuits. In gymnastics, by the end of Year 6, pupils know the importance of a 'warm-up' and 'cool-down' at the start and end of lessons. They understand the need for physical exercise in order to stay fit and healthy. In gymnastics, pupils show a satisfactory awareness of space and of changing direction and levels when moving around the hall. They perform satisfactory sequences involving 'wide', 'tall' and 'tucked' jumps, which they transfer successfully to the apparatus. Most pupils know how to get out and put away the apparatus sensibly and safely. In Year 7, in games, pupils show good skills in controlling and passing in both football and rugby. They show good skills in defending, for example in three on two or two on one.
163. In Year 7, teaching is very good and contributes to the good standards achieved. Pupils benefit from specialist teaching and strong subject knowledge, particularly in the teaching of skills and techniques. In lessons, teachers constantly support and encourage pupils to improve skills and techniques. Pupils enjoy lessons, work hard and make good progress in their learning. In Years 4 to 6, teaching is satisfactory, with teaching of dance good. In the best lessons, teachers show good subject knowledge and support pupils effectively in lessons by improving individual, paired or group performances.

164. At the time of the inspection, the co-ordinator was absent, but evidence from her planning files indicates that the subject is effectively managed. Planning is good and there are detailed schemes of work for each aspect of the subject, which show the knowledge, skills and understanding to be taught as pupils move up through the school. Resources are adequate and pupils benefit from a very large playground. However, the school field is inadequate in size and currently out of action through problems with the surface.
165. A strength of the school is the wide range of extra-curricular activities and opportunities for pupils to take part in competitive matches. In addition, the school encourages pupils with particular interests or talents to join local clubs and sporting organisations. The Year 7 football team won the local league and were finalists in a county competition in 2001. The Year 5 and 6 football club is well attended, with clubs for boys and girls. During the school year there are clubs, in addition to football, for rugby, athletics, cricket, dance and volleyball. In addition, pupils benefit from coaching in tennis. Pupils in Year 7 benefit from very strong sporting links with the local community college.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

166. Standards in religious education meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus when pupils reach the age of 11 and when they leave the school at the age of 12 years. This is an improvement since the previous inspection, when some weaknesses were reported.
167. Younger pupils successfully learn about key events in the life of Jesus when they re-enact the calming of the storm on the Sea of Galilee using puppets. They learn with interest about a variety of creation stories, such as Aborigine and Eskimo stories, and make good, thoughtful comparisons between them and the Biblical creation story. They become absorbed in their work when they learn about features of other faiths, including places of worship. For example, when they begin to understand the importance of the Gurdwara to Sikhs and its place within the Sikh community. They are very interested in the most important people in other religions, for example Guru Gobind Singh. Pupils are fascinated when they are shown Sikh artefacts to illustrate 'The Five Ks' and listen avidly as their teacher explains their symbolism. They handle the artefacts with care and respect as they are passed around the class. The oldest pupils begin to learn that holding religious beliefs has an impact on how people act when they find out how and why charities are started. There is no evidence of the regular use of information and communication technology to support pupils' learning in religious education.
168. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as a second language, are very interested in their work. As a result, they all make satisfactory progress in knowledge and understanding of religious beliefs. Assemblies make a good contribution to religious education when the stories of Noah, and David and Goliath, are retold in a very lively and stimulating manner that helps pupils to understand their meaning.
169. Visitors from the local Christian community come in to talk to the pupils during assemblies. However, there are few visitors from other faith groups to help extend pupils' understanding of religious beliefs and what they mean to believers.
170. The quality of teaching in one lesson observed was satisfactory and in all the other lessons teaching was good. Teachers are confident and interesting when they discuss the work. They prepare for their lessons well and encourage pupils to look at artefacts and talk about their work. As a result, pupils listen well and begin to develop a good knowledge of religious beliefs. Pupils' interest in the work is developed through opportunities to bring different religions alive by inviting guest speakers to talk on Judaism, Islam, Sikhism and Hinduism. Although planning for religious education

includes spiritual development, few opportunities are taken to reflect quietly during lessons. The curriculum planning for religious education follows the locally agreed syllabus supplemented by other commercial packs and books. There is a satisfactory range of resources, although some such as posters and Christian artefacts are still being collected. Due to the reorganisation of the library, it is not possible to make a judgement about the books available to the pupils. The curriculum leader is keen and knowledgeable. She provides effective support for her colleagues and has a clear plan to develop the subject further.