

INSPECTION REPORT

ST MARK'S CE VA FIRST SCHOOL

Swanage

LEA area: Dorset

Unique reference number: 113814

Headteacher: Miss VJ Potter

Reporting inspector: John M Young
(OFSTED No: 25386)

Dates of inspection: 16 – 18 October 2000

Inspection number: 224180

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

© Crown copyright 2000

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First
School category:	CE Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	4 - 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Bell Street Swanage Dorset
Postcode:	BH19 2SA
Telephone number:	01929 422949
Fax number:	01929 425504
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr M Walker
Date of previous inspection:	27 January 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
John Young (Ofsted No: 25386)	Registered inspector	Science	What sort of school is it?
		Music	How high are standards? a) The school's results and pupils' achievements
		Physical education	How well are pupils taught?
		Equal opportunities	How well is the school led and managed?
			What should the school do to improve further?
Anthony West (Ofsted No: 9588)	Lay inspector		How high are standards? b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
			How well does the school care for its pupils?
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Jean Newing (Ofsted No: 21992)	Team inspector	Areas of learning for children in the foundation stage	
		Mathematics	
		History	
		Geography	
		Art and design	
		Special educational needs	
Carol Slade (Ofsted No: 23812)	Team inspector	English	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
		Information and communication technology	
		Design and technology	

The inspection contractor was:

Cambridge Education Associates
Demeter House
Station Road
Cambridge
CB1 2RS

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Registrar
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7 - 10
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?	11 - 13
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	13 - 14
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	14 - 16
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	16 - 17
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	17 - 18
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	18 - 20
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	20
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	21 - 24
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	25 - 35

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Mark's CE First School was founded in 1855 and its buildings have been extended over the years, the most recent room having been added this term. Most pupils come from the surrounding area, but a significant proportion come from further afield. The school is located in the poorer part of Swanage. St Mark's School is similar in size to other first schools, having 126 boys and girls on roll. The school has five single age group classes and the average class size is 24. A below average proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals. Almost all pupils are white and very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs, 48 per cent, is well above the national average. Baseline assessment shows attainment on entry to be well below average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an improving school with many good features. The school is well led by the headteacher who receives good support from the governors and senior staff. The leadership and management of the school are committed to improving the learning opportunities for all pupils and teachers and teaching assistants are very effective at carrying this out in the classrooms. Pupils' attainment on entry to school is very low. It has fallen since the time the school was last inspected when pupils' attainment on entry to school was average. They have poor mathematical and language skills. The good quality of teaching and the well-planned learning opportunities ensure pupils make sound and often good progress throughout the school. Nonetheless, pupils' attainment in English at the ages of seven and nine remain well below the national average. The same age groups achieve standards below the national average in mathematics and standards in line with the national average in science. Pupils feel happy and secure in their school and their attitudes and behaviour are good. The school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- The quality of teaching throughout the school is good and often very good.
- The provision for pupils who have special educational needs is very good.
- The school is well led and managed by the headteacher and senior staff.
- The school makes very good use of its very able teaching assistants which has a positive impact on pupils' achievements.
- Pupils attain above average standards in design and technology and physical education.
- The provision for pupils' moral, social and cultural development is good and pupils' spiritual development is very good.

What could be improved

- Standards in reading and writing.
- The involvement of pupils and their parents in the setting and reviewing of targets.
- The clarity of the school's policy on homework.
- Information to parents on what their children are to be taught.

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 good improvement since the last inspection in January 1997. The quality of teaching has improved markedly. The school's curriculum now incorporates all aspects of the revised National Curriculum and teachers' planning from schemes of work ensures the progressive development of pupils' learning as they move through the school. Assessment procedures, including the use of baseline assessment in the reception class, are now very good. Good improvement has been made in the leadership and management of the school. The headteacher and senior staff now regularly monitor the teaching and learning in classrooms and the role of governors has been extended as they are now involved in the strategic management of the school's development. Although standards are generally lower than at the time of the previous inspection, this can be explained by the changes to the school's catchment area. The school now has an increased number of pupils who have special educational needs and over 30 per cent of pupils in Year 4 did not start school at St Mark's. Standards fell after the last inspection but they are now rising again but insufficient time has elapsed for this to show in results in English. The school sets targets in English and mathematics but neither the pupils themselves nor their

parents are sufficiently involved in the setting or achievement of these.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with			
	All schools			Similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
Reading	E*	E*	E	E
Writing	E*	E*	E	E
Mathematics	E	E*	C	C

Key	
Well above average	A
Above average	B
Average	C
Below average	D
Well below average	E
Very low	E*

After a fall since the last inspection, standards have begun to rise again. Pupils' performance in reading and writing is well below the national average. This shows some improvement as standards were very low compared with all schools in the previous two years. The 2000 National Curriculum assessments reflect the achievements of a relatively able group of pupils and inspection findings show pupils' attainment in mathematics to be below the national average at seven and nine. This represents improvement in the results of 1998 and 1999 when standards were equal to the lowest five per cent of all schools. Good use of teaching assistants has helped improve the attainment of both more able pupils and the very high proportion of pupils who have special educational needs. Pupils' standards in science have risen over the past two years. Although teacher assessments show standards to be well below the national average, the percentage of pupils attaining higher than the expected level is well above average. Evidence from the inspection finds that standards in science at seven and nine are in line with the national expectation. Standards in design and technology and physical education are above the expected level in both key stages. In all other subjects, pupils' attainment is in line with national expectations.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils are keen to come to school and they enjoy good working relationships with their peers and with adults.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils behave well in assembly, around the school and in class. Their behaviour in the playground, at lunch and break times is also good
Personal development and relationships	Pupils work very well together, share resources and ideas well and take responsibility when it is offered. There could be more opportunities for pupils to be involved with the assessment of their work, for independent learning and for the use of initiative.
Attendance	Attendance is in line with the National average and unauthorised absence is below. Lessons start promptly and with little fuss.

All these factors assist the pupils to make good progress.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

In 80 per cent of lessons, the quality of teaching was at least good with 36 per cent judged very good and four per cent excellent. Sixteen per cent of lessons observed were judged to be satisfactory with four per cent unsatisfactory. Very effective use is made of teaching assistants who have planned effectively with the teacher and know precisely what the pupils in their groups will learn and how they can facilitate the learning process. This is particularly beneficial to the school's high proportion of pupils who have special educational needs. A strong feature of the teaching at St Mark's is very good classroom management. Relationships between all adults and pupils are good and a warm, friendly approach is used by teachers and teaching assistants to all pupils. This is linked to the setting of very clear expectations of good behaviour and non-confrontational approaches to indicate the unacceptability of disruptive behaviour which very occasionally occurs. Teachers work hard to ensure that learning is not hindered for the majority of pupils and the school's "five point scale" warning for inappropriate behaviour, which culminates in such pupils visiting the headteacher, is very effective in helping teachers maintain good order throughout their lessons. On very few occasions activities lack sufficient challenge and a few pupils become restless and disruptive. The teaching of numeracy and literacy is consistently good and 50 per cent of lessons are very good. As a result of this good teaching, pupils learn aspects of English and mathematics such as letter sounds and multiplication facts very quickly.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The school provides a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum with a great deal of practical and stimulating experiences for all pupils.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Teachers plan lessons to meet the needs of all pupils and use teaching assistants very effectively so that all pupils who have special educational needs are successful learners.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Pupils' moral, social and cultural development is good. Their spiritual development is very good. Pupils experience a variety of opportunities to express their own feelings and ideas knowing that these will be respected by adults and fellow pupils.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares for pupils and their welfare well, although some administrative aspects of health and safety are not fully compliant. Procedures for monitoring attendance and behaviour are good. There are also good procedures to monitor pupils' personal development and the school works hard at improving pupils' self-esteem.

Parents feel comfortable talking to the school and are confident that any problems will be addressed. Pupils' annual reports are detailed but could give more consistent guidance on how pupils could improve. Not all parents are involved in target setting and generally parents do not get specific information on the curriculum to be taught. Parents' contribution to the school is good through fund-raising and providing help in lessons.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher and staff have worked very hard to monitor teaching and learning throughout the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors, together with the headteacher and senior staff, are involved at an early stage in the formation of the school development plan.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The headteacher and senior staff make a full analysis of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are aware of the importance of teaching and the use of teaching assistants in raising educational standards
The strategic use of resources	Good. The headteacher and governors make good use of government grants to provide the school with new computers. They plan the budget well to secure the school's share of major building work costs.

The accommodation is good. The school hall is used particularly well for physical education lessons. The staff are well qualified and are deployed very effectively. The school makes regular checks of cost-effectiveness and best value of the services it uses.

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 teaching is good. • The school expects their children to try hard and achieve their best. • Their children like coming to school. • Parents felt happy to come into school and raise concerns. Several said that when they had done so they had been dealt with quickly and skilfully. • Their children make good progress in school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More information on what their children were going to learn. • Some parents would like to see a larger range of activities outside lessons. • A significant minority of parents thought their children should have more work to do at home.

The inspectors agree with the positive comments made by parents, particularly the level of good teaching in the school. Inspection findings also agree with parents' views on their need for more information on the curriculum. The school sets a good amount of homework for its pupils. However, it would be helpful to parents if the school had an agreed policy on homework so parents knew what type of work to expect for different age groups. Inspectors found the school to have a larger than normal number of clubs and activities outside lessons. These interesting and varied activities are not always held at the end of the school day.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Baseline assessment of children as they enter the reception class shows their attainment to be well below average. A high proportion of children have delayed personal, social and emotional development. The school has a reputation for its support for pupils with special educational needs and the intake of pupils in this category has risen to over a third in recent years. There is a high turnover of pupils in the school and over 30 per cent of pupils in Year 4 did not start school at St Marks. These factors, together with changes in the school's catchment area have resulted in a fall in standards since the last inspection. Standards have begun to rise over the past two years.
2. In the 2000 National Curriculum assessments, when compared with all schools and similar schools, pupils' performance in reading and writing was well below the national average. This shows some improvement as standards were very low compared with all schools in the previous two years. The standard of work seen during the inspection broadly confirms the results of the national assessments. The few opportunities for pupils to read individually to adults and extend their writing outside literacy lessons has resulted in them making slower progress in reading and writing than in mathematics and science.
3. In mathematics, standards were in line with the national average at the end of Key Stage 1 and above average for the number of pupils achieving the higher than expected levels. The results were the same when compared with all schools and similar schools. The 2000 National Curriculum assessments reflect the achievements of a relatively able group of pupils and inspection findings show pupils' attainment in mathematics to be below the national average in both key stages. This represents improvement in the results of 1998 and 1999 when standards were very low when compared with all schools.
4. Pupils' standards in science have risen over the past two years. Although teacher assessments show standards generally to be well below the national average, the percentage of pupils attaining higher than the expected level is well above average. Evidence from the inspection finds that standards at the end of Key Stage 1 and Year 4 are in line with the national expectation.
5. The consistently good quality teaching in the Foundation Stage, where the teacher provides exciting learning opportunities for the children, enables children to make good progress towards achieving the Early Learning Goals in their knowledge and understanding of the world and their creative and physical development. Owing to the low level of attainment on entry to school, children fail to achieve the expected levels in communication, language and literacy and in mathematical development.
6. Teachers are very aware of the need to develop pupils' language abilities and good use is made of whole class learning time at the beginning of the literacy hour to promote speaking and listening skills. Attainment is below average in speaking and listening for pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 and by the time they are ready to transfer to middle school at the age of nine. However, with the support of high quality teaching, pupils are now making good progress in this area of their learning from a low base. Although attainment in reading and writing at the ages of seven and nine is well below average, the good quality of teaching ensures pupils are now making satisfactory progress in their learning. The school has set targets for pupils in English, but as neither pupils nor parents are sufficiently involved in the setting or achievement of the targets, the full impact on standards has not been achieved thus far. Teachers have adopted the National Literacy Strategy with enthusiasm but there are few opportunities for pupils to read individually to an adult or pursue independent reading for interest and pleasure.
7. The school has enthusiastically and effectively implemented the numeracy hour in all classes. This has helped improve standards in mathematics throughout the school, particularly for the higher attaining pupils. The regular monitoring of teaching, learning, teachers' planning and pupils' work by senior staff has also had a positive impact on standards and the quality of teaching is now at least good, and sometimes very good in Key Stage 1. In shape and space lessons, pupils'

knowledge and understanding develops from recognising squares, triangles, rectangles and circles in Year 1 to finding the perimeter of two-dimensional shapes in Year 4. Teaching assistants are used very effectively in all mathematics lessons and they make a very significant contribution to pupils' learning, especially for the lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs.

8. Pupils' attainment in science is in line with national expectations. The previous inspection found that there were weaknesses in pupils' understanding of investigative and experimental science. This is no longer the case. Teachers' planning for lessons with a high proportion of practical activities enables pupils to learn effectively through experimentation and trial and error. More able pupils in Year 2 understand the gradual development of human beings from babies who cry and sleep through to older children and adults who are able to walk, talk, read and write. Less able pupils in Year 2 have a developing understanding of how to keep healthy by eating a balanced diet and taking regular exercise. Pupils in Year 4 understand that an electrical circuit would not be complete if the wires were connected to the same battery terminal.
9. There has been a slight decline in pupils' attainment in information and communication technology (ICT) since the last inspection but this has coincided with recent changes in the subject and the school's adoption of a government recommended scheme of work. The school has very recently installed new computers and more pupils are able now to develop their ICT skills and understanding of controlled devices, word processing, art programs and desktop publishing.
10. Standards in history and geography are in line with the national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 and at Year 4. In history, good quality teaching has enabled pupils in Year 3 to gain a great deal of knowledge and understanding of life in Roman times. Pupils in Year 1 in geography lessons are beginning to understand that plans are a birds' eye view. They learn this by drawing their own plans after placing wooden furniture on paper. This is linked effectively with numeracy as the pupils are being introduced to simple co-ordinates. Pupils in Year 4 have good knowledge of an Indian village and can compare climate, houses and schools with those in Swanage.
11. Pupils' attainment in design and technology and physical education are above the national expectation and the end of Key Stage 1 and Year 4. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils, at both key stages, use sequences of movement effectively in dance and gymnastics lessons. The excellent instruction and demonstration of landing, travelling and hanging has a direct impact on the quality of pupils' performance. Standards of attainment in music are in line with national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 and when pupils transfer to the middle school.
12. The good quality of teaching at St Mark's School ensures that pupils make sound and often good progress in many areas. There is no marked difference in the attainment of boys and girls. Pupils who have special educational needs and more able pupils make good progress and have good support from teaching assistants. Targets in English and mathematics are set for every pupil in terms of National Curriculum levels and these are carefully reviewed each term. Progress towards targets is hindered as neither pupils nor their parents are involved in target setting or achievement. With the exception of reading and writing, where progress has been slower, the standards reached by all pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 and when they leave the school at the age of nine show there has been a significant rise in attainment since they entered school.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

13. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good and support teaching and learning well. Throughout the school, pupils, including those with special educational needs, are keen, enthusiastic and eager to come to school. They listen attentively, follow instructions and settle quickly to the task given. The great majority of children generally concentrate well, although in lessons when teaching was unsatisfactory or when teachers were inconsistent in dealing with behaviour, pupils lost their concentration and misbehaved.
14. The great majority of pupils work very well, independently and in differing group situations. For example, Year 4 pupils collaborated well in groups when they constructed simple electrical circuits in their science lesson. In a Key Stage 1 physical education lesson, pupils worked well together when devising dance sequences.

15. Pupils of all abilities are interested in the life of the school and behave well, complying with school and class rules. There have been no exclusions and as in the previous inspection, pupils' attitudes, behaviour and relationships contribute significantly to the learning environment of the school.
16. They know right from wrong and are polite and courteous to teachers, their peers and to visitors. Behaviour in the dining hall, during assembly and whilst pupils move about the school is good. The great majority of pupils form good relationships with their peers and with adults. No examples of any oppressive behaviour, bullying, sexism or racism were seen during the inspection. The majority of pupils understand the impact of their behaviour on others.
17. Pupils in school do have opportunities to take responsibilities by setting their own class rules, by being monitors and by helping teachers. However, the inspection team found that there are few opportunities for pupils to display initiative, take responsibility for their own learning or to be involved in setting their own performance targets.
18. As in the previous inspection, pupils' attendance is satisfactory. Although the school's attendance figure is slightly lower than the national average, the unauthorised absences have continued to improve and are now below the national level.
19. The registration of pupils at the start of sessions is handled efficiently and pupils settle down to work promptly and with little fuss. This contributes positively to the learning process.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

20. The majority of parents believe that the teaching in St Mark's School is good. The inspection confirms these views. The previous inspection reported that teaching was sound overall with notably good features in the youngest and oldest classes. The evidence from this inspection shows a great improvement in the quality of teaching and teaching is now a strength of the school. In 80 per cent of lessons, the quality of teaching was good or better with 36 per cent judged as very good and four per cent excellent. Sixteen per cent of lessons observed were judged to be satisfactory with four per cent unsatisfactory. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have undertaken in-service training on monitoring the quality of teaching and this has promoted a positive approach to raising standards in the school. All staff and governors share this commitment.
21. Teaching of the Foundation Stage in the reception class is very good. The teacher has a very good understanding of the way young children learn and provides high quality learning opportunities for them in their first year in school. When taking part in sand and water play or collecting evidence from an autumn walk, children acquire knowledge of the world around them as a result of the very effective interactions of the teacher and teaching assistants.
22. The teaching of numeracy and literacy is consistently good and 50 per cent of lessons are very good. There is a good balance of direct teaching and independent work from pupils during these lessons. Plenary sessions are used effectively to consolidate pupils' learning, provide opportunities for assessment and clear up any misunderstandings. In literacy lessons, teachers prepare stimulating and enjoyable opportunities for shared reading and writing activities. The effective teaching of phonics enables pupils in Year 1 to use medial vowels to blend simple three letter words. Teachers are very effective in planning cross-curricular activities in literacy sessions. Whilst using reference books in Year 3, pupils identified different reading and writing skills required for investigating the Romans. Teachers have a very secure knowledge of the National Numeracy Strategy. Lessons are planned with clear learning objectives and these are shared with pupils. This was very evident in a Year 4 lesson on perimeter where the pupils knew they would be learning a quicker way of calculating the perimeter of a rectangle without measuring the length of all four sides.
23. A strong feature of the teaching is very good classroom management. Relationships between all adults and pupils are good and a warm, friendly approach is used by teachers and teaching assistants to all pupils. This is linked to the setting of very clear expectations of good behaviour and non-confrontational approaches to indicate the unacceptability of disruptive behaviour which very occasionally occurs. Teachers work hard to ensure that learning is not hindered for the

majority of pupils and the school's "five point scale" warning for inappropriate behaviour, which culminates in such pupils visiting the headteacher, is very effective in helping teachers maintain good order throughout their lessons. On a very few occasions, activities lack sufficient challenge and a few pupils become restless and disruptive.

24. Teachers' planning is good throughout the school and very good in Key Stage 1. All teachers' plans make clear what pupils of different attainments will achieve and how different groups of pupils, including those who have special educational needs, will be supported. Very effective use is made of teaching assistants who have planned effectively with the teacher and know precisely what the pupils in their groups will learn and how they can facilitate the learning process.
25. In all lessons, but more particularly during practical activities such as physical education or music, teaching assistants provide extremely useful assessments of pupils' progress and teachers build well on these observations both within the lesson and in their planning of future lessons. In all lessons, teachers move round the classroom well to assess pupils' levels of understanding and they employ good open ended questioning techniques to help pupils explore their thoughts. In a Year 2 literacy lesson, the teacher used well crafted open and closed questions to help pupils order their thoughts on how to make a recipe for scrambled eggs. Teachers' marking of pupils' books, although not consistent throughout the school, praises pupils' efforts. Occasional use is made of stickers which is effective in encouraging pupils to produce work to a high standard. Although individual targets are set for pupils, pupils and parents are not sufficiently involved in the setting and evaluation of these targets.
26. The methods employed by teachers and the organisation of their lessons are very good. The introduction to lessons are often stimulating and informative, ensuring that pupils pay attention and remain keen to see how the lessons develop. This is particularly the case during lessons that centre on practical or investigative approaches. In dance lessons, where teachers give extremely agile and effective demonstrations, pupils' responses show a great deal of improvement as a direct result of the teachers' input.
27. In their questionnaire, the majority of parents agreed that their children get the right amount of work to do at home. Inspection findings agree with this opinion. A variety of homework is regularly set and ranges from spelling and reading work to art activities. The setting of homework varies from class to class but overall, the activities completed at home effectively extend the work covered in school. The school has developed a new home/school reading record which is beginning to have a positive impact on reading standards.

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

28. Good progress has been made in strengthening curriculum provision since the previous inspection. Most subjects now have effective schemes of work from which activities can be planned for pupils with different levels of attainment. From September 2000 the curriculum has undergone major changes with the launch of the new foundation curriculum for the reception year and the revised National Curriculum for all pupils from five to sixteen. The staff has embraced these new initiatives with enthusiasm and is already implementing them well. It plans to review and modify provision in the light of experience so as to effectively meet the school's particular needs. Throughout, there is good or very good provision made for pupils' intellectual, physical, social and emotional development as they progress through the school. The school adopts stimulating, practical hands-on methods wherever possible in delivering the curriculum.
29. The curriculum for the reception year is very strong. It fully meets requirements for the new Foundation Stage in early years education in both its breadth and balance. It rightly places a strong emphasis on developing personal, social and emotional awareness where a high proportion of children entering the school are lacking in these skills.
30. From the age of five to nine all pupils experience an effective curriculum which fully meets statutory requirements. All the subjects required in the National Curriculum and religious education are taught. The latest government recommended schemes of work have been adopted

since September and these ensure progressive provision for the development of pupils' learning as they move through the school. Well designed individual education plans and very good additional teacher assistant support ensure that pupils with special educational needs have full access to the curriculum.

31. Although a policy is not yet in place for equal opportunities a statement in the school brochure makes the school's position clear. Teachers are sensitive and aware and treat all pupils with equal regard for their individual needs. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good and includes healthy eating, drugs and sex education.
32. The high quality of teaching ensures that the school fully meets requirements in its provision for the National Literacy Strategy. Curriculum planning is detailed and at least satisfactory progress is secured for all pupils by well designed activities matched to pupils' needs. Good use is made of cross-curricular themes in planning lessons. An outstanding example of this was seen in a Year 3 literacy lesson where a focus on Roman history was being successfully used to develop writing skills. Speaking and listening abilities develop well, albeit from a low base, for many pupils. There are signs too that standards of writing are improving. However, the English curriculum as it stands is not yet raising interest and attainment in reading and writing sufficiently as teachers do not regularly allocate time to read to their classes or provide enough opportunities for pupils to read individually to an adult. Pupils have insufficient time for independent reading for interest and pleasure and their progress in writing suffers as there are few opportunities for them to extend their writing outside the literacy hour. Effective curriculum methods for the implementation of the numeracy strategy are having more positive results in raising attainment in mathematics.
33. Whilst parents are critical of provision for extra-curricular activities, inspection evidence finds that these criticisms are unjustified. There is good provision for extra-curricular activities which are usually planned on a seasonal basis. A few take place after school but most are organised during midday breaks. They include sporting and musical activities as well as drama and pottery. A computer club is planned for the near future now that the National Grid for Learning access is on-line and new computers are fully installed. The school choir is very popular and has a significant impact on the enthusiasm and fine quality of singing during collective worship.
34. The school has very strong links with the community. Amongst many these include volunteer reading helpers who have a regular commitment to the school. A local football coach teaches ball skills weekly and recently helped pupils to win the Purbeck football tournament. Pupils visit local nursing homes to entertain residents with their singing. There is a school recycling centre which provides pupils with direct messages about conservation through recycling waste. Links with local churches are particularly strong. Ministers regularly contribute to the school's collective worship and pupils celebrate events in the Christian calendar at St Mark's Church. Pupils are encouraged to support children less fortunate than themselves through world charities.
35. The school maintains close links with other schools in the area. There is regular liaison with the feeder middle school to ensure that pupils make a smooth transition to them at the age of nine. First school teachers co-operate closely in moderating standards of seven and nine-year-olds' work to ensure parity of assessment. Teachers learn together at joint in-service training days and headteachers regularly meet to make joint policy decisions. Pupils regularly participate in the combined Purbeck schools music festival.
36. Very good provision is made for pupils' spiritual development. They experience a variety of opportunities to express their own feelings and ideas knowing that these will be respected by adults and peers alike. Collective worship provides a strong daily opportunity for a spiritual focus and pupils sing together with obvious enjoyment. During the inspection aspects of forgiveness were meaningfully explored for pupils through their own experiences of family life and through such examples as the story of "The Prodigal Son". Teachers create lively classroom environments where pupils work is valued through fine displays and self-esteem is raised as photographs of pupils engaged in learning activities are regularly publicised around the school. Teachers make learning interesting and accessible for their pupils and also nurture pupils well-being through regular praise.
37. Pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong and provision for moral education is good. In each class pupils have devised their own sets of rules for working together. These are publicly

displayed and pupils try hard to aspire to them. Teachers are very good role models for their pupils in the fair and respectful ways in which they respond to their pupils' personalities. Good behaviour is praised but equally pupils know that unacceptable behaviour and bullying will not be tolerated in the school. As a strongly Christian school aspects of religion also form a firm foundation for its provision for moral education. Pupils make regular charitable contributions for disadvantaged people.

38. Provision for pupils' social education is also good. Relationships are good between adults and pupils. Teachers are sensitive and supportive of their pupils and each other. Pupils have many opportunities to develop their sense of belonging both in classes and within the whole school. Teachers systematically teach pupils how to listen well and to be disciplined in taking turns in speaking. Plenary sessions in many lessons give pupils rich opportunities to share their opinions with peers. Social interaction is important to many other aspects of learning. For example, pupils are able to work well together in small groups during a dance lesson as they discuss plan and practise lively sequences of movements then perform them to their appreciative class peers. In regular celebration assemblies pupils acknowledge each others' learning, certificates are awarded for good achievements and birthdays are celebrated.
39. The school makes good efforts to provide for the cultural development of its pupils through an extensive range of cross-curricular opportunities. The choir and recorder players participate in musical activities for the benefit of the school and the community. Composer of the week forms a regular though underdeveloped feature of daily assemblies. Through history pupils learn about how the Romans lived when they invaded Britain and the historical monuments such as Roman Bath they have left behind. In geography pupils compare the life of children living in a small Indian village with their own. Pupils' awareness of world cultures is also raised through the religious education curriculum as pupils study the special aspects of such faiths as Judaism and Hinduism. Pupils very much enjoyed a multicultural experience staged in liaison with the local cluster of schools when, amongst several other things, they listened to a West Indian steel drummer and were able to experiment on steel drums themselves.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

40. Procedures for assessing pupils' progress have significantly improved since the previous inspection, where they were a key issue, to a position where they are now very good. Baseline assessment now provides a point of reference not only for attainment on entry and will be a useful guide to whether and how the school's provision is actually raising pupils' attainment over time.
41. Academic targets are set for every pupil in terms of National Curriculum levels and these are carefully reviewed each term. Critical pathways are a useful means by which the school charts its attainment aspirations for pupils in each year group, in broad bands of abilities, in mathematics, reading and writing. These objectives are also used for pupils with special educational needs where the school adopts useful categories established by the local education authority. A portfolio of examples of completed work is being prepared which annotates pupils' work to assess and define National Curriculum levels. This will be used as a point of reference for common standards within the school.
42. Good use is made of assessment in guiding curriculum planning. Teachers have a good understanding of how pupils are attaining in lessons and use this information effectively to place pupils in ability groups for English and mathematics. They use effective questioning techniques to aid the assessment process. They are alert to how pupils are progressing with their work during independent learning sessions and adapt and vary activities with flexibility if additional learning of a topic is still required.
43. Much on-going marking of pupils' work is done verbally during lessons and is usually a sensitive balance of encouragement and ideas for improvement. Although there are some inconsistencies in book marking, generally teachers are positive. Some use stars and stickers as rewards for good work. Individual targets are set for pupils and are recorded in their writing books and home-school diaries. However, pupils and parents are insufficiently involved in the setting of these and in their achievement.

44. The school continues to provide a safe and caring environment for its pupils as reported in the last inspection. Members of staff know pupils well and this enables them to provide appropriate care and support. The quality of information kept on each pupil is detailed and comprehensive. Medical and personal needs are clearly identified and dealt with. External agencies including the educational welfare service, health professionals and social services support this aspect of the school well.
45. The school identifies and deals effectively with any hazards found on site and the governors' responsibilities for health and safety are being developed. Checks and risk assessments have recently been introduced; however, there are some administrative aspects in this area that need updating. The school has a health and safety policy, which the school is presently reviewing. Members of the staff are trained to administer first aid and the school's provision for first aid and welfare support are good despite the absence of a first aid room. The school monitors security arrangements and has involved parents in this process through a questionnaire.
46. The school's policy and procedures follow the guidelines of the local committee for the protection of children. The headteacher is the designated person responsible for child protection arrangements and other members of staff fully understand the school's arrangements and procedures.
47. Attendance is monitored well, and this has successfully reduced the incidence of unauthorised absences. The school complies fully with the statutory requirements for registration and the coding and recording of attendance. The school's arrangements for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are good. There are sanctions and reward arrangements in school and the behaviour policy plus the regular reminders and promotion of school and class rules, give pupils and parents a clear understanding of the school's expectations. The staff and parents confirm that there are few cases of poor behaviour, bullying or racial tension in the school.
48. Pupils' personal development is good and is supported through class activities, visits and extra-curricular activities. One of the school's aims is to develop pupils' self-esteem. This it does through a carefully constructed set of rewards that include an award to the "star of the week". The school has acknowledged that more could be done to consistently include pupils and parents in setting targets for pupils' improvement.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

49. In their questionnaire responses the majority of parents feel that the school is good, 89 per cent feel that the school expects high standards. The impact of the parents' involvement on the work of the school is good. The parent-teacher association raises large sums of money to purchase materials and resources for the school. This included the purchase and erection of adventure play equipment. The parents have been involved in maintaining the school fabric and through parental contributions the school is able to operate a swimming pool.
50. Parents and staff organise social events for pupils and parents, and they attend performances, social and curriculum events, briefing meetings and parents' evenings. The school has involved parents in its decision making process by encouraging parents to complete a questionnaire on the school's security arrangements.
51. Parents believe that the information on the pupils' annual reports is detailed and accurately describes their children. At the parents' meeting they wanted more information in the annual reports on how pupils' achievements compared with national averages. Strengths and weaknesses are shown on reports; however, they do not always include information on how pupils can make further progress. Pupils and parents are not always involved in agreeing targets for pupils' academic or social improvement. Some reception class parents are provided with notes on how pupils can improve, with targets for help at home.
52. The school's documentation for parents is informative and fulfils most statutory requirements except that the annual governors' report to parents does not include sufficient detail of either the

school's arrangements for the disabled or the school's financial arrangements. The prospectus does not include the school's address and telephone number.

53. The school has held meetings and workshops to advise parents of the curriculum, for example, the initiatives in numeracy and literacy. However, parents are not regularly provided with information on what the curriculum timetable will be. Lists of projects are posted in some classrooms but unless parents visit classes this is not of use to them.
54. The school provides plenty of newsletters for parents outlining forthcoming events and arrangements for school trips, welfare matters, medicals etc. The letters from class teachers are especially friendly and informative.
55. The contribution of parents to children's learning at school and at home is satisfactory. Parents and teachers are able to communicate by using the recently revised home-school reading diaries. The school has been successful in providing opportunities for parents to approach school to discuss issues and parents confirm that they feel able to discuss matters of concern with the staff.
56. Parents and carers come in to school to enrich the curriculum, help with extra-curricular provision and organise and support fund-raising social events. At the parents' meeting, parents were unsure of the school's provision for homework or the homework policy.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

57. The headteacher provides good leadership and manages the school well. The previous inspection reported that although the headteacher provided caring and supportive leadership, there were nevertheless weaknesses in the overall leadership and management of the school. The headteacher, staff and governors have worked very hard to redress these weaknesses, particularly in the monitoring of teaching and learning, and now both teaching and learning and leadership and management are strengths of the school. The headteacher knows her school very well and she has a clear understanding of how the school is functioning. She makes a good analysis of the school's strengths and weaknesses and is aware of the importance of teaching and teaching assistants in raising educational standards. Together with the literacy and numeracy co-ordinators, the headteacher monitors planning and gives effective feedback to individual teachers. Effective use is made of the local education authority to evaluate this strategy and good use is made of evidence in the form of an action plan to target areas for development.
58. Governors' involvement in the school is good. They fulfil all their statutory duties. The last inspection criticised the governors' limited influence on curriculum planning and long-term strategic management of the school. Governors are now very involved with the development of the curriculum. In addition to the good quality information provided by the headteacher, they regularly visit classes to monitor the implementation of curricular developments such as the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Governors, together with the headteacher and senior staff, are involved at an early stage in the formation of the school development plan. Two governors have received appropriate training in performance management. They have a good understanding of the process and, together with the headteacher and staff, are introducing performance management for all teaching staff.
59. The financial management of the school is good. Having being criticised in the previous inspection for being unclear as to how it would raise standards, the development plan is now a useful tool for improving the school's financial management, curriculum development, management of staff, improvement in premises and for raising standards. Areas for development are carefully costed, identify training and resource requirements, show who will monitor and evaluate the projects and state success targets. Recent initiatives, which are already having a positive impact on standards, have been the increased deployment of very effective teaching assistants and the development of an effective teaching policy.
60. In-service training undertaken by the headteacher and deputy headteacher to develop good procedures for monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning is improving standards in the

school. It is helping raise standards in mathematics and science where good teaching and learning is observed, evaluated and shared with all teachers. Monitoring of English teaching has not yet identified the improvements needed to raise standards sufficiently in reading and writing. Effective monitoring of teaching and learning is beginning to be part of the role of curriculum co-ordinators in addition to the effective support with planning and use of teaching resources already offered to colleagues. There are extremely harmonious working relationships amongst all adults in the school. This is of great benefit to pupils as the headteacher, teachers, teaching assistants and governors are committed to achieving the school's aims of creating a happy, secure and positive environment.

61. Financial control and school administration are efficient. The school's finances are managed well by the headteacher and the finance officer and are monitored effectively by the finance committee of the governing body. Sound use is made of information technology to provide regular information about expected and intended expenditure. An action plan has already been drawn up to rectify minor issues identified in a recent local education authority audit of the school's finances. Day-to-day administration is good. Office procedures are efficient, run smoothly and support teaching and learning effectively.
62. Specific grants are used effectively and supplemented where necessary to support provision for pupils with special educational needs. Funds for the professional development of staff have been used wisely and according to areas defined in the school development plan. Most of the funding has been taken up in training for initiatives such as the National Numeracy and Literacy Strategies but good use of National Grid For Learning funds, supplemented by the school's budget, has enabled the school to purchase good quality computers. Prudent use is made of budget-under spending to enable the governors to pay their ten per cent contribution to major building works as required by the diocese from their voluntary aided schools.
63. Regular reviews are made to check on cost-effectiveness and best value of services used. On major building works, the diocesan building surveyor, on behalf of the school, carries this out. Projections of how major spending decisions will affect budgets over the long term are made before final decisions are taken. The school earmarks a higher-than-average proportion of the school's budget for teaching assistants. This is a very good strategy as the assistants make a considerable contribution to raising pupils' attainment and accelerating progress in lessons.
64. All teachers are suitably qualified and are very well deployed. Professional development of all staff is seen as a high priority in this school and opportunities are provided for all staff to have the training they need to be effective. The school has benefited from the employment of newly qualified teachers in recent years. The induction of these teachers, led by the deputy headteacher, has been very good. This has helped them settle in very quickly and has added greatly to the quality of teaching throughout the school.
65. The accommodation is good. Although the school does not have the benefit of a first aid room, the classrooms are large and the internal and external fabric of the building is in good repair. Displays of pupils' work throughout the school create an attractive environment for everyone working in the building. The working conditions in the school are greatly enhanced by the high standard of cleaning in the entire building. The school has a hall which is used well for many activities throughout the school day. Particularly good use is made of the hall for physical education lessons. A new room with linking corridors has recently been built in the school. Careful thought needs to be given to the use of this building to maximise its use for pupils.
66. The school has good resources to teach all subjects of the National Curriculum. These are used effectively to support learning.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

67. To improve the performance of the school, the governors, headteacher and staff should:
 - Raise standards in English by:

- providing opportunities for pupils to read individually to adults;
 - enabling pupils to pursue independent reading for interest and pleasure;
 - establishing a well stocked library with books suitable for the reading abilities of the large majority of pupils;
 - designing a timetable for all classes to make use of the library;
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to undertake extended writing activities.
(paragraphs 2, 12, 32, 61, 85, 87)
- Improve pupils' learning by involving them and their parents in setting and reviewing targets;
(paragraphs 12, 17, 25, 44, 52)
 - Clarify the school's policy on homework and give parents more information on the curriculum to be taught to their children. (paragraphs 27, 57)

Minor issues

Improve the consistency of marking throughout the school. (paragraphs 25, 44)

Ensure the annual governors' report to parents includes both sufficient detail of the school's arrangements for the disabled and information on the school's financial arrangements. (paragraph 53)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	25
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	22

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4	36	40	16	4	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		126
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		18

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		57

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	15
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.2
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2000	12	18

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	8	9	11
	Girls	13	14	16
	Total	21	23	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	70 (61)	77 (45)	90 (72)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	8	11	11
	Girls	12	12	13
	Total	20	23	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	67 (66)	77 (82)	80 (38)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	0
White	110
Any other minority ethnic group	1

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y4

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19.8
Average class size	23.8

Education support staff: YR – Y4

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	161

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
----------------	-----------

	£
Total income	258072
Total expenditure	243708
Expenditure per pupil	1741
Balance brought forward from previous year	16529
Balance carried forward to next year	30893

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	101
Number of questionnaires returned	53

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	56	36	4	2	2
My child is making good progress in school.	46	36	9	0	9
Behaviour in the school is good.	36	45	9	4	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	32	55	4	9	0
The teaching is good.	57	39	4	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	36	43	11	6	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	62	32	4	0	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	51	39	4	0	6
The school works closely with parents.	40	40	12	2	6
The school is well led and managed.	51	30	6	2	11
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	45	45	4	0	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	21	51	13	6	9

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

68. The children in the Foundation Stage are taught in a class of 24 pupils. Children are admitted part-time after their fourth birthday and spend two terms full-time in the reception class. Provision is very good for these youngest children.
69. The quality of teaching for children in the Foundation Stage is very good. The teacher has a very good understanding of the way young children learn and, together with the teaching assistants, provides high quality learning opportunities for children in their first year in school.
70. The quality of teaching for the youngest children was judged to be good at the last inspection. This has improved as all lessons observed were at least good and in 75 per cent of lessons, the teaching was very good. The teacher forges very positive relationships with parents so that they are able to contribute to their child's learning. After baseline assessment, she meets all parents and carers individually to explain the results of the tests and to give ideas of how they can help their children at home.
71. Assessment of children when they start school shows that attainment on entry is well below average, especially in personal, social and emotional development, communication language and literacy and mathematical development. Most children have pre-school experience in the local playgroup. There are good links between the school and the playgroup that ensure continuity in learning. Although the children have very good learning opportunities in the Foundation Stage, only a minority achieve the Early Learning Goals in all areas of learning by the time they enter Key Stage 1.

Personal, social and emotional development

72. The teaching of personal and social skills is very good and the warm friendly enthusiastic approach of the teacher results in children feeling safe and secure in their learning. The two teaching assistants are used very effectively and give very good support, especially in language development. They used open-ended questions and encourage the children to talk in full sentences. This very good class management is helping these youngest children to learn to listen, follow instructions, stay on task and to concentrate on the interesting tasks presented to them, for example, making individual booklets 'Where is My Teddy?' Good learning is effectively nurtured by the good use of role-play areas, for example, when children use mobile phones in the 'office' to order goods, arrange repairs to vehicles, etc. As a result of the very good teaching in this area many children's personal and social development is in line with the national expectations by the end of the Foundation Stage, but there is a significant minority who do not reach this level.

Communication, language and literacy

73. The teaching of communication, language and literacy is very good and is imaginatively and appropriately linked to the objectives of the National Literacy Strategy. The higher attaining children achieve results in line with the expected standards at the end of the Foundation Stage. However, most pupils start Year 1 with skills well below average in this area and consequently, despite the very good teaching and the effective support of teaching assistants, the majority of children do not reach the expected standard at the end of the Foundation Stage. However, children are making rapid progress during this half term; some children who could not form any letters at the beginning of term can now write their name, others can trace over the teacher's writing. All children have the opportunity to listen to well-read stories and rhymes and to look at books, but only a minority of children is sufficiently articulate to share books and talk about the pictures with an adult. Some very good teaching was seen to help children learn how letters join together to form words, how words are put together to make sentences and then how sentences are put together to form stories.

Mathematical development

74. Teaching is very good in this area but despite the good teaching most children do not achieve the Early Learning Goals at the end of the Foundation Stage. The gap between the attainment on entry and the expected standard at the end of the Foundation Stage is too wide to bridge in such a short time. The teacher plans many interesting and challenging practical activities, which are well matched to children's prior learning, for example, counting conkers in a box, counting bears in the house, writing and ordering numbers. Positional language, for example, behind, under, on, beside, is taught in a highly motivating way at the end of each session. As a child looks for teddy, which other children have hidden, the teacher uses the correct language. Mathematical development, along with personal and social development, is well promoted in the first session after registration, using the number of boys and girls present, the date and days of the week. Towards the end of the morning the children sing and act number songs, which are used effectively to develop accurate counting skills.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

75. Teaching of knowledge and understanding of the world is very good and results in the majority of children achieving standards that are in line with those that are expected at the end of the Foundation Stage. The teacher and the teaching assistants interact with children very effectively when they are playing in the sand or water, looking at pictures, collecting evidence on an autumn walk, and ensuring that the children acquire knowledge and develop skills which helps them to understand the world around them. Children use the computer to create pictures of patterns. This area is well linked to literacy, for example, the children made individual books about autumn.

Creative development

76. Role-play areas are used very well to provide good opportunities for pupils' creative development, for example, acting the story of the Three Bears in the house, arranging for MOTs to be carried out from the 'office'. Following a visiting drummer from Trinidad the children made shakers and drums and used them to play in a band. Children are given frequent opportunities to paint, cut and stick, complete jigsaw puzzles and build with a variety of construction sets. The teacher provides very good opportunities for them to listen to music and respond with movement. Teaching in this area is good and ensures that most pupils achieve the expected standard at the end of the Foundation Stage.

Physical development

77. Teaching is good in this area and as a result most children reach the expected standard at the end of the Foundation Stage. Children are encouraged to be independent when dressing and undressing for the physical education lesson. In the summer children use the woodland trail in the school grounds, which gives good opportunities to observe carefully and move in a controlled way. During the inspection the physical education lesson was imaginatively linked to literacy which was a highly motivating experience for these young children. They pretended the apparatus was a wood and re-enacted the story 'Where is My Teddy?'. Following this activity they had the opportunity to develop skills of running, jumping, climbing and balancing. Very good attention was paid to safety and to warm-up and cool-down activities. This lesson was effectively used to promote children's personal and social development and illustrates the strength of the teaching in the early years. Children are given learning experiences which incorporate several areas of learning and this makes a significant contribution to the progress children make in the Foundation Stage.

ENGLISH

78. St Mark's School has justifiably gained a positive reputation for its support for pupils with special educational needs and the intake of pupils in this category has risen to over a third in recent years. Baseline assessment shows that fewer children enter school with average or above average ability than is usual when compared with schools nationally. These factors had a negative impact on standards in English since the last inspection.
79. Attainment in speaking and listening is below average for pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 and by

the time they are ready to transfer to middle school at the age of nine. However pupils are now making good progress in this area of their learning from a low base, with the support of high quality teaching. Attainment in reading and writing at the ages of seven and nine is well below average in spite of teachers' best efforts but pupils are making satisfactory progress in their learning towards higher attainment over time. The school makes good English provision for its pupils through the national literacy hour but the quality of its provision is not yet reflected in test results.

80. National test results for this year when compared with all schools show that in reading and writing the percentage of pupils gaining the national standard of Level 2 or above is well below the national average. For those attaining above the national standard at Level 3 or above results are well below the national average in reading but have improved to a below, but not well below, average result in writing. When results are compared with those of schools in a similar social context pupils' results are very low in reading for pupils achieving both Level 2 and above and Level 3 and above. Results are better in writing where the number of pupils attaining Level 3 or above was below, but not well below, the average for similar schools.
81. Pupils with special educational needs are diagnosed early in their schooling. Well targeted individual education plans are designed for those who need them and pupils are well supported by generous provision of teaching assistants in classes. They work closely with teachers to provide complementary help for pupils who need it. A well organised programme of additional literacy support is available in Key Stage 2 for needy pupils.
82. Teachers have a strong awareness of the priority for developing pupils' language abilities. Generally good use is made of whole class learning time at the beginning of the literacy hour to promote speaking and listening skills. Teachers provide interesting activities that stimulate pupils' thinking. They craft well worded questions to help pupils order their thoughts and to encourage them to share their ideas with peers. Teachers praise and value pupils' contributions. The use of the plenary session towards the end of the literacy hour for pupils to share and celebrate each other's achievements, although satisfactory, is less well developed than the other aspects of literacy lessons. The extension of interactive language skills is a positive factor of teachers' planning in all subjects of the curriculum as well as English.
83. During the literacy hour pupils have rich enjoyable opportunities for shared reading and writing activities. In reception children empathise with the emotions of characters in a story which they share in big book form. In so doing they learn that books can contain stories and that reading is enjoyable. Many acquire a firm understanding of book conventions such as the accurate orientation of words and sentences and the turning of pages. They begin to develop an early knowledge of letters and their phonic connections. In Year 1 pupils blend simple three letter words which have a medial vowel. They play a motivating listening game by selecting and holding up the correct vowel for a spoken word. In Year 2 pupils learn that there are different styles of reading and writing to suit a range of purposes including lists and instructions and can read items and decide in what order they should be placed. In Year 3 outstanding cross-curricular links with English are forged through history, as pupils identify the differing reading and writing skills required for investigating the ancient Romans, using information books. Year 4 pupils explore the use of powerful verbs and begin to draft their own headlines and newspaper reports. Although there is evidence in teachers' planning which shows that big book stories are used during the literacy hour, during the inspection there was a heavy emphasis on the development of knowledge, skills and understanding of the writing process.
84. The quality of English teaching is at least good and is very good in a majority of lessons. Teachers understand their pupils well and prepare their lessons carefully to meet the varied range of abilities they have in their classes. They create exciting language environments in their classrooms. Teachers also work hard to make lessons interesting and to provide a variety of practical meaningful experiences. Well paced elements to literacy lessons ensure that interest and concentration are maintained and maximised throughout the hour. Caring but firm behaviour management keeps some challenging behaviour well under control and ensures that all pupils usually meet the planned learning objectives for the lesson. To make ongoing assessments teachers keep a close eye on how pupils achieve and with the support of highly proficient teaching assistants keep effective records of pupils' progress. Ability groupings and future lesson plans are often modified using the evidence from these assessment observations. English targets

are set but neither the pupils themselves nor their parents are sufficiently involved in the setting or achievement of these. Whilst teachers have adopted the National Literacy Strategy with enthusiasm other English activities are less consistent. Pupils' progress in reading is hindered as teachers do not regularly allocate time to read to their classes or provide enough opportunities for pupils to read individually to an adult or pursue independent reading for interest and pleasure. Pupils' progress in writing suffers as there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to extend their writing outside the literacy hour. These shortcomings account, at least in part, for pupils attaining below averages for similar schools.

85. The English co-ordinator has played an important part in training and supporting staff, as well as purchasing good quality resources for the National Literacy Strategy. Good procedures are in place for ongoing assessment and for the regular judgement of progress at the end of each term. Teachers frequently meet with colleagues from the local cluster of schools to train together and to assess pupils' work together to ensure that everyone is marking test papers to a similar standard. A portfolio of pupils' graded work annotated to highlight significant achievement and to specify National Curriculum levels is being assembled to further aid teachers' judgements.
86. Whilst the provision of language resources generally is good, the same cannot yet be said for the library. It is in a transitional state having recently been moved to a newly built room. At present there are insufficient books, both fiction and non-fiction pitched to the reading abilities of a large majority of pupils. Classes are not regularly timetabled to use the library and its role in helping pupils to become hooked on books is minimal.

MATHEMATICS

87. The national assessment tests in 2000 show that at the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' standards in mathematics are in line with the national average, and above for the number of pupils achieving the higher level, Level 3 in all and in similar schools.. A relatively able Year 2 class gained these results and inspection findings show that standards throughout Key Stages 1 and 2 are generally below the national average. At Year 4 pupils do not reach the expected standard. However, this represents a significant improvement over the last few years.
88. Standards are lower than those seen at the last inspection. Changes in the catchment area and the high mobility factor in recent years are important factors in explaining this situation. Thirty per cent of pupils in the current Year 4 class did not start their education at this school.
89. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is well below the level expected. Despite the very good teaching in the Foundation Stage, pupils enter Key Stage 1 below the level expected. Throughout the school, except in Year 3, about a third of pupils in each class are not achieving the expected national standard.
90. The numeracy hour has been enthusiastically and effectively implemented in all classes. It has been well resourced and lessons are brisk and challenge all pupils. There has been regular monitoring of teaching and learning, teachers' planning and pupils' work.
91. Pupils in both key stages are gaining skills in calculation. Pupils in Year 1 play dice games to reinforce accurate counting skills and complete calculations such as $6 + 5$ and $3 + 4$. Not all pupils are aware that the same answer could be reached by adding $5 + 6$ and $4 + 3$. Pupils in Year 2 use the hundred square to count forwards and backwards. Pupils in Year 3 can identify pairs of numbers that make 20 and pupils in Year 4 can use mental recall to answer questions on the four times table. Few pupils could use the same recall to answer questions on the six, seven, eight and nine times tables.
92. All classes were studying shape and space during the week of the inspection and this showed very good continuity in learning. Pupils in Year 1 can name and identify the properties of the most common two-dimensional shapes such as, triangles, squares, rectangles and circles. They know the number of sides and corners each shape has. In Year 2 pupils build on this knowledge as they name and match three-dimensional shapes, cube, cuboid, cylinder, sphere and prism. In Year 3, pupils build on their previous knowledge as they describe the characteristics of three-dimensional shapes referring to faces, edges and corners. They identify right angles in two-

dimensional shapes and learn the meaning of quadrilateral. They use appropriate vocabulary to accurately describe two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes. Pupils in Year 4 can measure the length of the sides of rectangles, triangles and squares in order to calculate the perimeters. Higher attaining pupils can solve problems, for example finding the perimeter of a football field when they are given only two measurements.

93. Pupils' overall learning is good throughout the school and reflects the consistently good, and occasionally very good, teaching in numeracy. In some mathematics lessons, however, lower attaining pupils do not concentrate well and fail to make the same progress as other pupils. This is particularly the case when they are not directly taught or supervised by the teacher or teaching assistant. Pupils make good progress in both key stages. Pupils benefit from the school's policy of grouping pupils according to need, so that each group has clear targets and work is well matched to their prior learning.
94. The teaching of mathematics is at least good, and sometimes very good in Key Stage 1. Good teaching indicates secure knowledge of the National Numeracy Strategy. Lessons are planned with clear learning objectives. Each lesson is carefully structured and moves at a brisk pace. All lessons include oral work, direct teaching and opportunity for independent work. The plenary session consolidates learning and gives opportunities for the teacher and teaching assistants to make assessments and deal with any misconceptions. The very good teaching exemplifies very consistent use of behaviour management strategies to enable all pupils to be successful learners. Teaching assistants are used very effectively in all classes and make a very significant contribution to pupils' learning, especially for the lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. Resources are used effectively to support pupils' learning.
95. The results of the good teaching have a significant impact on pupils' attitudes. They participate well in the oral part of the lesson, listen carefully while the teacher introduces the main activity and work with concentration on the challenging tasks provided for them. They are eager to explain their learning in the plenary session. In Years 1 and 2 science lessons, pupils make effective use of their knowledge of block graphs to show their favourite fruits. When working on the computer, pupils in Year 4 are beginning to use a control program to simulate the movements of a turtle on screen. To do this successfully they combine a mathematical understanding of directional movement and angles with their computer handling skills.
96. The subject is well led by a capable, experienced co-ordinator who monitors both the teaching and learning of mathematics throughout the school and the effective use of resources.

SCIENCE

97. Teachers' assessment in 2000 indicated that attainment generally in science at the end of Key Stage 1 was well below the national average. However, within these assessments, 40 per cent of pupils, well above the national average, attained higher than the expected level. The 20 per cent of pupils not reaching the expected level by the age of seven can be explained by the high numbers of pupils on the school's register of special educational needs and the low level of pupils' attainment on entry to school. The school has worked very hard to increase the amount of investigations and experimental work in science lessons over the past two years. This has inspired pupils and has resulted in a notable rise in standards with a significant number of pupils achieving higher levels than expected for pupils of their age.
98. From the evidence gathered during the inspection, standards are in line with the national average at the end of Key Stage 1. Pupils also reach the expected levels in science at the end of Year 4. The previous inspection noted that there were weaknesses in pupils' understanding of investigative and experimental science. These areas have improved since the last inspection and teachers now plan lessons which contain a great deal of practical activities, such as the creation of circuit switches, which enable pupils to learn through experimentation and trial and error.
99. In a Year 2 science lesson all pupils were able to match young animals to their parents including horse/foal, pig/piglet, seal/pup and swan/cygnets. They knew that animals, including humans, produce young. Some more able pupils were insufficiently challenged during the lesson as they merely reiterated facts they already knew. These pupils, however, have a good understanding of

how humans develop from babies who cry and sleep through to older children and adults who are able to walk, talk and read and write. Lower attaining pupils in Year 2 have a developing understanding of how people keep healthy by eating a balanced diet and taking regular exercise. All pupils in Key Stage 1 make sound use of their numeracy skills when constructing block graphs to present information such as their favourite fruit.

100. Pupils in Year 4 know the function of switches in electrical circuits. They are able to experiment with balsa wood, paper clips and drawing pins to make sliding and swivelling devices which both complete and break the circuits. More able pupils in Year 4 can carry out fair tests to determine which materials such as wooden pegs, metal spoons, nails, plastic pots, pencils and bulldog clips will conduct electricity. They transfer this knowledge well to conclude that the plastic coating on wire acts as a good insulator. The majority of pupils can read simple electrical circuit diagrams. They know if the circuit is correctly wired to light up a bulb or sound a buzzer and they are aware if, for instance, the wires are connected to the same battery terminal then the components will not be activated as the circuit is not complete. A minority of pupils do not understand the difference between batteries and mains electricity.
101. The quality of teaching in science is satisfactory. Teachers' planning outlines clearly what the pupils are expected to learn during the lesson. Activities build on pupils' previous levels of understanding as was evident in a Year 4 lesson where pupils had satisfactorily built electrical circuits and were then encouraged to incorporate a switch in the circuit which, in turn, could be used to send simplified Morse Code messages to fellow pupils. Teachers and teaching assistants support pupils well by using effective questioning to develop pupils' own ideas and by offering advice and suggestions. This is particularly effective in the practical elements of science lessons. However, more able pupils in a Year 2 lesson were insufficiently challenged when they were asked to write the names of baby animals. These pupils knew the answers before the lesson began.
102. The exciting and practical investigations and experiments planned for pupils, particularly in Key Stage 2, enable them to enjoy their work and show good levels of concentration throughout their lessons. Despite experiencing great difficulties with batteries without holders with fixed terminals, pupils co-operated very well to ensure their group made a successful circuit. Pupils are very keen to complete their work to a level of which they are proud as was seen in a Year 2 lesson where pupils worked hard to present their study of animals and their young in written and pictorial form.
103. The science co-ordinator is relatively new to the post and is beginning to have a positive impact on the teaching and learning of science throughout the school. She has begun to organise resources into collections for the different areas of study and gives valuable support to colleagues through advice on teaching strategies and help with planning. The co-ordinator has monitored teaching and learning and has effectively promoted more experimental and investigative science activities in lessons throughout the school.

ART AND DESIGN

104. Although it was only possible to observe one lesson in art during the inspection, it is clear from the displays in classrooms and around the school that the standard of art is in line with the national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 and by the time pupils leave the school in Year 4. Standards in art have remained the same since the last inspection.
105. Pupils in Key Stage 1 look at the work of several famous artists, for example, Monet, Paul Klee and Matisse and make pictures in their particular style. They have opportunities for observational drawing, printing and collage. In the lesson observed Year 2 pupils looked at a seascape by Seurat and made a satisfactory attempt to express their own ideas in his style

using oil pastels. Some pupils worked well to produce effective collages in metallic, cellophane and tissue paper based on the style of Matisse's *Beasts of the Sea* but a few pupils could improve their work by paying more attention to original artist's work.
106. Pupils in Year 3 are exploring pattern this term, for example, repeating and rotating patterns,

harvest patterns and making leaf patterns using a single stencil motif. An attractive display of multi-cultural patterns in the classroom makes a good contribution to cultural development. Pupils in Year 3 use a computer art program competently to flood-fill shapes showing symmetry and reflection.

107. In the lesson seen in Key Stage 1 the teaching was satisfactory. The teacher has secure knowledge and understanding which was used well to plan a well structured lesson with clear learning objectives. Good resources were used effectively to inspire pupils and enhance their knowledge and skills. The management of pupils was inconsistent, and this was the element that made the teaching only satisfactory. Calling out was accepted for some pupils but not others. Teachers' planning and pupils' work on display indicates that the quality of teaching is at least satisfactory throughout the school.
108. The co-ordinator is a young teacher who, after evaluating standards in art throughout the school, has shared her knowledge of art with other colleagues, introduced new resources and led workshop sessions. The pottery club which she takes is popular and provides good opportunities for pupils to gain knowledge and develop skills. Some of the work that has been done in the club is on display celebrating their effort and helping to raise pupils' self-esteem.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

109. Only one design and technology lesson was observed during the inspection. Other evidence was gathered from the evaluation of work on display, from a review of teachers' planning, the scheme of work and discussion with the subject co-ordinator.
110. It is clear that provision for and attainment in design and technology have improved greatly since the previous inspection. Standards of attainment for pupils at the ages of seven and nine are above the average expected for their age. Pupils make good progress in their knowledge, skills and understanding of the potential of the designing and making processes. Their learning confidence thrives on the interesting practical activities which their teachers organise for them.
111. In Year 1 pupils explore the possibilities of different qualities of paper as they construct lively moving pictures, for example, of fish swimming in a wavy sea. They carefully use split pins to join pieces of card to make jointed people. These complement a science topic on the human body. The design process is refined further in Year 2. Here pupils produce exciting plans for hand puppets. From these they construct colourful paper patterns which match well to their original design drawings. They are now in the process of practising stitching and beginning to construct their actual hand puppets from felt. Computer aided design and a study of traditional Indian patterns enables Year 3 pupils to make their own colourful informed patterns based on Hindu designs. In Year 4 pupils pursue a mature design task as they explore the function, construction and materials used in massed produced purses. Through systematic evaluation of these they begin to design and make their own lively versions, but not before they have carefully experimented with two types of stitching to decide which will be most suitable for their purses.
112. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers are very enthusiastic and excite their pupils' interest with motivating tasks. Activities are well planned and a variety of resources such as card, paper, fabrics, scissors, adhesive tape, sewing needles, different colours of threads and glue are available for the progressive development of pupils' making skills. Good teacher assistant support ensures that there is plenty of help for pupils and most remain positive and absorbed with tasks, concentrating enthusiastically over a long period.
113. The co-ordinator for design and technology is very enthusiastic. She has overseen the implementation of the new scheme of work for the subject recommended by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. This has helped colleagues to improve standards in design and technology by providing tasks for pupils which build on their skills, knowledge and understanding. The school is satisfactorily resourced to deliver the revised curriculum. As well as centrally stored equipment every class has a variety of construction equipment and basic tools to aid pupils' learning of manipulative skills.

GEOGRAPHY

114. Standards in geography at the end of Key Stage 1 and by Year 4 are in line with the national expectations for pupils of that age. Geography was not being taught during the last inspection and a judgement on attainment was not made.
115. Pupils in Year 1 are studying the local environment and can name and record the physical and human features of the immediate locality. After listening to a story about a new park being created, they considered the project from different points of view, that is, the residents living nearby and the children who will use the park. Pupils are beginning to understand that plans are a birds' eye view by drawing their own plans after placing wooden furniture on a paper. They are being introduced to simple co-ordinates. These are challenging tasks and are often seen in Year 2. Scrutiny of work of Year 2 pupils shows that they can compare and contrast their own area with a contrasting one, for example, a Scottish island. Pupils in Year 4 are studying Chembakoli, an Indian village, comparing climate, houses school and the day in the life of a child. This topic is making a useful contribution to cultural development.
116. The overall quality of teaching throughout the school is satisfactory and sometimes good. The judgement is made from looking at teachers' planning and pupils' work as only one lesson was seen in Year 1. This lesson showed good teaching that enabled pupils to develop their mapping skills. By the end of the lesson pupils were able to draw plans of familiar surroundings by cutting out objects such as furniture and placing them on paper to create a "birds' eye view". Other strengths of the teaching were the detailed planning with very clear learning objectives and the very challenging activities that were set for the pupils. The teacher's assessment of learning was used effectively to enable all pupils to be successful learners.
117. In the lesson observed the pupils clearly enjoyed the lesson. They responded well to the teacher's very consistent behaviour management strategies that enabled all pupils to listen to the story. All pupils worked with interest and concentration on the interesting work that were set on simple plans for changing the environment.
118. The co-ordinator for geography ensures that that there are good resources available, which teachers use well, to support pupils' learning. The Qualification and Curriculum Authority's scheme of work is being used for the first time this term and this will be evaluated at the end of the year.

HISTORY

119. Standards in history are in line with the national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 and at Year 4 although the work done by Year 3 pupils this term on the Romans is of a higher standard. The school has maintained the standards seen at the last inspection despite literacy and numeracy having had a strong focus over recent years.
120. The good quality of the curriculum at this school is the strength of the foundation subjects, which are used effectively to develop pupils' positive attitudes to learning.
121. Pupils in Key Stage 1 are looking at household objects that would have been used in the early part of the last century and comparing them with those in use today. They are beginning to understand why things have changed, for example, lamps, irons etc.
122. Pupils in Year 3 have been learning about invaders and settlers this term, particularly the Romans. The Roman Day, when the school hall was transformed into a Roman villa and pupils dressed up and did the jobs of slaves, servants and soldiers, gave pupils a good insight into life in Roman times. They know about some of the important people of the period for example, Julius Caesar, Claudius, Boudicca. The literacy hour has been used effectively in this topic, for example, pupils looked at the story of Boudicca from different viewpoints as well as sequencing the story.
123. Pupils are really enthused and excited by this topic; they have found out information at home. During the inspection week the topic was coming to an end and pupils were keen to share all they

had learnt.

124. The quality of teaching is good at both key stages. Lessons are well planned with challenging work set for pupils of different abilities. This was very evident when pupils were designing a Roman town and less able pupils were given a road plan around which they could create their town. Teachers are using the Qualification and Curriculum Authority's scheme of work this term and assessment shows that pupils learning has been good.
125. The headteacher is the co-ordinator for history and ensures that there are high quality resources for each of the topics to be studied.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

126. Whilst standards remain similar to those at the time of the previous inspection in Key Stage 1 there has been a slight decline in attainment in Key Stage 2. Inspection has coincided with a period of significant change for the subject. A new government recommended scheme of work was newly implemented last month. The school's provision of computers and access to programmes has improved with its recent connection to the National Grid for Learning and the installation of new computers.
127. By the age of seven pupils are attaining the knowledge, skills and understanding expected for their age. The same is true for pupils at the age of nine as they prepare to transfer to middle school.
128. Pupils progressively learn to use the control devices on the computer. They manipulate the mouse with increasing levels of confidence and skill in hand and eye co-ordination. They gain an appropriate basic technical vocabulary with which to name such items as the keyboard, printer and enter button. Strong cross curricular links are established at the outset. In Year 2 many pupils can access a word processing program by manipulating the mouse and clicking on the correct icon. They also use the directional arrows on the keyboard to shift the pointer as they change a horizontally placed set of words into a vertically ordered list. They use an art programme to select colour and line then draw identifiable fruits by successfully manipulating the mouse. In the junior years pupils enjoy combining different fonts with chosen pictures from a desk top publishing program. By Year 4 pupils are beginning to use a control program to simulate the movements of a turtle on screen. To do this successfully they combine a mathematical understanding of directional movement and angles with their computer handling skills. This is just one example of the ways in which the school is actively promoting the use of ICT across the curriculum.
129. Even though new computers have only recently been installed and teachers have had to familiarise themselves with new software they are still managing to provide satisfactorily for their pupils learning needs. Their demonstration skills give pupils a sound structure on which to build their independent skills. The use of simple, step by step, procedural reading instructions for pupils' to access programs independently is at present underdeveloped. Teachers make good use of competent teaching assistants and teenage pupils on work experience to provide additional support for pupils.
130. The co-ordinator for ICT is quite new to the role and has taken over at a time of important changes for the subject. She is a confident knowledgeable computer user and provides good leadership and management for the subject in supporting colleagues in setting up new equipment and in guiding planning for the new scheme of work. She is currently helping to organise training in the latest equipment and software with all teachers in the Purbeck small schools cluster.

MUSIC

131. The previous inspection found standards in music to be in line with national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 and by the time that pupils leave the school in Year 4. The school has maintained these standards.

132. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have developed satisfactory listening skills. They have a developing understanding of dynamics and most can tell the difference between loud sounds and soft sounds on tuned percussion instruments such as wind chimes. More able pupils have a sound grasp of both pitch and dynamics and can use a variety of instruments to play high notes and low notes and loud sounds and soft sounds. This work provides a valuable link with the science curriculum. Pupils in Year 1 can name the instruments they play such as drums, wind chimes and swanee whistles.
133. Pupils' vocal skills in Key Stage 2 are of a high quality. In assembly, pupils are supported by, and take their lead from, the good quality of singing from teachers and teaching assistants. This has encouraged pupils to sing with good clear diction, soft, pleasant tone and the accurate pitching of notes. In Year 4, pupils know the five notes of the pentatonic scale in C - CDEGA, and make a fair attempt to compose a short piece of music using the pentatonic scale and playing fast and slow notes as well as loud and quiet notes. However, the lack of challenge in this activity and the failure of the teacher to manage the groups effectively results in pupils making unsatisfactory progress with their skills in composition.
134. The teaching of music in Key Stage 1 is of a very high quality. The teachers' good knowledge of the subject allows pupils to learn how to maintain a steady pulse in the 6/8 rhythmic whispering of *Pass the Instrument Round*. This use of rhythm and rhyme links effectively with pupils' work in literacy. Teachers employ excellent techniques such as fingers on lips for silence and fingers on ears for listening. These ensure pupils are very attentive and learn to focus their listening and explore the sounds of musical instruments. Teaching in Year 4, however, is unsatisfactory. A lack of challenge in composition tasks and the failure to adopt positive suggestions from pupils results in unsatisfactory behaviour from many pupils.
135. When the teaching is sound or better, pupils thoroughly enjoy their music lessons. They love to take part in music making both vocal and instrumental. Pupils are very willing to help each other with their compositions but when the learning intentions are unclear or lack challenge, pupils' normally good behaviour suffers and resources such as beaters and felt tip pens are misused.
136. The subject is well led. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic about music in the school and she regularly invites visiting musicians to perform for the staff and pupils. The school is involved with other neighbouring schools in joint musical productions. Musical resources are plentiful and are in a good playing condition.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

137. Standards in physical education have improved since the school was last inspected. Standards are now above national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 and are above what is expected for pupils in Year 4 when they leave the school.
138. Pupils in Year 1 use the hall space well. They change direction very well when running and skipping and avoid touching other pupils. They have good ideas for movement and mime and use these well to illustrate the story of *Jack and the Beanstalk*. These actions include pulling the cow, being a growing beanstalk and imitating a stamping giant. When using large apparatus, pupils make effective use of the floor and the lower and higher levels of wall bars and climbing frames. In Year 2, pupils make effective sequences of movement, travelling in different ways using different parts of the apparatus and different parts of their bodies.
139. In Year 3, pupils appreciate the value of a warm up before strenuous exercise. They warm up effectively by rolling their shoulders, making circular movements with their hips and running on the spot. The pupils make very effective dance sequences incorporating six movements. These have a set time limit of eight counts and are very effectively developed into sequences in a "feline" style.
140. The quality of physical education teaching is very good. Teachers make extremely good use of both pupils' actions and their own demonstration to improve all pupils' understanding and

performance. This is very evident in lessons where pupils emulate the exact points demonstrated to them by teachers and fellow pupils and they immediately refine and improve their gymnastics and dance skills. In those lessons where excellent teaching takes place, the pupils are extremely well managed and motivated and the teacher gives constant praise, help and encouragement.

141. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour during physical education lessons are very good. They perform dance and gymnastic sequences with a great deal of concentration, listening carefully and incorporating teaching instruction and advice in their work. Younger pupils thoroughly enjoy adding star jumps, hops and forward rolls into their movement sequences.
142. Resources for the teaching and learning of physical education are good. The school has a good amount of large and small apparatus which is in good condition. The swimming pool, although temporarily out of use, is an effective resource for developing pupils' early swimming skills and is used frequently swimming in the summer term. The subject is well managed by a keen, enthusiastic co-ordinator who obviously leads from the front and inspires her colleagues.