

INSPECTION REPORT

WIMBORNE FIRST SCHOOL

Wimborne

LEA area: Dorset

Unique reference number: 113679

Headteacher: Mrs J Mockridge

Reporting inspector: Mr M S Burghart
20865

Dates of inspection: 27th – 30th May 2002

Inspection number: 224515

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	School Lane Wimborne Dorset
Postcode:	BH21 1HQ
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J Pullen
Date of previous inspection:	February 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
20865	Mr M Burghart Registered inspector	Special educational needs; English as an additional language; English; Music; Physical education; Religious education.	The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9487	Dr F Hurd Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development; How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
22578	Mr G Jones Team inspector	Equal opportunities; Science; Art; Design and technology; Information and communication technology.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
27568	Mrs M Davidson Team inspector	Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage; Mathematics; Geography; History.	

The inspection contractor was:

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Wimborne First is an average sized primary school in the town of the same name in Dorset. The school provides good accommodation (much of it very recently completed) for eight classes, two of which contain pupils from more than one age group. There are 224 children on the school roll aged four to nine. There is an average of 28 pupils per class. Pupils are drawn from the local surrounding area from a mix of private and rented accommodation. Most of the pupils attend some kind of pre-school group (many at the on-site kindergarten) before starting Year R. Their attainment on entry to the school, aged four, varies, but overall is slightly below average for the county. The headteacher has been in post for three years. She is supported by eight full time teachers. There are 61 pupils on the special educational needs register. This accounts for 27.8 per cent of the school roll, and is above the national average. One pupil has a formal statement under the terms of the DfES Code of Practice¹, which proportionally is below average. Seven children are known to be eligible for free school meals, which is well below the national average of 20 per cent. Nine pupils require extra support as a consequence of having English as an additional language. This is about average. The school provides care facilities for children before and after school each day which parents pay for. An above average proportion of pupils join the school other than at the start of reception.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good school. It has made rapid and significant progress, especially in the last two years, under the excellent leadership of the head, in a very good partnership with the deputy. Relationships are very good and staff, pupils, governors and parents work together as a very good team. The quality of teaching, the curriculum and the learning environment very successfully contribute to the school's very good ethos. Pupils' learning is good and this is resulting in good achievement, particularly for those with special educational needs, and for higher attainers. Standards are at least satisfactory in all subjects and are rising. Standards are good notably in English and mathematics, as the result of very good assessment and target setting. For broadly average spending the school gives good, and much improved, value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards are good in English, mathematics, information and communication technology (ICT), art, and design and technology.
- Teaching is good and often better.
- Pupils' excellent attitudes, very good behaviour and personal development are successfully encouraged.
- The school uses assessment very effectively to set targets.
- It maintains excellent links with parents.
- It is very well led and managed, especially in terms of educational direction and strategic use of resources.
- The school provides a good curriculum and a very good learning environment.
- It supports pupils with special educational needs very well.

¹ Code of Practice: This gives practical advice to schools and local education authorities about their responsibilities and tasks to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs receive the most appropriate help to further their learning and personal development. This is a statutory duty under the 1993 Education Act.

What could be improved

- Outdoor provision for the Foundation Stage².
- The profile of music across the school.
- The monitoring role of some co-ordinators.
- Opportunities to further enhance pupils' awareness of multicultural issues.
- The monitoring of attendance.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The last inspection in February 1997 raised four key issues for improvement. The school has made very good progress in overcoming these as well as in a variety of other areas. The quality of teaching has been raised considerably from '25 per cent unsatisfactory' to none. Assessment procedures provide much better information which is used very well to set targets for improvement both in pupils' performance and for curriculum planning. Standards of behaviour are now very good. Better planning and teaching have improved pupils' writing standards and the school continues to have this as a priority. In addition substantial improvements to the building have had very good effects on the quality of the learning environment. Developments to leadership and management have a positive impact throughout, especially in the strategic use of resources to support the curriculum. Very good improvements in financial planning have redressed the previous deficit budget. Resources have been improved throughout especially for ICT where the new suite is a real asset. Given the good quality of policies, planning and procedures the school is judged as having made very good improvement since the last report and is very well placed for future development.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
Reading	A	C	C	C
Writing	C	D	C	D
Mathematics	A	E	C	C

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

The school's results for pupils in Year 2 in 2001 were average in reading, writing and mathematics. There are clear indications of improvements this year with high proportions of pupils achieving the higher Level 3, and pupils with special educational needs getting closer to the expected Level 2. Although there are variations between year groups, depending on proportions of special educational needs, early indications in results of 2002 tests for both Year 2 and Year 4 show that standards are above average in reading, writing and mathematics for seven year olds, and above average in English and mathematics for nine year olds. Inspection evidence confirms this situation. Science standards are average at seven and nine with a significant proportion of pupils now reaching above the expected levels by the time they leave the school. In the light of almost 28 per cent special educational needs,

² The Foundation Stage refers to children from entry up to and including age six when they complete the reception year.

and above average proportions of pupils who have joined the school other than at the start of Year R, the school is doing well. Since the last inspection there is evidence that some pupils had been underachieving, notably in mathematics. This has been effectively addressed with better planning, teaching and assessment. Standards are steadily rising.

Most children in the Foundation Stage (Year R) are on line to achieve the Early Learning Goals³ by the time they move into Year 1. Throughout Years 1 and 2 the use of 'plan, do, review' has a very good impact on standards. Standards in ICT, art and design and technology are above expectations at the end of Year 2 and Year 4. In music, physical education, geography and history pupils' attainment meets national expectations. In religious education standards are consistent with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus when pupils are nine, but above such expectations at seven.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Excellent; pupils enjoy coming, are enthusiastic and try hard.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good and much improved since the last inspection.
Personal development and relationships	Very good: pupils respond very well to opportunities to make choices, show initiative and take responsibility. Relationships are very good.
Attendance	Satisfactory being in line with the national average, but this has slipped since the last inspection and could be better.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 4
Quality of teaching	Very good	Good with very good features	Good with very good features

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

The quality of teaching has been dramatically improved since the last inspection and is now judged good overall. No lessons were unsatisfactory compared with '25 per cent' last time. Eight out of every ten lessons observed were good or better, and four out of ten were very good. Three lessons from three different teachers were judged excellent (Year 1 enrichment literacy, Years 3 and 4 literacy, and Year 2 religious education). All teachers recorded at least one good lesson. Eight teachers and one teaching assistant had very good lessons. Teaching directly affects pupils' learning, which is consistently good, and frequently very good; helping pupils to achieve well. Strengths in teaching are in the Foundation Stage, special educational needs, which includes the good work of teaching assistants; consideration for pupils with English as an additional language; literacy and numeracy. Staff are very good at managing behaviour and using questions which require pupils to reason and express themselves. Relationships are very good. Teachers usually plan well and make very

³ QCA (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority) has produced a set of 'Early Learning Goals' for children in this stage of education. These outcomes are a set of skills, knowledge and understanding that children might be expected to achieve by the age of six. There are six areas of learning: personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical development and creative development.

good use of assessment to set targets to provide work for different ability levels. Homework is used effectively and consistently. Relative weaknesses in this good profile of teaching are in some teachers' knowledge and understanding of music and religious education, and in the lack of pace of some lessons.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good: broad, balanced, relevant and available to all pupils. Very good enrichment from visits and visitors. Homework well used. Foundation Stage curriculum good, but with some limitations in the lack of specific outdoor space and facilities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good support. Teaching assistants make a significant contribution. Very good individual education plans. The Code of Practice is fully met.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good support: all pupils are fully included in all activities.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good spiritual, moral and social opportunities. Cultural good overall, more still to do to promote awareness of multicultural issues.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good physical care. Very good learning environment. Very good use of assessment to set targets and raise standards.

The school maintains excellent links with parents and has considerably improved the effectiveness of communications. Parents' impact on the work of the school is judged excellent.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good: excellent leadership from the head and very good management from head and deputy to ensure clear educational direction. Very good school development plan based on contributions from all. Co-ordinators' management is sound overall, very good in literacy and numeracy, with more still to do in some subjects. Behaviour very well managed.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good especially in support of financial and building issues. All responsibilities met. However, not all assemblies fully meet requirements as acts of collective worship.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Excellent analysis of current performance to develop the curriculum and provision. The school manages change very well.
The strategic use of resources	Very good use of finance to support the curriculum. Staff, accommodation, resources and time used very well. Best value

	principles followed. The school gives good value for money.
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PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The school is approachable.• Children are helped to be mature.• Teaching is good.• The school is well led and managed.• Provision for special educational needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Information on progress.• Homework.

Parents expressed very positive views about the school both at the Ofsted pre-inspection meeting and through the parents' questionnaires (nineteen parents attended the meeting with the registered inspector and nearly half of all parents returned the questionnaire). Inspectors are pleased to support these positive comments. With regard to information about pupils' progress, inspectors find that reports are satisfactory overall but do not give enough information about levels which pupils achieve. The school's use of homework is judged good and the procedure enhances pupils' learning.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Pupils' attainment when they first enter Year R is assessed as slightly below average for the local education authority with strengths in mathematical skills and weaknesses in physical development.

2. Standards as evident in results of National Curriculum assessments made in Year 2 and in Year 4 show fluctuations year on year. This can often be explained by variable levels of special educational needs: for example this year nearly a third of pupils in Year 2 are on the special educational needs register compared with a fifth in previous years; and the high levels of mobility, where above average proportions of pupils join the school at times other than at the start of Year R. However, the last report indicated that '25 per cent of teaching' was unsatisfactory in 1997, whereas none fell into this category this year. Inevitably as there is a very close relationship between teaching and learning pupils' attainment varies. Since the last inspection results in reading, writing and mathematics for seven year olds appear to have gone up and down. Whilst inspection evidence does show that in 2000 pupils in Year 2 were underachieving in mathematics the overall underlying trend in each area tested is upward and generally in line with the national picture. There is no significant difference in the performance of girls and boys, although the school has targeted boys' reading and girls' mathematics to try to overcome national tendencies for weaker results.

3. The school can demonstrate that it adds value to individual pupils' performance over their time at the school and that intensified provision for those with special educational needs has been successful in helping them towards (and in some cases to gain) nationally expected levels. Very good assessment and target setting means that higher attaining pupils are now much more likely to achieve higher than average levels with positive impacts on the school's average point scores⁴ used for making comparisons.

⁴ Average point scores refers to the average of pupils' scores weighted by Ofsted for each level attained in each subject.

4. Year 2001 National Curriculum test results for seven and nine year olds showed pupils were average in reading, writing and mathematics; and average for English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 4. Following very careful analysis of past performances results for the current Year 2 and Year 4 pupils in 2002 are likely to be better. Early indications are that most pupils have achieved the nationally expected levels with much improved proportions of pupils doing better than this. For example, half of Year 4 pupils have already reached levels expected of Year 6 in the middle school in mathematics with over a third at this level in reading. In Year 2 above average proportions of pupils have achieved Level 3 (the above average level) this year with spectacular improvements in writing which was previously a weakness and the focus of much extra attention. One in five pupils is now at this standard compared with less than one in ten in 2001.

5. Inspection evidence from lessons and work sampling indicates that standards are currently above average in English and mathematics at the end of Year 2 and Year 4 where teaching is consistently good, and in line with national averages in science with strengths in investigational work. Comparisons with similar schools in 2001 based on the take up of free school meals were average in reading and mathematics, but below in writing. Schools in this area suffer from what may be an unrepresentative take up because there is no school meals service. In the light of above average levels of special educational needs and high proportions of pupils joining the school other than in Year R, the school is doing well.

6. Standards are good for both seven and nine year olds, being above expectations in:

- Information and communication technology, very much as the result of new planning, a very good subject co-ordinator and an excellent ICT suite;
- Design and technology: where pupils make very good use of the skills they develop in the 'plan, do, review' work to propose designs, make, and then test the effectiveness of their work;
- Art, where good work in two and three-dimensions in class art lessons is used very well to support other subjects and is complemented by excellent work and examples created in art club.

7. Standards in ICT and design and technology are much improved since the last report and are above national expectations, whilst in art they have been maintained.

8. In religious education pupils exceed the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus at age seven with good levels of understanding and knowledge of facts. This is the result of recent good teaching especially in Year 2 which promises much for the future. Currently pupils in Year 4 have reached satisfactory standards for nine year olds.

9. In geography, history, physical education and pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship education standards have been maintained and are sound, being in line with national age related expectations throughout the school.

10. Pupils' attainment in music is barely satisfactory at the end of Year 4, but sound at the end of Year 2. However, it is clear that pupils in Year 1 are above what is normally expected of this age group in composing and recording their work. Variations in pupils' performance are the result of variations in the quality of teaching and a lack of monitoring of the success of provision. This constitutes a decline in standards since the last inspection, notwithstanding good quality singing and continued success in the quality of school public performances.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. Pupils' attitudes towards the school are excellent, and pupils show a high level of interest and enthusiasm in the activities provided for them. They are eager learners who expect to enjoy themselves in and out of class. Even the youngest children take pride in

achieving the targets set for them, and are enthusiastic about new challenges. In class they compete enthusiastically in any sort of quiz given them, and co-operate well, whether in pairs or groups. Very little time is wasted: pupils work hard and play hard. They concentrate well for long periods, staying on task and needing very little supervision from adults. The system of 'talking partners' works extremely well. All these characteristics were seen in a Year 2 class, when 'partners' were asked to debate a particular aspect of an eyewitness account of the Great Fire of London for five minutes, and then to report their findings, before returning to discuss another aspect. Pupils rose to the challenge superbly, remaining totally concentrated on the task for nearly half an hour.

12. Pupils' behaviour is very good, a marked improvement from the last inspection when there was a minority of poor behaviour in class, and some boisterous behaviour outside. There have been no exclusions in the last academic year. Behaviour in class during this inspection was graded good or better in three-quarters of the lessons observed. No unsatisfactory behaviour was observed in or out of class. Playtimes and lunchtimes are happy well ordered occasions with no aggression or oppressive behaviour. All pupils are instantly still and silent at one blast of the whistle signalling the end of a playtime, and quietly line up to return inside. Pupils are extremely welcoming and courteous towards visitors. They hold doors open and are always keen to see if they can help in some way. The pupils are fine ambassadors for their school.

13. Pupils' personal development is very good, an improvement from the last inspection when it was good. Pupils are notably articulate, well able to discuss their own strengths and weaknesses, and their academic and personal development. In the weekly 'celebration assembly' pupils put their hands up to say 'what they were pleased about'. This included 'I'm really enjoying the symmetry work' and 'I'm enjoying playtime a lot more now I'm not playing football'. They know they can rely on the adults in the school community to listen to them courteously and treat their comments with respect. Relationships within the school are very good, both between adults and pupils and amongst the pupils themselves. In class and assembly discussions pupils show a very good understanding of the impact of their actions on others. They are keen to help each other, both informally and formally. Children look after each other in the playground. When a boy tripped and fell three girls were quick to help him up and fetch adult assistance. Pupils have taken on the many responsibilities offered to them enthusiastically. Peer mediators help other children sort out their disagreements; the 'play team' supervise the play equipment and show younger children how to use it; and older pupils look after younger ones well at the mixed age lunch tables. Every class has elected representatives, and although these have not yet become a formal school council, they have already had significant achievements. They talked about the unpleasant state of the boys' toilets in assembly and asked fellow pupils to be more considerate when using them: this had a marked effect. They requested that fixed play apparatus be installed for older pupils, and the school has arranged for this to be done soon.

14. Attendance is satisfactory, a decline from the last inspection, when it was good. In part this appears to be due to some parental attitudes and a lack of rigorous monitoring by the school. In 2000 to 2001 it was in line with national averages (94.5 per cent as against 93.9 per cent); unauthorised absence was in line (0.7 per cent as against 0.5 per cent) and authorised absence was below (4.9 per cent as against 5.6 per cent). Virtually all pupils arrive punctually at school, and classes begin promptly.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

15. The quality of teaching has been significantly improved since the last inspection found 25 per cent to be unsatisfactory. Teaching is now judged good. None of the 56 lessons observed was unsatisfactory and four-fifths were at least good with four out of every ten being very good. Three lessons (Year 2 enrichment literacy, Years 3 and 4 literacy, and Year 2 religious education) were excellent. All teachers were seen to teach at least one good

lesson and nine different members of staff recorded very good sessions. This is a good profile of teaching with very good and occasionally excellent features which underpins the good, and improving, quality of pupils' learning.

16. Teaching in the Foundation Stage was very good in three-quarters of lessons observed. Work sampling confirms teaching is at least good and that children have the same opportunities in both classes. Statistics show that teaching for Years 1 and 2 was marginally better than for Years 3 and 4 during the inspection, but most lessons in both categories were at least good. Particularly noteworthy teaching was observed in Year 2, and in the mixed Years 3 and 4 class.

17. Strengths in teaching are in:

- Very good relationships which mean pupils are not afraid to make mistakes, and show very good respect and consideration to teachers who listen to them;
- Very good support from teachers and teaching assistants for pupils with special educational needs;
- The quality of planning, particularly in literacy and numeracy, where teaching is consistently good with learning objectives made very clear;
- Good use of questioning which requires pupils to think and respond with opinions and express their feelings: for example in an excellent Year 2 religious education lesson on 'special books' the teacher asked very good prompt questions which pupils used as an excellent model when 'interviewing' each other about the Jewish Torah;
- Very consistent management of behaviour making very good use of the school's procedures, the outcome being much improved standards;
- High expectations based on very good use of assessment to set targets and in most lessons provide work for different ability levels. This is especially effective for special educational needs and higher attaining pupils;
- Very good teachers' knowledge and understanding of design and technology and art leading to frequently very good pupils' learning and resulting in standards above expectations;
- Excellent use of a system known to the school as 'plan, do, review' in Years R, 1 and 2 to encourage pupils to make choices and evaluate their own successes. Pupils develop independence and make good progress in overcoming the weaknesses they are helped to identify for themselves.

18. The contribution teaching assistants make to the quality of teaching is particularly noteworthy. Assistants know pupils well and carefully monitor progress against pupils' own targets.

19. Weaknesses in teaching even in this good profile are in:

- The lack of pace in some lessons: for example in a Year 3 science lesson where the teacher spent too long talking before pupils were to be actively involved;
- The lack of teachers' knowledge and understanding of music especially for Years 3 and 4 and the general lack of emphasis on music across the school;
- Some teachers' lack of confidence in teaching religious education, most obvious for Years 3 and 4: for example teachers following similar planning in different classes with variable success as a result of making less use of artefacts.

20. Throughout the school strengths in teaching far outweigh weaknesses. The quality of teaching continues to be very successfully developed as a result of very effective monitoring by the head as part of very effective performance management. The best co-ordinators (most obviously in English and mathematics) are very involved in such monitoring with a good impact on quality and standards. The least effective monitoring: for example in music and religious education, has resulted in weaker teaching with opportunities missed to promote learning.

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

21. Even though the curriculum offered to pupils at the last inspection was seen to be satisfactory with some good elements, the school has still managed to improve it so that now the quality and range of the curriculum is good overall, and very good in Years 1 and 2.

22. A weakness lies in the curriculum for the Foundation Stage in that access to a secure outdoor environment with a wide range of large wheeled toys for children to share, is still not available. The remainder of the curriculum in this part of the school is good, relating closely to the recommended early goals for learning, and linking well to the early levels of the National Curriculum.

23. The school provides, for the rest of its pupils, a curriculum which has good breadth and balance and which is particularly relevant to them. Personal, social and health education are very well planned by the school. The school is now extending and more clearly defining its work on citizenship to add to this part of the curriculum.

24. Although the school promotes literacy and numeracy well, making good use of the national strategies, with the exception of some aspects of music, it has not lost sight of the rest of the curriculum. This has been achieved by cultivating real cross-curricular activities and topics, which make pupils use skills gained in both literacy and numeracy lessons. This is further supported by specific celebrations of subjects noted in arts week, science week, and work for example in Year 4 which links art and information technology in producing work on our polluted environment.

25. The use which pupils make of their mathematical and scientific knowledge, skills and understanding was criticised at the last inspection. Since that time, the school has developed this aspect of the work in both subjects well, especially in science where it is now a strength.

26. The school further supports its curriculum with a range of good visits and visitors, which enrich the work. From a wide range of provision, Year 1 talk to grandparents about the past, whilst Year 2 visit the Waterfront Museum in Poole as they carry out a comparison between Poole and Wimborne. In the classes for the oldest pupils, visits are made to the Dorchester Museum, supporting studies about Roman Britain, while in support of Creative and Expressive Arts week, a dance adviser improvised dances from other cultures.

27. A residential visit to Leeson House, connected with work on the environment, not only gives good support to this curriculum area, but equally helps pupils with their social development.

28. Planning has been improved since the last inspection, when it was criticised for “not ensuring progression”. It now ensures not only the full coverage of the National Curriculum requirements, but at the same time confirms that learning builds systematically from year group to year group. The school has introduced a system of ‘plan, do and review’ within its classes up to and including Year 2. Through this system, pupils receive direct support with the planning of their work, but are allowed to make decisions on how they will plan their time, reviewing their progress through discussions with partners, sharing their thoughts on their work. This has done much to give pupils a degree of independence at an early age.

29. The school, through its policies and practices, offers a fully inclusive curriculum, which offers equal opportunities to all of its pupils. It does this through very careful assessment and

planning, which provides challenges and support for all abilities and for those pupils whose first language is not English. The school makes very good provision for pupils with special educational needs. Pupils' needs are assessed at an early stage and provision is made for them through planning and through well written individual education plans, which are put into effect well by teachers and support staff, resulting in these pupils making similar (and in some cases better) progress to their class mates. A relative weakness in this overall good curriculum provision arises from some subjects not being monitored across the school. This has for example led to the underemphasis of some aspects of music.

30. The school offers a very good range of extracurricular opportunities, noted as good at the last inspection. Most activities are for pupils in Years 3 and 4, although one or two involve younger pupils. Many pupils take advantage of these clubs and benefit from further opportunities to extend their sporting, musical, computer and art skills. Very many parents are pleased with this level of extra provision.

31. There are very good links with the local community, contributing very positively to pupils' education. Volunteer librarians from the local community ensure pupils have good access to fiction and non fiction books. The parent teacher association raises a great deal of money for the school, often with the help of local shops and businesses. A major credit card company supports the school's fund raising efforts, whilst the local theatre gives the school an opportunity to use its facilities to perform its Christmas show.

32. The school has good relationships with the Wimborne Pyramid of local schools. It carries out joint discussions in all major subject areas and ensures with the middle school, that pupils transfer from one school to the other smoothly. As the school is used by a kindergarten, there is close liaison between the two when young children enter full time schooling. The school swimming pool, funded by the parents' association, is let on a regular basis, supporting its use for the pupils at the school.

33. Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is very good, marking a very good improvement since the last inspection.

34. Provision for spiritual development is very good. This is very good improvement since the last inspection. The school gives pupils very good opportunities to explore values and beliefs, particularly during curriculum time for religious education and personal, social and health education. In these lessons and sessions pupils have very good opportunities to discuss their feelings and emotions. Similarly, in assembly time during celebrations of achievement, all pupils have a chance to reflect and then contribute their successes for that week. These ranged from feeling good that a different game to football had been played at lunchtime, to being confident in understanding symmetry, to making a new friend. The school has created an ethos in which all pupils flourish. Those with special educational needs and English as an additional language are particularly well included and their development is monitored and supported. Teachers use styles which value all pupils' questions and answers, and the use of discussion partners contributes effectively to this. The 'plan, do and review' system used in Years R, 1 and 2 encourages pupils to ask questions like why, how and where, and make appropriate and sensible judgements about their work and achievement.

35. Provision for moral development is very good. This is a very good improvement since the last inspection. A secure moral code is the basis of the effective behaviour policy. Pupils' self esteem is high and they understand the importance of operating within the code of behaviour and are very crestfallen on the very few occasions that sanctions are applied. The quality of behaviour in the school now is such that sanctions need rarely to be applied. The learning environment provided by the school offers an atmosphere of tolerance and open attitudes, in which pupils feel confident in expressing their own feelings. Good behaviour and high quality relationships are modelled well by adults and reinforced by stories told in

assembly. The school's values are reinforced by displays of the 'Golden Rules' and the quality of relationships.

36. Provision for social development is very good. This is good improvement since the last inspection. The key values and principles which contribute to the ethos of the school create a very positive feeling of community, in which all are respected. This is an inclusive school. Learning opportunities, especially using discussion partners and 'plan, do and review' systems, give pupils many chances to work co-operatively. Pupils discuss and plan their activities and share reviews. For example, while reviewing a design and technology activity, two boys were able to make supportive and helpful comments on each other's work, using compliments about the good quality of axles on his friend's chassis as a starting point for improvement to his own. Pupils are given positive corporate experiences by attending assemblies for even the youngest children, by going out on visits linked to curriculum work – the local area for geography and further afield for history and residential experiences. Pupils are given very good opportunities to exercise leadership and responsibility by preparing and clearing up playground equipment to checking that lights are switched off throughout the school. The ethos of the school positively encourages attitudes of honesty, a high degree of respect for difference and self respect. Independent learning has a high profile in the school due to the strength of teaching and the way that all pupils are given chances to select and evaluate their work.

37. Provision for cultural development is good. This is satisfactory improvement. The school provides opportunities for pupils to celebrate their own culture in dance at the Morris dance club and in literature in literacy lessons. Pupils develop good relationships with the local community by visits to places of local interest linked with the taught curriculum, as with a close link to the local National Trust areas. Pupils have experiences within the taught curriculum to find out about other cultures. This is most effective in art, with young children looking at the works of Rousseau; and in geography. The religious education curriculum provides effective insight into the practices and beliefs of other cultures. While studying holy books, pupils were able to discuss their own experiences of books special to them, including the Qu'ran, and to begin to make links with reading in another language, with pupils' own experience of Chinese. The school has already identified the need to raise further the awareness of the wider multicultural society in the United Kingdom by arranging a special day with visiting experts for the older pupils, and using the suggested materials as an addition to the current curriculum. Inspection evidence confirms that there is a need to develop pupils' understanding still further in terms of multicultural awareness.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

38. Procedures for monitoring and promoting pupils' personal development are excellent, an exceptional level of improvement from the last inspection, when they were satisfactory. The school aims to encourage every child to do his or her best, through an almost individually tailored system of personal support. Pupils with special needs are as well catered for as are the more academically able and unusually gifted. The school's explicit values of consideration and kindness mean that achievements of any kind are valued and acknowledged publicly.

39. The school has a number of systems to allow pupils to talk about their personal development and their feelings to teachers, and for these to be recorded. The registration system allows pupils to give a 'snapshot' of how they are feeling. Thus when the teacher calls a name, pupils may reply 'excellent playtime' or 'I lost my temper again', or simply say 'yes' if they have nothing particular to report. From the time a child arrives at the school, class teachers and teaching assistants keep a simple confidential record of personal development. A note is kept of any problems that arise and how the school dealt with them.

40. At the weekly 'celebration assembly' pupils share news of achievement, from making a new friend to becoming the top goal scorer in the local schools' league. Pupils file out to the

song 'What have you done today, to make you feel proud?' All classroom staff attend a weekly 'business lunch', when concerns about pupils' personal and social development are shared with colleagues. 'Green slips' are issued to pupils for academic achievements, and three of these earn a 'green certificate', handed out in the celebration assembly.

41. The planned provision for personal, social and health education is good, and that for citizenship is currently being developed. There is a policy on race equality. Circle time⁵ is well used in all classes to develop pupils' ability to discuss their own feelings and help them cope with difficult situations. Children are given a wide range of responsibilities, from class representatives to light monitors, who check all unnecessary lights have been switched off. The class representative system will become a school council next term. Year 4 run a 'Play Team'. They apply whilst still in Year 3 and undergo a formal interview. They are responsible for managing the equipment at playtimes.

42. All the older classes have had training in mediation skills, and pupils volunteer to act as mediators. Pupils who disagree about something can ask them for help. A number of pupils regularly work at National Trust properties as Countryside Guardians, helping with various maintenance tasks.

43. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour, and for eliminating oppressive behaviour, are now very good. At the last inspection the improvement of behaviour management was a key issue. It was inconsistently applied, and pupils were ignorant of the behaviour code. A new system was introduced by the headteacher which is regularly reviewed by all staff. It is centred around the Friday 'Golden Time': pupils lose minutes for every instance of unsatisfactory behaviour. Pupils who do not lose any 'Golden Time' throughout a term get a 'Golden Letter': this gives credit to those who might otherwise escape praise as well as blame. There are 'Golden Rules' for indoor and outdoor behaviour. Staff provide very good role models for pupils by their team spirit and courtesy. No significant differences in behaviour management are now apparent between classes. Sanctions beyond the level of a warning, or the loss of a minute of 'Golden Time', are now very rarely used. There has been a year-on-year reduction in this.

44. All lunchtime staff have had training in positive behaviour management. Pupils sit in mixed-age 'family groups' for lunch, with an older pupil on each table tasked to help younger ones by opening crisp packets, fetching water and so on. The atmosphere is happy, relaxed and noticeably quiet. All pupils have to remain seated for twenty minutes, which means that slower eaters do not feel pressurised. Lunchtime supervisors display impressive management skills, not only discussing play activities with pupils, but sometimes joining in. A very good range of activities is provided for pupils at playtime including bats and soft balls, skipping ropes, stilts and construction toys. Football takes place well away from other play activities.

45. Procedures for child protection and for pupil welfare are good. There is a detailed child protection policy, which is distributed to all staff. In addition, the headteacher, who is the child protection liaison officer, briefs staff verbally on this issue. Procedures follow local authority guidelines, and the school has appropriate links with outside agencies. Records are stored securely. The dedicated medical room is attractively decorated with pupils' work and contains a full size permanent bed. Staff are trained in epipen use and will administer long term medication. There are first aid instructions in every classroom, with photographs of pupils with particular health problems. There are two fully qualified first aiders, and a first aid course was held for lunchtime staff. The school has a strict 'nut free' policy to which parents are asked to adhere.

⁵ In these lessons, pupils sit in a circle and through agreed rules, have the opportunity to speak and listen to each other talking about issues, which touch them all.

46. There is a good security policy. The building for Years 1 and 2 has panic alarms linked to the office and all classes have 'help' cards for an emergency. The site is secure. Visitors sign in and out and wear identifying badges. The school has good procedures to ensure that pupils never leave the premises without its knowledge. There is a draft risk assessment policy, which will formalise current good practice. The school uses its own well designed risk assessment form. The fire brigade has assessed the building since the extensions were built, and its recommendations have been fully implemented. Regular fire drills are held and all appropriate fire precautions are in place. The two voluntary swimming pool managers regularly update their qualifications for small pool management. All adults supervising swimming at the pool complete a course in pool safety. There are occasional difficulties with unauthorised use of, and minor damage to, the pool. The school has had problems with children skateboarding in the grounds out of hours, but these seem to have disappeared with improved security and the creation of a skateboard circuit in the park. The school's principle health and safety issue remains the narrow access lane, as at the time of the last inspection. This has no pavements, and is regularly used as a free car park which makes it even narrower. Some motorists (including parents) drive along it too fast, despite repeated appeals from the school. At present there is no formal recording of any perceived hazards reported between risk assessments, and of the action taken; and no formal recording of the actions taken to deal with any perceived hazards identified by risk assessment.

47. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are adequate but could be improved. The importance of attendance and punctuality are regularly noted to parents through newsletters and in the prospectus. Registers include detailed guidance on their completion, and on arrangements for pupil safety, particularly at the end of the day. They are completed in conformity with statutory requirements. Pupils arriving late have to sign the 'late book' and give a reason for their unpunctuality. Unexplained absences are followed up but procedures could be improved. The administrative officer provides a termly list of late arrivals and unauthorised or unexplained absences, and reports any anomalies she notes at this time. She does not normally produce printouts of attendance patterns more frequently than this. At present the school does not use the warning letter to parents facility on its electronic system. It has satisfactory links with the education welfare service. As the attendance level has dropped from 'good' to 'satisfactory' since the time of the last inspection, the school should give higher priority to this issue. At present there is no one person specifically responsible for monitoring and improving attendance.

48. The school very effectively promotes the inclusion of pupils from ethnic minority groups in all aspects of school life. It provides extra support for them, for example in its 'Talk Club', in which pupils with English as an additional language, together with pupils who are shy at speaking in front of their classes, meet in a small and supportive atmosphere, discussing such topics as holidays and the World Cup. In class lessons, teachers were seen making special efforts to involve pupils from Chinese and Muslim backgrounds. This was particularly well illustrated in a religious education lesson where the views of these pupils provided added interest and information when discussing sacred books.

49. A key issue for improvement noted at the school's last inspection was 'to improve arrangements for day to day assessments' in order that this might 'inform planning and provide work that is suitably matched to the attainment of pupils'. The school has made very good progress on this issue and now has very good procedures for assessment, the results of which are used very well to adapt the curriculum to suit the needs of pupils.

50. The school assesses children shortly after they arrive in the reception class and uses the results to provide appropriate teaching for individuals and groups of its youngest children. Teachers log children's progress as they work through the 'stepping stones' of the recommended Early Learning Goals, noting their progress and matching the challenge of work to suit that progress. At this early stage, the school makes predictions for possible achievement at the National Curriculum tests more than two years ahead.

51. During their time in Years 1 and 2, pupils' progress is checked at regular intervals and recorded in their 'Once a month' books, making access to examples of their work, levelled against the standards of the National Curriculum, easy to see. It can then be checked against their predicted scores for the end of Year 2 tests, in order to see if pupils are making the expected progress over time. Those who are not making sufficient progress are highlighted and their work examined in order to see where extra support might be given. Equally those who make very good progress have their targets raised again with extra support. This was seen in action, with the headteacher giving extra support to more able pupils in Year 1. Pupils who are not achieving so well are often noted and receive equally effective support from well trained teaching assistants.

52. The results of the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2 are analysed very well in order to establish:-

- How well the school has fared against national results and against the results of similar schools;
- If there are any gender differences in the attainment of pupils;
- If any particular questions or sets of questions were answered well or badly.

As a result, the school has looked into gender differences in mathematics and English, whilst looking at mental mathematics to improve test results.

53. Throughout Years 3 and 4, regular assessments are made, not only in mathematics and English, but in science and information and communication technology. As a result of these assessments, targets are set for all pupils. Targets are then reviewed and updated on a regular basis throughout the year with new ones taking their place. These are shared with pupils who then become more involved in their own personal development and take some control of the progress they make.

54. In order to aid pupils' progress on a daily basis, marking is of good quality across the school. This gives pupils support and often flags up the next step they should take to make further progress. As a result of marking and assessments, changes to planning are regularly made. During the inspection, teachers were seen noting class, group and individual progress of pupils, which then resulted in the following lessons being altered to take account of the progress made. Assessment procedures with regard to special educational needs are very effective and such pupils make good and often very good progress.

55. The school makes very good use of information technology in its assessment programme and now has the opportunity to extend assessments to cover all other subjects, and further, to chart the progress of its gifted and talented pupils. This would help develop the monitoring of subjects other than English, mathematics and science.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

56. The impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school is excellent. Parents give unstintingly of their time, money, energy and expertise in every area of school life. Artists, engineers, management consultants, accountants, statisticians, gardeners and craftspeople have all helped the school in various ways, whether in class, in the management of the premises, or by providing professional experience for the governing body. A committee of parents and governors runs the kindergarten and the breakfast and after school club on the school premises as a separate organisation, and others organise, maintain and supervise the swimming pool. Parents have helped redecorate the school, and to move furniture after the rebuilding work last year. The 'Pretty Playground' group has already created a garden area, and has further ambitious plans. Parents help run after school clubs and 'Golden Time' activities. Some parents help man the library. Twenty parents help in class on a regular basis every week, and others come in when they can. Parents support swimming lessons and

offsite visits. The parents, teachers and friends association has a management committee of sixteen and raises very considerable sums for the school every year, as well as running highly successful social activities. Parents' dedication and enthusiasm is outstanding and extremely impressive. It is a major reason for the school's success.

57. The contribution of parents to children's learning at school and at home is very good. Although homework is voluntary the vast majority of children do it and much extra besides. Parents enjoy following up the suggested activities and readily supply artefacts to support topic work. Nearly all parents regularly hear their children read, particularly in the younger age groups. Parents strongly support the school's ethos of 'learning is fun'. However, the attendance level has dropped from good to satisfactory since the last inspection. Parents could help to improve this.

58. It is not surprising to find that parents have very favourable views of the school. They are particularly pleased with its high expectations of its pupils: 'education is individually tailored to each child'. Parents feel their children are making good progress. They think that behaviour is very good, because of the school's management of it. Teachers are readily accessible. Parents are generally very pleased with the extracurricular provision provided by the school, although some would like more for the younger children. Nearly all parents think their children really enjoy coming to school, and would not hesitate to approach the school with any problems: 'the school always listens and is willing to learn'. Parents believe pupils become more independent and mature. 'Children are not afraid to fail because the teachers make it clear that they will learn from failure and do better next time'. Parents feel that they are equal partners with the school in their children's learning. They feel the headteacher knows pupils well and gives strong leadership. Homework is felt to be relevant and presented in a parent-friendly way, although a minority of parents feel that any homework is inappropriate in first schools. Most parents feel well informed although a minority (11 per cent of respondents to the questionnaire) were less certain. Parents are very pleased with all the different facilities the school has and the 'extra' activities it runs, such as the Science Challenge and the Book Week, to which they are invited. Most parents would agree with the parent who wrote that 'the school is always looking for a new challenge'.

59. At the last inspection the school had good links with parents: these are now excellent. The school has an open door policy: teachers are readily accessible at the start and end of school, and the headteacher can be seen at short notice. Parents can contact the school by e.mail as well: the deputy head checks and answers all e.mail correspondence. Parents are invited to open afternoons, during which each class in turn does a short presentation. Each class holds a 'tea and cake assembly'. In September, a 'Meet the Teacher' evening is held, and parents' consultation evenings are held in the other two terms. Parents are invited to share special visitors and events, for instance during Book Week. The school runs information evenings on statutory assessment tests and various aspects of the curriculum. The school consults parents on various issues, usually through questionnaires, and this year a meeting was held when new school aims were formulated. Homework is a voluntary activity: pupils who do not complete it are not penalised, but those who do are praised. There is a detailed homework book for each child with full information of activities, some or all of which parents may choose to undertake with their child during the week. Parents' comments are always read and followed up if necessary. Homework is always marked.

60. The school holds sessions for parents on supporting children's work in literacy and numeracy in conjunction with the local education authority. It supports parents in other ways: privately run before and after school clubs are held on the premises, and parents can obtain car passes which allow them free parking whilst delivering and collecting children. The deputy head attends meetings of the parents, teachers and friends association. Teaching staff usually give support to social events.

61. The quality of information provided for parents is good. The prospectus and governors' report are both attractively laid out and informative. They fulfil statutory requirements and

unusually display evidence of a sense of humour. The school sends out very detailed weekly newsletters giving full details of academic, extracurricular and social events. This is available in paper or e.mail format. The school's website is well laid out and regularly updated. Curriculum information is sent out at the start of each term. It is accompanied by detailed suggestions of how parents could support work at home, whether through extra research, visits to a particular place, or otherwise. The school issues reassuring and detailed information on statutory assessment tests. Reports are attractively presented, with a drawing by the pupil of him or herself on the front. They include clear, sensible targets for English, mathematics and personal development. Although they give a good idea of what pupils know, understand and can do, they do not include any indication of whether this is at, above or below the level expected of a pupil of this age. Reports do not include any space for parents or pupils to add a contribution.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

62. The headteacher's leadership is excellent. She has drawn together staff, pupils, governors and parents in a very good team to pursue high standards. The school's obvious commitment to improvement coupled with very good relationships throughout gives rise to a very good ethos which very effectively supports learning.

63. The very good partnership between head and deputy is very successful in managing the school both day to day and through excellent educational direction. There is an excellent system to demonstrate that the contributions of everyone are considered towards forward planning. This results in a very good school development plan which is used very effectively as a tool for improvement. The head makes very good links between the performance management of staff, targets for professional development and the targets of the school. For example, pupils' standards in literacy and ICT are being raised as the result of staff expertise being improved through in-service training following effective monitoring and evaluating of pupils' performance.

64. Considerable improvement against the issues raised by the previous report, notably in standards in writing, assessment procedures and use of information, the quality of teaching and standards of behaviour, has resulted in very good progress. When other initiatives such as the introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and extensive developments to the building, the curriculum and communication with parents are considered, it is possible to judge that the overall quality of leadership and management is much improved, and is now very good.

65. Co-ordinators, particularly for English, mathematics, science, ICT, design and technology and art, manage subjects well. They ensure that planning and resources are good; and monitor the quality of teaching effectively. These co-ordinators show very good vision. Because of this standards are good and pupils achieve well. Less effective monitoring: for example in music, has not guaranteed consistently good emphasis on teaching, and standards, although basically satisfactory, have suffered.

66. Very good management of assessment, especially in the last two years, has significantly improved procedures and the use made of data to develop planning and target setting. Assessment is now judged very good compared with unsatisfactory in the last report.

67. Governors play a very good part in the management of the school. Statutory responsibilities are met (although not all assemblies fulfill all requirements as acts of collective worship). Governors are well informed, have clear and meaningful links with the school, have a sound understanding of the curriculum and play an excellent part in the high quality strategic use of resources. There is evidence of very successful evaluation of the success of decisions made and of best value principles being met for spending. The school has very successfully overcome a potential overspend over the last two years.

68. The governing body gives very positive support to the school particularly in finance, managing the building, maintaining staffing levels to support special educational needs and confirming the priorities of development planning. There is a very good partnership with the headteacher. Governors are effective as 'critical friends' without impinging on areas where they have delegated responsibility. Many of the governors are parents or ex-parents with detailed knowledge of the school and this is balanced by very good business acumen: for example in finance and ICT, which directly benefits management.

69. Together head, staff and governors have established worthwhile aims and values for the school which are being translated into everyday practice. For example, intentions to provide all pupils with equal opportunities regardless of gender, ability or ethnic background are obvious in the school's fully inclusive nature. A distinct improvement since the last report is in the effectiveness of communications with parents and the community. Parents are very well informed. The school is one of the first to make full use of electronic communications through e.mail and its website to give and receive information, and this is much appreciated by parents.

70. The school's management of behaviour is now very good. All concerned know and understand the systems in place to encourage and reward pupils and, where necessary, invoke sanctions. This has been developed over a period of three years and is now consistently applied by all staff. The effect is that standards of behaviour have gone from "normally good with too much boisterous behaviour" to very good, and is a major influence on pupils' enthusiasm for school, now judged excellent.

71. An area for improvement in this very positive view of leadership and management is in how attendance is monitored and encouraged. This is clear in the decline from good to satisfactory since the last inspection and although the recently adopted electronic system has the potential to provide detailed tracking of trends, these are not yet analysed.

72. The management of special educational needs and of provision for English as an additional language is very good. Extra support is well targeted at specific needs and as a result pupils make good, and frequently very good, progress.

73. The staffing of the school is now stable and provides a good range of expertise, training, age and experience. There is a particularly good match for those co-ordinating mathematics, English and science, where effective leadership has led to improved standards in these subjects. The headteacher values and respects the quality of her senior management team and this attitude is reciprocated by subject leaders. The learning support assistants who provide particular support for pupils with special educational needs contribute effectively to the learning environment designed for them. Teaching assistants in the Foundation Stage make a significant contribution to the good provision in this area. The school is successfully involved in performance management and all teachers derive personal development targets from this, which match closely to the issues identified in the school development plan.

74. Newly qualified teachers receive very good support from a personal mentor and have ample opportunities to observe and teach in all parts of the school. Teachers new to the school are well supported by colleagues and by a useful staff handbook. However, there are no formally recorded procedures for induction at this time. Work experience students are supported by their class teacher and one teacher has responsibility for their placement and welfare. Recently there have been no initial teacher training students in the school.

75. The quality of the accommodation is very good, an improvement from the last inspection when it was considered adequate. The original Victorian building has been recently extended to include a large hall, school office and reception area, medical room and new classroom. Classrooms are all of a good size and most have been attractively modernised

and redecorated. The headteacher's office is adjacent to the new library area, which, despite being situated where several routes through the school meet, feels like a centre of activity and not like a corridor. There is a good sized, well equipped staffroom. The wide corridor alongside the classrooms provides plenty of space for small group work or messy activities, as well as cloakroom areas. The school's new computer suite is spacious, appropriately ventilated and lighted. It is further enhanced by the high quality display of children's work on virtually every surface in the school. A wooden building formerly used by the school is now the property of the parents' association. A separate building, originally workshops and toilets, now houses the younger pupils and a privately run kindergarten. About half of the roof and windows of this building will be replaced during the summer. It is hoped the rest will be done during the following year. The school is well aware that this building needs repointing and general maintenance. Outside, there are two hard playground areas, which provide adequate play space for the numbers on roll. An attractive, well stocked garden area has been created by parents. The swimming pool and changing rooms are maintained and run by parents and governors on behalf of the school. Across the narrow access lane there is a good sized paddock surrounded by mature trees, with a car park and a fenced conservation area with a raised pond. The school is surrounded on three sides by the town park. It is a peaceful, beautiful setting, and the accommodation as a whole is a very good aid to learning. The site is very well maintained, and free from litter and graffiti. However, there is no separate, distinct outside play area for children in the Foundation Stage and this has negative effects on their physical and personal development.

76. At the last inspection, resources were seen to be only adequate. Currently resources are good overall. There are strengths in the provision for information and communication technology, whilst subjects such as design and technology, art and design and physical education benefit from resources of both good quality and quantity. All resources are well catalogued, stored and are very accessible. However, there is concern for the provision of resources for the children in the Foundation Stage, with reference to outdoor activities. This was a key issue at the last inspection and has yet to be improved.

77. Finance is very well managed. There is excellent use of all funding both from the school's own budget and from a variety of extra grants. For example, all funds designated for special educational needs (and more) are appropriately spent and because of this, provision is very good. Particularly good use of a grant from the DfEE for buildings has considerably improved accommodation. Governors and head have done very well to take the school from a deficit budget soon after the last inspection to a very healthy situation where all funds are available to be spent on pupils currently in the school. The administrative officer makes a very positive contribution to the efficiency of day to day financial control and she keeps governors very well informed of expenditure.

78. The school appears to be carrying forward almost ten per cent of its annual budget. This would be well above recommended levels. However, this is a false picture as it is the result of extra funding towards building and refurbishment costs. The reality is that all money is appropriately earmarked to support pupils' learning with the addition of another teacher and teaching assistant for September 2002.

79. The marked improvements in provision, particularly in the quality of teaching, the curriculum and the learning environment, are the result of excellent leadership and very good management. For broadly average spending the school now gives good value for money, an obvious improvement over the previous report's judgement of 'satisfactory'.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

80. In order to further improve the school headteacher, governors and staff should:-

- **Improve** further outdoor facilities and resources for children in the Foundation Stage.
Paragraphs: 22, 75, 76, 83, 90.

- **Develop** provision for music by:

- Improving teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject (particularly in Years 3 and 4);
- Raising the profile of the subject across the school.

Paragraphs: 10, 19, 20, 29, 65, 161, 163, 167.

The following minor issues should form part of the governors' action plan:

- Improving the monitoring role of co-ordinators, notably in music, religious education, geography, history and physical education to include observation of teaching to identify areas for further development.

Paragraphs: 10, 19, 20, 29, 55, 65, 141, 145, 164, 172, 175, 180.

- Developing further opportunities to raise pupils' awareness of multicultural issues.
Paragraphs: 37.

- Improving procedures to monitor attendance.
Paragraphs: 14, 47, 57, 71.

In the context of this very good school some of the above issues already form part of the school development plan.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	56
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	26

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	20	23	10	0	0	0
Percentage	5	36	41	18	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents almost two percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	224
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	61

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	9

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	14
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	8

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.9
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.7
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	25	25	50

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	22	21	22
	Girls	21	22	23
	Total	43	43	45
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	86 (89)	86 (86)	90 (97)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	21	22	24
	Girls	22	22	21
	Total	43	44	45
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	86 (92)	88 (100)	90 (89)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	3
Chinese	3
White	168
Any other minority ethnic group	6

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)	9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.9
Average class size	28

Education support staff: YR – Y4

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	210

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000 – 2001
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	£
Total income	478810
Total expenditure	463038
Expenditure per pupil	2125
Balance brought forward from previous year	30800
Balance carried forward to next year	46572

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	228
Number of questionnaires returned	106

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	68	28	4	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	66	31	2	1	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	61	36	1	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	47	40	8	4	1
The teaching is good.	76	21	1	1	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	54	33	9	2	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	77	18	2	2	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	70	27	2	1	0
The school works closely with parents.	67	26	5	1	1
The school is well led and managed.	73	19	3	1	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	74	22	4	1	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	58	39	2	0	1

Due to rounding percentages may not total 100.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

81. The provision for Foundation Stage education is good.

82. Children in the Foundation Stage are taught in two classes. The older children work with Year 1 pupils and operate in a separate building housing Foundation Stage and Year 1 classes, as well as an independent kindergarten. Children arrive at the school with attainment overall which is slightly below county averages, but in line with these in mathematics. There is a wide spread of ability and a significant proportion of children with special educational needs. By the end of their time in the Foundation Stage, most children will have attained the Early Learning Goals in communication, language and literacy, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development, and will have exceeded the standards expected in personal, social and emotional development, speaking and listening, mathematics and creative development.

83. Through consistently good teaching children achieve well. The curriculum is planned carefully and effectively incorporates all six areas of learning. There are particular strengths related to personal development and the 'plan, do, review' system. In creative development and knowledge and understanding of the world activities, children with discussion partners plan and select their activities and are given opportunities to discuss and review what they have done. This gives young children a particularly good understanding of their own learning and a very good start to personal learning responsibility, which is continued throughout the school. Close records are kept of children's progress, based initially on an assessment using local authority materials. This tracking of attainment, which is used throughout the school, is started effectively in the Foundation Stage. Children use the outside of the school, including the garden, effectively for science and road safety activities. However, at present there is no safe designated area where structured play activities can be planned as an integral part of daily learning in all areas of the curriculum and this was an issue in the last inspection.

84. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is very good. There were examples of very good teaching seen throughout the inspection. Teachers manage children very well and use regular systems and routines as well as implementing the school behaviour policy and 'Golden Rules', which even the youngest children understand. Effective planning and efficient daily review of lessons enable teachers to plan for individual development and both teachers demonstrate a very good understanding of the requirements of the Foundation Stage curriculum. Lessons maintain the interest of children because of their variety of content, and children respond very well to the stimulating learning environment. The 'plan, do, review' system used involves complex planning strategies, and resources are well developed and presented. Teachers deploy classroom assistants very well and they contribute significantly to the learning ethos of classes, by taking appropriate responsibility for children's learning, sharing in planning and contributing to records of children's progress. Those children who have already been identified as having special educational needs are particularly well supported and achieve well.

85. Very close links operate between the kindergarten and the Foundation Stage. A sympathetic and staggered entry to school is operated and teachers spend time with the children who are coming into their class. Parents are offered many opportunities to meet and discuss any concerns. They can meet with teachers every day and leave messages or book meetings in the morning. They are made to feel very welcome in class and partners in their children's education. Regular, more formal opportunities are given for parent/teacher consultations during the year, when children's progress is discussed.

Personal, social and emotional development

86. Children achieve well in this area, due to good teaching and most will exceed the learning goals in this area. The emphasis given in the school to personal development, through an understanding of how to behave and the quality of relationships ensures that young children have good models to follow. Children are interested and excited about their learning and the powerful contributions of the 'plan, do, review' systems mean that they understand how to operate well in groups of different sizes. They take turns and share and are sensitive to the views of others. They take good care of their own hygiene, and dress and undress without help. They understand the 'Golden Rules' and are very pleased when they receive green slips for good work or effort and are particularly proud to receive certificates in celebration assemblies. Teachers keep effective records of children's personal development and the inclusive ethos of the school has its beginnings in the Foundation Stage.

Communication, language and literacy

87. Children achieve satisfactorily in this area, but make better progress with speaking and listening, and most are on course to reach the learning goals at the end of the year. Teaching is good and children respond well to the emphasis placed on discussion, both of work in their review sessions and the use of vocabulary and questions from adults throughout the day. Children are able to identify stories as fantasy and enjoy commenting on the attitude of the 'Tiger who Came to Tea' saying, "He didn't say sorry and he didn't tidy up!" They find the challenge of solving problems stimulating when thinking how to sort out the difficulty of the troublesome dragon or the giant who came to town. Children are able to write some common words and the higher attainers make good attempts at new words using phonics⁶. Work is well designed for children of different abilities, with opportunities for independent writing, story outlines and an emphasis on role play to find a solution to a giant problem. At this stage of the year, children are suitably engaged with all elements of the literacy lesson. They are able to form recognisable letters and use their knowledge of phonics to help with their reading. Classroom assistants play a particularly important role in the support of writing and reading, using praise and questions to extend understanding and support learning so that children can write a sentence starting with 'I will.....' to describe how they will sort out the problem of the giant.

Mathematical development

88. Children achieve well in this area and most are on course to exceed the learning goals. Teaching is good. Children can count confidently to twenty and beyond. They can recognise these figures and play games enthusiastically arranging themselves and number tiles into the correct order. They understand comparisons in length and have been able to 'measure' their beanstalk by printing coloured hands. They know the days of the week and sing songs, which encourage them to record dates. They are beginning to tell the time and most can draw and say 'o'clocks', especially when matched to a story about a ladybird. Children can say what they do at various times in the day. As is appropriate at this stage, children experience all aspects of the numeracy lesson and activities are well chosen to give experiences which reinforce learning at different levels. For example, some children work at identifying and writing times – drawing pictures and writing what they do at that time, others are able to use playdough to roll and make figures to make a large clock. They are introduced to the idea of making estimates, 'How many beads can you thread in one minute?' and then testing them.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

⁶ This refers to the sounding out of letters and blends in order to read unfamiliar words.

89. Children achieve satisfactorily in this area and most will attain the learning goals. Much emphasis is placed on science and in this aspect children exceed the Early Learning Goals. Teaching is good here and older reception children do benefit from working with older pupils. During their 'plan, do, review' sessions, children have chances to phrase scientific questions. They find out about the growth of plants by growing cress in a variety of conditions, starting their bean seeds and later planting them out in the garden. They use the grounds of the school well when they investigate colour, smells and identify parts of plants. There is less recent evidence of children developing an idea of the passage of time, although they do look at the local environment and can identify features linked to the country and town. Children are able to use the mouse on the computer and some are able to log on.

Physical development

90. Children achieve well in this area due to good teaching and most will attain the learning goals. Many of the children understand the reasons why you need to warm up before exercise and can mention heart, blood and muscles. They learn how to use space well and know how to jump, skip and run. They learn to dance and move effectively to music and understand changes in speed. They use the outside space to investigate road safety using pedalled toys. However, at present there is no clearly defined safe area where children can carry out structured play activities on a regular basis as part of the daily curriculum. This restricts children's development.

Creative development

91. Children achieve well in this area. Teaching is often very good and most children will exceed the learning goals at the end of the year. Through well selected activities linked to their project, they recognise paintings by Henri Rousseau and produce detailed and brightly coloured pictures of their own. They understand how to mix colours and to make a background to which they can add paper and textile collage. The results are effective and pleasing. Children have frequent and good experiences of making music. They can identify rhythms linked to insect cards and attempt to match rhythm to pitch, using chime bars. Some can record their compositions by dots and pictures. An appropriate amount of time is allowed for role play activities and especially when play is led by an adult particularly good progress is made in imaginative speaking and listening skills.

ENGLISH

92. Since the last report found standards in English to be broadly in line with the national average pupils' attainment appears to have fluctuated year on year. Results of National Curriculum tests for seven year olds in reading and writing based on average point scores (which gives weightings to individual pupils' performances) and those from optional tests for nine year olds, declined over the three years from 1998 to 2001. However, during this time levels of special educational needs rose to almost 28 per cent (above the national average) and there was an above average rate of 'mobility'. That is to say a significant proportion of pupils left or joined the school other than in Year R. Both of these factors can legitimately partly explain the school's performance, as would the legacy of the 25 per cent of unsatisfactory teaching recorded in the last inspection in 1997.

93. Current inspection findings are that standards are now above average in speaking and listening, reading and writing by the ages of seven and nine. This is confirmed by the early indications of 2002 test results which show good achievement. A significant proportion of the above average profile of pupils with special educational needs have reached, or nearly reached, nationally expected levels. More able pupils did well with nearly 30 per cent achieving the higher Level 3 in reading in Year 2 which is likely to be above average. Nearly 20 per cent of pupils have achieved this level in writing which is considerably better than the nine per cent of 2001. This success is the direct result of:

- The school's targeting of writing as an area for development;
- Good planning and use of assessment;
- Good teaching particularly in Year 2.

94. Results of optional tests for Year 4 in 2002 show very good improvement in reading and writing standards with almost 40 per cent of all pupils reaching levels normally expected of Year 6. From a slightly below average starting point when children first enter Year R the school adds good, and in many cases very good, value to pupils' English skills by the time they leave Year 4.

95. Throughout the school the vast majority of pupils read well for their ages. They have good strategies for reading new words and understanding what they read using a mixture of sounding out and referring to the context. For example, a Year 2 girl for whom English is an additional language made an excellent attempt at describing the meaning of 'pondered' as a 'deep think' having reflected upon the whole sentence. By the time they leave Year 4 most pupils are fluent and accurate in their reading. They read with expression, observing punctuation and are responding well to a variety of types of books, fiction and non fiction. Reading is used well to support other subjects especially in research for history, using the excellent new library where advanced skills of deduction, inference, skimming and scanning are used well.

96. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are good by the time they leave Year 4. Pupils pay attention to staff and each other and contribute well, and in the case of higher attainers very well, to discussions. This is of particular benefit to the introductory 'mind bending' and review elements of literacy time. All pupils benefit from the fully inclusive nature of the school and obviously feel confident that their contributions will be valued. Consequently those with special educational needs and English as an additional language join in class discussions and debates and were observed to volunteer suggestions and answer questions. Speaking and listening skills are used very effectively in other subjects: for example carrying out interviews in religious education and in role play in history.

97. Improving the quality of pupils' writing has been a specific focus of the school's planning over the last two years. Assessment and evaluation of aspects for improvement highlighted the need for better spelling and more sophisticated sentence construction. As a result of better planning and teaching standards have been systematically improved and are now judged good at age seven and nine.

98. Examples of good writing are evident in work in Year 1 about Creation stories; poetry about caring for animals and accounts of the Fire of London in Year 2; persuasive writing about water conservation in Year 3; and descriptions of how war affected evacuees in Year 4. Pupils make good use of punctuation, notably the use of speech marks by Year 3 and Year 4, and show the benefits of the school's spelling journals in their established strategies to improve accuracy. Areas for future development remain in handwriting and spelling, but even here standards are now above average.

99. Pupils write effectively in a variety of ways; including creative, persuasive, instructional texts, and writing to impart information. Particularly good work on the use of connectives has raised standards in Years 3 and 4 and a significant proportion of Year 4 pupils are approaching what is expected of Year 6 before they leave the school.

100. The response of all pupils to English and the literacy hour in particular is very good. Pupils are keen and interested and try hard. They take a pride in their work and the overwhelming majority complete homework on time and to a good standard. Pupils demonstrate good independence and work well in groups, often learning very effectively as a result of joint evaluation.

101. Pupils with special educational needs learn well. Most individual education plans are related to English skills and are well written, setting targets which support development effectively. Pupils are well supported. All the requirements of the Code of Practice are met and pupils achieve well.

102. Literacy teaching, which is a feature of other National Curriculum subjects as well as English, is consistently at least good. Features of good teaching are:

- Good use of open ended questions which require pupils to speculate and express themselves: for example, "What do you think Samuel Pepys felt like when he heard of the Fire?"
- Good marking of pupils' work, encouraging effort and setting targets for improvement;
- Teachers managing pupils, time, support staff and resources effectively;
- Staff challenging pupils effectively with good planning and very good use of assessment to pitch work at different levels within the class. This means mixed age and ability groups are well taught and has resulted in standards improving, especially for higher attainers;
- Good support for pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language;
- Effective use of homework.

103. Nearly six out of every ten English lessons observed were very good with one Years 3 and 4 session judged as excellent. The good quality of pupils' learning is directly proportional to the quality of teaching. It is clear that improvements, especially over the last year, are the result of very good management of the subject, by the co-ordinator who is skilled at supporting colleagues with good planning, evaluation of assessment and effective monitoring of teaching. The school is well resourced for the teaching of literacy with considerable improvements recently to the stock of books and library facilities.

104. The school is aware of the need to make even more use of ICT to develop pupils' writing. However, overall as a result of good leadership the school is very well placed to continue to raise and maintain standards in English.

MATHEMATICS

105. Standards observed at the end of Year 2 and Year 4 are above national averages in mathematics. For pupils at the end of Year 2 this marks an improvement on standards attained in the 2001 national testing and is the result of good teaching and perceptive leadership.

106. By the end of Year 2 pupils are achieving well. They are able to identify that minus is the inverse of plus and the higher attainers can make number sentences illustrating related multiplication and division facts linked to the 3, 4, 5 and 10 times tables. Pupils can identify shapes with lines of symmetry and round numbers to the nearest 10 and 100. They understand odd and even numbers and use these facts to help them answer questions in mental sessions. The higher attaining pupils can add three numbers to make totals within 100. All pupils have numeracy targets which are revised termly and many have challenging ones, which indicate attainment at a level higher than expected.

107. The majority of pupils at the end of Year 4 are attaining standards expected of them, with a significant proportion attaining levels higher than national expectations for none year olds. Pupils are able to draw shapes using co-ordinates in the first quadrant and the higher attainers can identify patterns which allow these shapes to be translated. Most pupils work efficiently with number lines to 10,000, understanding related place value. They can understand the rules associated with multiplication by 10 and 100. They improve their

understanding of time by estimating and then timing five minute intervals and they can calculate fractions of a litre.

108. Teaching in mathematics throughout the school is good and some very good teaching was observed during the inspection. In the best lessons teachers demonstrate confidence in their knowledge and understanding of the subject by the ways in which they are able to use a variety of methods to teach various concepts. They manage their classrooms well and frequently use discussion partners to good effect so that pupils understand what they are doing and can reflect on the learning outcomes of the lesson to evaluate how well they have learned. Planning is clear and effective. The strength of the daily evaluation system for teachers ensures that plans can be suitably adapted when necessary and pupils' work extended or re-taught. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported, especially during whole class mental sessions. Teaching assistants question and explain, enabling all pupils to take a full part in the numeracy strategy. Higher attaining pupils are challenged well as work is designed particularly well for different ability groups and in the best lessons has a challenge for each group. Occasionally the opportunities for challenge are not introduced early enough and pupils have many examples to complete first. Marking is efficient and helpful and in the 'once a month' books detailed comments related to attainment levels and targets are recorded.

109. Pupils enjoy mathematics. There is variety and pace in lessons which sustains their attention. For many a variety of activities and use of resources, whiteboards, multi-link cubes, drawing graphs and using co-ordinate grids contribute to motivation and long periods of concentrated work. Pupils understand that their answers will be valued and thus they will offer solutions and 'have a go'. They have a good understanding of how well they are achieving because they know the learning outcomes and with their discussion partners have opportunities to evaluate what they have learned. Pupils' recorded work is neat and well kept. Pupils take pride in what they are doing and work well with partners and in small groups. They help each other to understand.

110. The subject is led by an enthusiastic co-ordinator who has made efforts to enthuse the rest of the staff. She has demonstrated a clear understanding of issues raised by a careful analysis of testing, careful tracking of individual pupils' progress and the requirements of the numeracy strategy. The consideration of this extensive assessment has contributed greatly to the improvement in standards in the subject. The school is positive in its approach to continual development and the mathematics co-ordinator is already using the analysis of recent national testing to set up an action plan for next year. She has had sufficient opportunity to monitor planning and work, and offers important advice and in-service training for teachers, including exemplar lessons. The numeracy strategy is well established throughout the school and teachers use a variety of suitable materials to support their teaching.

111. Recently there have been fewer opportunities for designated sessions given over to mathematical investigation and the co-ordinator has identified the need to improve calculator skills for the older pupils. At present there are fewer links to ICT. Suitable programs are not used regularly to support learning in lessons.

SCIENCE

112. The results of assessments made by teachers at the time of the National Curriculum tests of 2001, showed that the school performance in science in Year 2 was close to the national average. However, when compared with similar schools, the performance was well below expectations. This was partly due to a high percentage of pupils with special educational needs in this group and quite a large number of pupils joining and leaving the year group during the time up to the tests.

113. Current standards, whilst being overall similar to the previous year in the percentage of pupils expecting to achieve the expected Level 2, now show a significant minority of pupils achieving the higher Level 3 than in the previous year. At the same time, weaknesses noted then, in pupils' experimental and investigative science, have now improved considerably, affecting all elements of science work. At the same time, teaching in Year 2 has improved and the overall attention to detail, the emphasis on understanding as well as knowledge, has provided the impetus to improve elements of the work.

114. Having identified science as an area of the curriculum in need of development, just prior to the last inspection, the school has worked hard to improve the subject in a number of ways:

- It has used a consultant to give good support to teachers in understanding their new scheme of work and putting it into practice effectively;
- It has developed very good assessment opportunities, on a termly basis, in order to check pupils' progress;
- It makes good use of these assessments to plan the next stages of pupils' learning; unsatisfactory at the last inspection;
- It has concentrated on putting right previous weaknesses in investigational work, making pupils more independent in the process.

115. Standards at the end of Year 4, at the time of the last report, were said to be average, but with too few higher attaining pupils being challenged adequately. Currently this is not the case. The school has implemented a very good system of assessment and uses it carefully to plan challenging work for all abilities in Years 3 and 4. At the same time, teachers are at pains to prepare work for three distinct ability groups within their science lessons. Much of the work is based on investigations and a regular system of assessment gives a clear picture of the good progress pupils are making in these two year groups. Once again, a significant percentage of pupils are achieving at a slightly higher level than expected of them, particularly in their investigational work.

116. Progress made by pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and those pupils for whom English is not their first language, is good. The inclusive nature of the teaching of science ensures that all pupils are challenged and that teachers have the highest expectations of their pupils in both behaviour and work.

117. Pupils in Year 1 learn about different parts of plants and can point to leaves, stems and roots, whilst asking good independent questions to place on a 'question tree', such as, "Why do plants make perfume?" Completed and assessed work illustrates pupils sorting magnetic and non magnetic materials, then using different materials as conductors, predicting in the first instance which would be most suitable.

118. Work in Year 2 on the human body, shows pupils working at a very large size model of the body's internal organs. When questioned they knew not only the names of the organs, but could effectively explain their functions within the body. Good use of numeracy skills was seen in a display of body height and weight for all class members. Pupils' work on a bouncing ball experiment showed clearly that pupils already understood the need to predict outcomes, measure them accurately and compare them with their original thoughts.

119. By Year 3, pupils understand completely the need for fair testing in their investigations, they were seen working at trying to find out what seeds need to help them germinate. In pairs they set up experiments, following their own suggestions, noting which elements will remain the same and which will change. In order to make the work more challenging for Year 4 pupils in the same class, they were asked to discuss photosynthesis and did this with accuracy.

120. Year 4 pupils have had experience of looking at light, noting such words as opaque and translucent. They have set up electrical circuits and understand the need for a circuit to be complete before it will work. They have set up fair tests to ascertain the conductivity of various materials, showing predictions, how the investigation will be made fair and then writing out their results with accuracy.

121. Part of the reason for improvements in standards since the last inspection, is to be seen in the improvements in teaching. Teaching was judged as satisfactory at the last inspection and is now good overall, with some instances of very good teaching. Two out of seven lessons seen were very good, four were good and one was satisfactory. Where teaching was noted as very good, in a Years R and 1 class, and again in a Years 3 and 4 class, the additional questioning, the very well structured lesson and the systematic development of knowledge and understanding were seen as the higher order teaching skills. As a result of these, pupils responded very well. They were very keen to answer questions drawing on their previous experiences. They tried to make use of scientific vocabulary and showed a good degree of independence when asked to set up their investigations.

122. The co-ordinator has helped appreciably in the quest for a stronger science curriculum and better quality teaching. With further in-service training planned, it is to be expected that standards will continue to improve and will compare more favourably with national standards and those of similar schools.

ART AND DESIGN

123. Only one lesson of art was seen at the last inspection, but comments made in the report suggest that standards in the subject were in line with what would be expected of pupils in this age range. Since that time, particularly since the headteacher has co-ordinated work in art and design, the subject has flourished and standards are now above expectations both at Year 2 and when pupils leave the school. All pupils, including those with special needs and pupils who do not have English as a first language, make the same good progress in the development of skills, knowledge and understanding as other pupils.

124. By the age of seven, pupils are able to blend colours well as they work in a good range of media and materials. The murals produced by Year 1 and some reception children, on the subject of the Creation, show a multi media approach, which has involved all pupils and has a high level of finish. Work in the style of Henri Rousseau, gives pupils good opportunities to mix colour, whilst adding cut paper to their pictures to give a different effect and reproduce the style of the artist.

125. In Year 2, pupils had previously used the digital camera to take photographs of each other. Before tackling self portraits they had opportunities to develop skills using line, tone, shape and form, as they practised drawing facial features, until ready to attempt further work. In the very well taught lesson seen, pupils were experimenting by cutting their digital photographs and filling the intervening space with a choice of pastels, watercolours and charcoals. In the corridor, completed self portraits were of good quality.

126. Pupils make careful observational drawings of natural and man made objects. They designed and made artefacts for a purpose. For example, in Years 3 and 4, there were very good examples of work showing completed evacuee suitcases, containing the artefacts which pupils expected children to take with them to their temporary homes during the war.

127. Sketch books are used well to develop artistic and designing skills, showing pupils unafraid to explore colour and shape. In Year 4, pupils used their sketch books to note art in their environment, before completing mini-sculptures based on their sketches. The feeling of freedom of expression is well supported in the school's art club. Here, a buzz of excitement was clearly evident as a large group of pupils tackled landscape painting. The headteacher

supplied useful digital photographs of a range of fields and skylines. Pupils then experimented with colour and were clearly seen to be developing their artistic skills, within a supportive and creative atmosphere. Pupils take their new found skills and excitement back into their own classes, where their talents often spark others to greater successes.

128. Work by the oldest pupils, as part of an entry in a national competition, showed very good links between art and information technology. Designs relating to a theme of man's lack of care for the environment saw pupils using digital photography to record aspects of pollution. Using these images, pupils developed them into multi-image pictures in the style of Andy Warhol, through use of computer and photocopy techniques, producing a powerful display, which won them a national award.

129. Further good examples of the school's cross-curricular work was seen following a visit to the Kingston Lacy estate as part of the National Trust's guardianship scheme. From this visit good quality pastel work was completed and displayed on the estate.

130. The overall success of art and design in the school can be attributed to:-

- The passionate interest taken in the development of the subject by the headteacher;
- The insistence on all pupils developing skills with which to tackle all elements of the art curriculum;
- Good, and often very good, teaching, which puts into effect an exciting curriculum;
- Pupils, who respond very well, enjoy their work and achieve well.

131. A parent, answering the Ofsted questionnaire, noted, "I am an art teacher at secondary level and I never fail to be impressed at the standard of work on display."

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

132. Good improvements have been made in design and technology in the school since the last inspection, at which time standards were mainly in line with national expectations. Currently, standards are above expectations at the end of Year 2 and Year 4.

133. The reasons for these improvements can be attributed to:

- The work of the very effective co-ordinator;
- The use of a scheme of work which is clearly based on the development of skills as well as knowledge and understanding;
- The efforts of all staff to put the scheme into effect with enthusiasm;
- The provision of good quality resources.

134. Although few lessons of design and technology were observed, comprehensive photographic evidence, good quality planning and a well kept file showing work levelled against descriptions made in the National Curriculum documentation, make judgements about standards of work possible. At the same time, progress made by pupils can be tracked through well-ordered assessments noted in pupils' 'Once a month' books. This shows that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, are making good progress. Planning shows that wherever possible, both teachers and teaching assistants plan to give support to those pupils with special needs and those for whom English is not their first language.

135. In the single complete lesson of design and technology seen in Year 2 and in the parts of lessons seen elsewhere in the school, teaching was regularly good and in the case of the Year 2 lesson particularly good. Here, the class teacher was very well supported by the headteacher who took a group of pupils working on the production of a vehicle. Rather than go straight into the design and make activity, these pupils were testing their ability to make parts of the vehicle. For example they were experimenting with axles and wheels, noting

which particular way of joining these to each other and to the chassis of the vehicle would be most effective. It is in the development of these skills that pupils make such good progress in their work.

136. Examples of good quality finished work were noted in winding mechanisms made in Year 2, photo frames in Year 3, and money containers in Year 4. In all of these projects, pupils provided good designs, which were often annotated to show materials and joining techniques. They usually listed not only materials, but the order in which things would be done. Finally good quality evaluations of the success of their finished products showed a good understanding of items being fit for their purpose.

137. The headteacher has recently introduced ideas for assessing pupils' abilities in the subject. Whilst these are at an early stage of development, they fit in well with the school's overall very successful pattern of assessment.

GEOGRAPHY

138. During the inspection there was only limited opportunity to observe teaching in geography. This took place during 'plan, do, review' sessions for pupils in Year 1 and formed a satisfactory part of these particular activities.

139. Pupils at the end of Years 2 and 4 attain standards which are expected nationally. They are able to identify features of town and country environments and draw imaginary maps to show these features. They have had successful experiences in looking at the road leading to their school to discuss its features and safety and to make suggestions as to how this might be improved. This work was celebrated by a colourful display of signs and notices, and effective use of a digital camera. Pupils have had experiences of making a map looking at an aerial photograph and make comparisons between life in Wimborne and a Scottish island.

140. Older pupils use maps to consider how land is used. They have made effective use of a database program to display the results of a job survey and linked this with transport. The whole school is very aware of recycling and their own effect on the environment. There have been effective studies of children living in different cultural environments and older pupils have the opportunity to visit other areas during residential stays and links with the National Trust. Pupils review their own work effectively during the 'plan, do, review' sessions and remember facts well.

141. The co-ordinator keeps satisfactory photographic and recorded evidence of work done in each unit taught. She is developing a format for assessment which can be used consistently through the school, but at present has not had an opportunity to monitor teaching. She acknowledges that geography has had less development than the history curriculum and that the enrichment links seen there are not as strong in geography.

HISTORY

142. Pupils at the end of Years 2 and 4 attain standards that are expected for their age in history. They achieve well and demonstrate great interest in the subject.

143. Little teaching was observable during the inspection, but sufficient recorded and displayed evidence was available to make judgements on attainment.

144. At the end of Year 2 pupils study the Great Fire of London, comparing and discussing fire fighting techniques. Pupils ask suitable questions and make booklets and written records. At the end of Year 4 pupils are beginning to understand the effects of World War II. They approach the work by considering how children like them might feel and the experiences evacuees had. The work done is supported very effectively by good quality displays, using

authentic artefacts and documents, like newspapers and ration books. The curriculum in this area is effectively enriched by the use of art and design and technology to make pictures and models of houses affected by the Great Fire of London. Older pupils make effective use of ICT by developing a web page which supports their research in history. They have used the local environment effectively, visiting the Dorchester museum to look at mosaic pavements when studying the Roman invasion. Pupils are beginning to understand the passage of time, using timelines effectively in their studies and they make effective comparisons between two periods in British history (Celts and Romans). Teachers make use of good resources well.

145. The co-ordinator has made a good start in the collection of evidence, based on the units taught in history using effective photographic records of displays and pupils' work. She has developed a new assessment sheet, which is being introduced throughout the school. However, there has been no opportunity to observe teaching to guarantee coverage and quality.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

146. Standards in ICT at the last inspection were noted as being in line with national expectations at both the end of Year 2 and when pupils left the school. Since that time, standards have improved and are now above national expectations at the end of both Year 2 and Year 4.

147. The subject co-ordinator has had a very positive effect on standards, through his support, very good understanding of the subject and the way he has set up the computer suite.

148. Although only one complete lesson of taught computer activities was observed, several parts of lessons, a wide range of work in books and on display, together with a wide range of planning, gives strength to the judgement that pupils are achieving above the expected levels for their ages. For example, in the complete lesson seen in a Years 3 and 4 class, pupils were engaged in creating multi-media presentations in the form of a page for their own school website, based on their work in a World War II project. They moved text with confidence, imported other text and visual material, arranged sounds within the page and some were clearly working at a level normally seen at Year 6. For the pupils in Year 3 this shows they are making very good progress in their learning. A feature of the lesson was the fact that all pupils, including the small group with special educational needs, were making good and sometimes very good progress. This is an improvement on the 'sound progress' noted at the last inspection.

149. Pupils have been able to achieve this progress, by working systematically through a range of activities, which develops their skills as well as their knowledge and understanding.

150. In a Year 2 numeracy lesson, pupils began the lesson in the computer suite, where they practised their tables using the computers, before returning to their own class to continue the lesson. This showed ICT giving good support to mathematics.

151. In Year 2 pupils were seen giving instructions to a programmable toy, which they sent in particular directions in order to reach specific points on the mat. In order to add interest to the activity, it was seen as a pirate giving instructions to find hidden treasure.

152. Pupils in Year 1 were emulating the style of Henri Rousseau as they drew and coloured pictures on screen. They showed good skills in the use of different on-screen brushes and effects. The activity was carried out almost without the teacher, as pupils were confident in their own skills and did not require close observation.

153. Further work on display and in pupils' 'Once a month' assessment books, shows Year 2 pupils writing about themselves, using full stops and capital letters in their texts. While Year 3 pupils write about an insect called the 'Swamp Stinger' for example, changing fonts, letter size and adding colour to highlight their texts. Work from Year 4 shows them creating on-screen tally charts to record their findings as they ask their classmates about how their parents travel to work. They then use the information to create graphs of their findings; two useful examples of information technology supporting other curriculum areas.

154. The co-ordinator, leading by very good example, entered his class for a competition in which pupils linked environmental issues with the use of photocopying and computing in order to present powerful visual effects, in the style of Warhol. This presentation won the school a prestigious award for its work.

155. A wide range of activities is taught well throughout the school, with some teachers showing very good skills. This shows good improvement from the previous report. Having had training, teachers are confident in their own skills and present lessons well. They are able to support individual pupils who have trouble with specific skills and can correct minor problems with hardware. As a result, pupils respond very well in lessons. They are attentive to instructions and eager to get on with the tasks. They often work in pairs and are happy supporting each other. In a Years 3 and 4 lesson, one pupil was giving close support to a friend who had missed a session on the use of a scanner. Behaviour is universally good during lessons and often very good. This has a very positive effect on the progress pupils make in their learning. This was the case at the last inspection and shows that pupils are still very keen to make progress and do well in the subject.

156. In spite of the very clear progress made by the school over the very recent past, there still remain a small number of issues to resolve. Whilst the school now has a pupil to computer ratio which is better than that recommended nationally, the use made of the computer suite is not as complete as it might be. Too often the suite remains empty, without even small groups of pupils using it for group activities connected to their other class work, in spite of their good independent skills. At the same time, the lack of class based computers does mean that neither teachers nor pupils can access information technology at will in order to support classroom activities. The school is now faced with making further difficult decisions about the continuing resourcing of ICT for the long term. The aspect of using ICT to collect data, monitor and analyse is not as well developed as other strands of the work, but is clearly in place.

157. The very effective management of the subject across the school has meant that the school now has its own website, produces its prospectus and notes of the annual parents and governors meetings on its site, together with e.mailing its weekly newsletters to those parents who have the facility to receive them. Teaching assistants have received training and take on a very active role when the class is in the computer suite. The library system for borrowing and returning books is now computerized, and librarians and pupils use this well.

MUSIC

158. The last report found standards in music to be in line with national expectations. This inspection judges that standards still meet such expectations, notably at the end of Year 2 and Year 4. However, the range of opportunities previously available to pupils appears to have been much wider than now and the overall emphasis on music has declined.

159. There are strengths in Years 1 and 2 where pupils build on sound work in Year R to express themselves, compose their own tunes and use a variety of symbols to write them down. In a very good Years R and 1 lesson pupils demonstrated above average knowledge and understanding and performed their own compositions well. Pupils played in tune, kept time and learnt to follow a score whilst paying attention to the 'conductor'.

160. Good teaching for Years 1 and 2 challenges pupils and gives them plenty of opportunities to explore their own capabilities. Relationships are good, planning ensures all requirements of the National Curriculum are covered and assessment to evaluate pupils' progress is being trialled. Pupils, both boys and girls obviously enjoy music lessons at this stage and work with enthusiasm.

161. Teachers in Years 3 and 4 are less secure in their own ability and lack knowledge and understanding of music. Teaching depends very heavily on commercially produced tapes and, although in the better lessons teachers stop the tape to discuss what is happening, opportunities are missed to develop the subject. Consequently standards are barely adequate at the end of Year 4 with some pupils, especially the more able, making too little progress. Pupils do experience all required elements, but as a result of insufficient informal intervention by teachers, do not achieve as much as they could. For example, pupils in Year 4 are aware of conventional notation used to record music, but have no understanding of the function of time signatures or clefs.

162. Years 3 and 4 are usually attentive and well behaved in music lessons, but their enjoyment and enthusiasm is less obvious than in Years 1 and 2 and owes more to the good relationships with staff than to success in the subject.

163. The co-ordinator for music has produced a good range and quality of planning for Years R, 1 and 2 and sets a very good example in her own teaching. However, a lack of monitoring of the quality of teaching and depth of study of Years 3 and 4 does not guarantee that standards are as good as they could be. Opportunities to develop the subject through evaluating strengths and weaknesses are missed.

164. Good use of a budget for music has produced a good bank of resources to support teaching and allow pupils to perform with a range of tuned and untuned instruments. Plans are in hand to improve these resources still further.

165. The last report indicated that there were weaknesses in pupils' singing in some lessons and assemblies. These have been successfully overcome and pupils were observed singing well, with enthusiasm on a variety of occasions. Video evidence and comments from parents confirm that the quality of singing and participation in school shows, usually held in a local theatre, are very good and highly regarded.

166. Although there have been times when special educational needs pupils and those for whom English is an additional language have been withdrawn from music lessons for extra help, overall pupils share similar opportunities.

167. Since the last inspection the numbers of pupils learning instruments (principally the violin and recorder) have decreased and there are fewer opportunities for pupils to take part on a regular basis: for example in a school choir. This decline has greater effect on those potentially more able pupils.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

168. Standards of pupils' attainment are satisfactory at the end of Year 2 and Year 4, being in line with national expectations for physical education. Evidence of this comes from a mixture of lesson observations, watching pupils at play, teachers' planning and records. The school's commitment to outdoor education is having a very positive effect on physical education. Activities on residential visits in team building and outdoor pursuits such as orienteering for Years 3 and 4 enhance the curriculum.

169. A new scheme of work now in draft form is ready for September 2002 to maximise the use of the new hall and apparatus. All elements of the National Curriculum programmes of study for physical education are catered for including gymnastics, dance, games and swimming. It is clear that pupils have been taught how to carry equipment safely and understand the need to warm up and cool down. Year 2 pupils have a satisfactory awareness of space, are able to devise their own sequences of movements to be completed on apparatus and the floor and have appropriate ball skills. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 build successfully on these skills and make satisfactory, and in the case of higher attainers, good progress.

170. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, have equal access to all physical education activities. There is no significant difference between boys and girls, although in a very good Year 3 lesson it was apparent that boys had good ball skills with their feet, whilst girls throw and catch large balls more effectively.

171. Pupils throughout the school respond very well to physical education, behaving themselves well, joining in team games and observing rules. They obviously enjoy games without wanting to win at all costs.

172. Teaching in physical education is satisfactory overall with some very good features. Planning is sound. Learning objectives are clear and well communicated and as in a Year 4 outdoor session pupils are extended mentally and physically. Teachers make good reference to how physical activity affects the body and make links with science and personal, social and health education. Good attention to health and safety was observed, removing jewelry and watches and when taking pupils across the road to the paddock. However, in one class long hair was not tied back and this was a hazard. Staff have varying levels of confidence in teaching physical education. Most pay good attention to helping pupils to improve their skills by watching others and evaluating performances. However, on occasions for example in a Year 3 games lesson, the pace was too slow and the space available was too big to allow for meaningful interaction between teacher and pupils.

173. Dance is taught in a satisfactory way to all year groups. Some staff feel more confident than others, but good links are made to drama, and dance makes a sound contribution to pupils' cultural development.

174. The school makes very good use of its own pool throughout the summer term, when all pupils swim every week. Attention to health and safety is very good and school records show that all pupils are able to swim before they move to the middle school.

175. A new physical education co-ordinator is due to take over in September 2002. She inherits good planning, good resources and accommodation. The subject is well supported by a good range and number of extracurricular activities including football, cricket, country dancing, and step aerobics. The school makes good use of grants to provide extra resources and facilities and currently holds the 'Sport England Activemark' in recognition of its commitment to promoting physical education. The school is aware of the need to improve the monitoring of actual teaching in physical education to identify areas for further development.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

176. Too little evidence was available for inspectors in the last inspection to form judgements on standards in religious education. Although few lessons were observable this inspection finds that pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 is above the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus and that at the end of Year 4 it is in line with such expectations.

177. Year 2 pupils have a well developed knowledge and understanding of different Creation stories and of Christian and Jewish festivals. They know how and why the Bible is special to Christians and that the Torah is fundamental to Judaism. Very good use was made of a Muslim girl's experience of the Qu'ran in an excellent Year 2 lesson on special books, and excellent use was made of ICT to project video images of pupils' interviewing role play. Pupils responded very well, making very good use of literacy skills, listening intently and asking pertinent questions. Because of excellent teaching in this lesson pupils' understanding was considerably enhanced, their learning was very good and all pupils including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language achieved well.

178. By the end of Year 4 pupils have studied Judaism and Islam to a satisfactory depth for their age and have an appropriate knowledge of different places of worship and customs: for example making comparisons of Christian and Muslim weddings.

179. Staff teaching in Years 1 and 2 use the same planning on a two year rolling programme and this guarantees full coverage of the curriculum. Teaching, confirmed by the quality of pupils' written work, is good overall in this age group and pupils respond well. The variety of work completed at different levels following the same input shows pupils of different abilities are suitably challenged.

180. Teaching in Years 3 and 4 is satisfactory, the best features being in management of pupils and when a variety of artefacts are used to stimulate discussions. Pupils' learning and response, although satisfactory overall, are not as good as in Years 1 and 2. This generally is because some teachers lack confidence in the subject. Although they are supported by the scheme of work which clearly states learning objectives, a lack of monitoring opportunities for the co-ordinator has not highlighted strengths and weaknesses for future development. Currently the absence of assessment in religious education makes it difficult for the school to gauge pupils' progress or attainment.

181. There is a good range of resources for religious education and these are supported effectively by the variety of visitors who come to take part in assemblies. These include local clergy and representatives from different faiths. Although long term planning for assemblies is satisfactory and some are led very well, not all fulfill all the requirements which would ensure they are acts of collective worship. However, both assemblies and religious education lessons make a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development which is now judged very good overall.