

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **SWANAGE FIRST SCHOOL**

Swanage

LEA area: Dorset

Unique reference number: 113677

Headteacher: Mr R Withey

Reporting inspector: Mr M S Burghart  
20865

Dates of inspection: 28<sup>th</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup> January 2002

Inspection number: 243040

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:	Mount Scar Swanage Dorset
Postcode:	BH19 2EY
Telephone number:	01929 422424
Fax number:	01929 426652
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr P Grover
Date of previous inspection:	July 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; Art; Music; Religious education.	How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9426	Mrs J Gallichan 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	Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage; Mathematics; Information and communication technology.	The school's results and pupils' achievements.
14637	Mrs M Hammond Team inspector	Geography; History;	
25554	Mrs J Watson Team inspector	Equal opportunities; Science; Design and technology; Physical education.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Swanage First is a slightly smaller than average primary school in the Mount Scar district of Swanage in Dorset. The school provides good accommodation for nine classes, two for each year group except Year 4 where there is only one class. There are 208 children on the school roll aged four to nine. There is an average of 23 pupils per class which is below average. Pupils are drawn from the local surrounding area some from private, but most from rented accommodation. Most of the pupils attend some kind of pre-school group before starting Year R, the majority at the on-site playgroup. Children's attainment on entry to the school, aged four, varies, but overall is average for the local education authority. The headteacher has been in post since September 1999. He is supported by nine full time teachers. Before the head's appointment the deputy acted as head for two years during the previous head's long term absence. There are 36 pupils on the special educational needs register. This accounts for 17 per cent of the school roll, and is slightly below the national average. Three pupils have formal statements under the terms of the DfES Code of Practice<sup>1</sup>, which proportionally is about average. Nine children are in receipt of free school meals, which is well below the national average of 20 per cent. No pupils require extra support as a consequence of having English as an additional language and no pupils come from minority ethnic groups. This is below average.

In the week prior to the inspection a senior teacher responsible for literacy, numeracy, curriculum and assessment died suddenly after a short illness. Following some deliberation the staff decided that despite the considerable effect of this tragic situation they would prefer to go ahead with the inspection.

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

Swanage First School is an improving school with many good features. Pupils get on well together. Standards are high in English and science and at least in line with national expectations in all other subjects, with the exception of information and communication technology (ICT) where improvements are necessary. The school has a good ethos and pupils of all abilities show very positive attitudes and behaviour. Considerable improvements in management procedures, well led by the headteacher, are having positive effects on the quality of pupils' learning. Following uncertainties in finance revealed in the last inspection, the school has done well to reduce significantly its large overspend, and presently gives sound value for money. This is still consistent with judgements from the previous inspection.

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

- Standards in English are well above average by the ages of seven and nine and above average in science.
- Teaching is predominantly good.
- Pupils' behaviour is excellent and attitudes are very good.
- Provision for special educational needs is good.
- Provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good.
- The headteacher manages and leads very well.
- Provision for the Foundation Stage<sup>2</sup> is good.

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<sup>1</sup> The DfES Code of Practice gives practical advice to schools and local education authorities about their responsibilities to ensure that all 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.

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

## What could be improved

- Standards and provision for information and communication technology (ICT).
- How responsibilities are delegated and carried out.
- Provision for pupils' multicultural awareness.
- Some aspects of teaching.
- Outdoor equipment for the Foundation Stage.
- Attendance rates.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The last report of July 1997 raised serious concerns about the management of the school as part of seven key issues for improvement. The school has made very good progress in overcoming this, notably since the present head was appointed. He has been able to build on the school's strengths and develop effective planning to address weaknesses. The school improvement plan is now a good tool for management and successfully prioritises initiatives. The considerable overspend is being successfully addressed and current financial management is secure. Release time has been allocated for the special educational needs co-ordinator and there is a clear statement regarding sex education. In addition national strategies have been successfully introduced for literacy and numeracy and modifications to the building (especially improved toilets) have enhanced the school environment. Resources have been improved. On the basis of policies, procedures and planning now in place the school is suitably 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	C	B	A	B
Writing	C	B	A	B
Mathematics	C	B	C	C

**Key**

well above average    A  
 above average        B  
 average                C  
 below average        D  
 well below average   E

The trend year on year has been upward in literacy skills and this follows the national trend. Pupils currently in Year 2 and Year 4 are performing well and are well above expected standards in English and above average in science. Attainment is in line with national expectations in most other subjects with notable strengths: for example in history; and meets the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education for seven and nine year olds. Although some aspects of mathematics, geography and music are underemphasised, pupils' attainment is satisfactory overall. Standards in ICT fall short of expectations partly as a result of lack of equipment and partly because of gaps in some teachers' knowledge and understanding. Not all statutory requirements for ICT are met. Pupils with special educational needs are fully included in all activities and do well considering their ability and experience. A high proportion of such pupils reach, or nearly reach, national expectations in English,

mathematics and science. By the end of the Foundation Stage children meet the national expectations for six year olds and some are well above these, especially in reading and personal and social development. Children make good progress from an average starting point as measured by the local education authority baseline.

### PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good: most pupils like school and respond very well in and out of class.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Excellent: pupils are polite and attentive and respond well to authority.
Personal development and relationships	Good: pupils show very good respect for each others' feelings and clearly understand the effect of their own actions. Relationships between pupils are usually very good.
Attendance	Although recently improved, attendance is unsatisfactory, being below the national average. It does however match rates in other local schools.

### TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 4
Quality of teaching	Good.	Good with strengths and a minority of weaknesses.	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 overall quality of teaching is good. All staff were observed and all had at least one good lesson. Five had very good sessions. Ninety-four per cent of lessons were satisfactory or better, with almost sixty per cent at least good. One in seven lessons was very good. The four less than satisfactory lessons affected more than one teacher and were partly due to a lack of resources for ICT as well as some gaps in teachers' knowledge and understanding. Strengths in teaching are in literacy, numeracy and science, and skilful use of questioning. Pupils are managed very well and teaching assistants make good contributions to the quality of teaching overall. Provision and teaching for special educational needs are good. More general weaknesses in teaching are the result of slow pace, some occasions when higher attaining pupils are insufficiently challenged and time not always well managed. Some aspects of the curriculum are underemphasised and homework is not always used consistently. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is consistently good.

Teaching has a positive effect on pupils' learning, especially with regard to literacy skills where it is supported by excellent planning, very good assessment and monitoring.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall and, although schemes are not yet complete for all subjects, the curriculum is being improved. Particular strengths in literacy. Statutory requirements for ICT not met and some underemphasis in aspects of mathematics, geography and music. Foundation Stage curriculum good, except for outdoor provision. Good team work in planning for classes with the same age pupils.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good provision and support, much improved. Individual education plans used well to set targets and encourage progress. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to pupils' learning.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall: spiritual provision improved to good. Moral and social provision very good and a strength of the school. Cultural good for local and UK culture, but more to do to improve pupils' awareness of multicultural issues.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good: a good level of physical care concerning health and safety issues. Assessment procedures very good in literacy and satisfactory in mathematics and science. More to do to introduce assessment to other subjects.

The school continues to maintain good links with most parents and the community, and has a good reputation. A small minority of concerns about relationships have been taken seriously by both school and governors, and are being dealt with through appropriate school procedures.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher's management is very good. Under his successful leadership the many key issues of the last report have been overcome. He maintains the school's educational direction and translates this into practical, prioritised procedures. Roles of senior staff as subject leaders are still in need of further development. Greater delegation of responsibility and more opportunities for monitoring are needed.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors give good support. They are well organised in committees which are particularly successful in managing the building, special educational needs and finance. Some statutory requirements for ICT and the school brochure not met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school analyses its performance well and now has a good awareness of its strengths and weaknesses. More to do to improve monitoring by subject leaders to evaluate teaching and learning.
The strategic use of resources	Good management of finance is overcoming the large overspend of previous years. Very efficient running of financial matters by administrative staff complements the link made between curriculum needs and the budget by head and governors. Best value principles followed well.

The school's falling roll has affected finance, but numbers have now stabilised. Staff, accommodation and resources are used effectively. The school has been determined to maintain single age classes. However, the formula-funded budget<sup>3</sup> may not be sufficient to support this arrangement in future. In this event curriculum planning on a two year cycle is already in place to protect pupils' education. There is insufficient outdoor equipment to support the learning of children in the Foundation Stage.

## **PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children like school.</li> <li>• Teaching is good.</li> <li>• Behaviour is good.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> <li>• Ninety per cent of parents feel comfortable about approaching the school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homework.</li> <li>• Extracurricular activities.</li> </ul>

Seventy-three parents returned the Ofsted questionnaire and 17 attended a meeting with the registered inspector. Most comments about the school were positive and constructive. A small minority of parents expressed concerns about relationships between some staff and pupils. Inspectors have reviewed school procedures for dealing with complaints and judge these to be sound. The school's homework policy is satisfactory, but is inconsistently applied in some classes. Extracurricular activities have been improved and are considered satisfactory for a first school. Overall, inspectors support parents' positive views of the school.

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<sup>3</sup> This refers to finance delegated to the school, primarily as a result of numbers on roll.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. When children start school in the reception classes their standards on entry, as judged by early testing in September, show that overall they have scores which are equivalent to those expected for their age in this county. A very small number of children show early signs of having special educational needs, whilst a slightly larger group show themselves to have above average ability. Literacy and language skills are a little higher than other skills on entry to school.

2. As a result children make good progress in their learning, especially in literacy and language work. The teaching of reading is especially successful in the Foundation Stage. Equally children make good and sometimes very good progress in their personal, social and emotional development, which gives all round support to the way they learn and take advantage of the good teaching on offer to them.

3. By the age of seven, pupils' performances in the 2001 national tests were good overall. In relation to national averages they were well above average in reading and writing and in line with those averages in mathematics, when average point scores<sup>4</sup> are considered. When compared with similar schools pupils were seen as above average in reading and writing and broadly average in mathematics.

4. In the time since the last inspection the school has gradually raised the performance of its pupils year on year in reading, writing and mathematics, with most progress and improvement shown in reading, which is a strength within the work in English.

5. Pupils of all abilities do well overall in the school although there are one or two inconsistencies in teaching for the school to address in order to achieve maximum progress for its pupils. Ninety-six per cent of parents, who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire, say that their children make good progress in the school. Effective support for pupils with special educational needs, throughout the school enables those pupils to make good progress towards their own targets, with difficulties not being eliminated but very much minimised.

6. In Years 3 and 4, progress is consistently good and here, the good and very good teaching coupled with the very good attitudes and behaviour of pupils, combine to ensure good progress is maintained.

7. In English, pupils' progress is good in the Foundation Stage and in Years 2 and 3, satisfactory with good features in Year 1, but very good in Year 4. As a result both reading and writing are strengths within the subject and pupils reach above average standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 4. Pupils exhibit very good listening skills and when asked questions they give good answers. Less effective is their initiative to ask questions of their own volition. The teaching of reading is very effective and consistent throughout the school. Great care is taken with assessing pupils' growing ability and parental support is helpful. Less successful are standards in handwriting, which suffer from the lack of a school policy to ensure this skill is developed throughout the school. Writing for a wide range of purposes is good, although pupils are not yet given enough opportunities to use their information and communication technology skills to support progress in this work.

8. In mathematics, pupils' progress is good towards attaining acceptable standards in numeracy. Virtually all lessons observed and well over ninety per cent of work in books is connected with this area of mathematics. It is not therefore surprising that this area has clear

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<sup>4</sup> Average point scores refer to the average of pupils' scores weighted by Ofsted for each level attained in each subject.

strength, whilst areas of shape, space and measure, and work on data collection and interpretation are weaker. At the same time, pupils are given too few opportunities to put their good numeracy skills into effect in carrying out investigations for themselves, without too much teacher direction.

9. In science, standards by the end of both Year 2 and Year 4 are higher than are expected when compared with national averages. By the age of seven pupils have an understanding of what constitutes a fair test and understand some of the forces, which act on moving objects. The curriculum, which plans for pupils to revisit and consolidate major areas of work over a two year period, is effective. However, in some classes investigation work is limited to copying information rather than pupils writing investigations and results themselves.

10. In ICT pupils make unsatisfactory progress through the school and standards of their work by the end of Year 2 and Year 4 are below expectations. Much of this is as a result of poor resources, but equally the school is not yet teaching to the full range of the National Curriculum requirements, due to some lack of confidence in the teaching staff, together with a lack of clear guidance from a comprehensive scheme of work. Too few opportunities are given to pupils to link their work in ICT, to work in other subjects.

11. The school has decided to utilise its assemblies to add to other small amounts of time spent on religious education. As a result, standards are in line with expectations, as expressed in the locally agreed syllabus, and pupils make satisfactory progress in learning about different religions, whilst at the same time making some progress in learning from a small range of religious experiences. The lack of reference books, especially in the library, and weak links with ICT give little support to multicultural awareness.

12. Standards of work seen in all other subjects including personal, social and health education, by the age of seven are as generally expected of this age group. Singing shows a slightly higher level of success, whilst no work was available to be judged in geography.

13. By the end of Year 4, standards are once again broadly as expected for this age group, with some weaknesses in the range of opportunities for three-dimensional work in art, whilst singing is now judged to be very good. Here the teaching is enthusiastic and pupils really enjoy their work. Other aspects of music, however, are not as well taught and consequently standards in composition, listening and appraising are underdeveloped.

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

14. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour were reported as a strength at the time of the last inspection. Standards have been maintained and improved upon. Attitudes to learning are very good and behaviour is judged to be excellent. These high standards have a very positive impact on learning.

15. The youngest children make a smooth transition to the reception classes from the on-site playgroup. They are familiar with routines and move about their classes with confidence. Children listen attentively to their teachers and respond willingly to instructions. They work particularly well in pairs, for example when working on the computer. Children relate well to one another and adults. They tidy up sensibly and quietly, without fuss, at the end of sessions. Children's personal development is very good. During a circle time<sup>5</sup> when pupils discussed caring for others it was evident that they had a good understanding of what this meant. They suggested they might show how they cared by reading to one another, helping if someone fell over, or by giving a present.

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<sup>5</sup> In these lessons, children 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.

16. Throughout the school pupils' attitudes to their learning are very good. Pupils gather quickly for whole class teaching sessions and give teachers their full attention. They listen well and are usually keen to answer teachers' questions. At singing practice all pupils participate with obvious enjoyment. During a religious education lesson about the Bible, which followed a lively and interesting presentation during assembly earlier in the day, pupils were particularly well motivated and keen to learn more. Pupils concentrated well to produce good quality written work stimulated by the whole class teaching and discussion.

17. Behaviour is excellent. All lesson time can be devoted to teaching and learning as pupils behave so well. Although the school premises are difficult, pupils move between buildings sensibly. In assemblies pupils show respect for the occasion and wait quietly listening to the music until everyone arrives and the presenter begins. They then give that person their full attention. Pupils are polite and friendly as they talk with visitors and the eldest are keen to talk about their school, that they are proud of. No aggressive or oppressive behaviour was observed during the inspection. Parents opinion that pupils behave well at school is overwhelmingly confirmed by the observations of inspectors.

18. Relationships between pupils are usually very good. Pupils work happily in pairs and small groups, often working in mixed gender groups when given free choice. All groups of pupils, whether boys or girls, younger or older, those with different talents or from different villages get on well together. Pupils want to help each other and co-operate well in order to complete a task. For example, in a Year 1 physical education lesson pupils tried really hard to work together to win a team game passing balls, quoits and bean bags to their friends at the end of the line. They encouraged each other, enjoying their success with shouts of delight. Pupils respect the views of others even when they are different from their own.

19. Pupils enjoy taking responsibility when given the opportunity and this aspect of pupils' personal development is satisfactory. Pupils help themselves to equipment they need such as pencils, crayons, paper, or word books to help them with spelling, during lessons. However, there are not enough opportunities for them to research for information using the library or ICT, ask their own questions during whole class sessions or select resources from a wide range in subjects such as design and technology and art and design.

20. Almost all parents responding to the Ofsted questionnaire state their children enjoy coming to school. Most pupils arrive punctually and are keen to start the day's activities. Despite pupils' obvious enthusiasm and enjoyment of school, attendance levels are well below the national average. A large number of families take their children out of school for holidays during term time, partly because of the seasonal nature of their own work. It is difficult for teachers to cover again all the work that might have been missed. Unauthorised absence is now carefully followed up and as a result has been significantly reduced to a level below the national average. There have been no exclusions in the last year.

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

21. The overall profile of teaching is good. Over two-thirds of the 68 lessons observed were at least good with one in seven lessons very good. All staff including temporary teachers were observed and every teacher had at least one good lesson. In all 94 per cent of lessons were at least satisfactory. Teaching for the Foundation Stage was consistently good, notably in the areas of personal and social education, and communication, language and literacy. The majority of higher attaining children are already working well within Level 1 of the National Curriculum in reading and writing before leaving reception.

22. Teaching in the infant classes in Years 1 and 2 is good overall with some strengths and some weaknesses. Strengths are in:

- Literacy teaching, with Year 2 doing particularly well to help the majority of pupils reach (and in the case of higher attainers exceed) national expectations for this age in reading and writing;
- Numeracy work in Year 1 with pupils making good progress in learning new strategies.

23. Weaknesses in both year groups affected the teaching of information and communication technology (ICT) where inadequate resources and a lack of staff knowledge and expertise resulted in pupils making insufficient progress, and in a lack of confidence in teaching dance. Throughout these infant classes positives considerably outweigh negatives.

24. For pupils in Year 3 and Year 4 teaching is generally good and often very good. Good planning ensures that pupils of the same age in different classes have the same opportunities. Clear strengths are in:

- Consistently good literacy teaching which results in pupils reaching high standards: notably in reading and writing;
- Very good design and technology teaching which requires pupils to plan and design before testing their ideas. For example examining the success of designs and models of Roman catapults;
- Good science teaching which results in pupils' good learning and above average standards;
- Very good teaching of singing techniques, where three teachers were ably supported by a teaching assistant at the piano;
- Very good attention to the National Numeracy Strategy in Year 4 with high expectations and clear explanations. Pupils achieve good levels of understanding and are encouraged to reflect on the success of their chosen methods;
- History teaching in Year 3 where skilful use was made of video evidence and computer programs for pupils to select pertinent information before drawing conclusions.

25. Strengths common to all lessons observed include very good relationships between pupils and with staff. No incidences that have clearly concerned a small minority of parents regarding relationships were seen.

26. Throughout the school the management of pupils is usually good and often very good. Because of this pupils respond very well and behaviour is often excellent. Good planning for special educational needs, and when work is set for different ability groups, is successful (especially in literacy work) in supporting such pupils. Staff ensure that all pupils are included in all activities. The quality of teaching and support from teaching assistants is good, based very much on good relationships.

27. Weaknesses, which sometimes negatively affect lessons which overall may be satisfactory or even good, are in a lack of pace and management of time: for example introductions too long with too little opportunity for pupils to contribute, and pupils allowed to be slow in changing before and after physical education. Pupils are too seldom made aware of clear expectations of time. In some ways this is reflected in time deadlines set for completion of programmes of work in subject planning being too vague. For example a review of planning for music extending to almost a year without completion. Some staff are not confident in their knowledge and understanding of ICT and this negatively affects pupils' achievement.

28. There is a need to improve the consistent use of a more systematic programme of homework to complement classwork, especially for older pupils. Overall marking is satisfactory and best where it shows pupils how to improve.

29. Teachers have responded well to the school's programme of performance management. Where effective monitoring and evaluation of teaching by subject leaders has

complemented the monitoring of the head, the impact on what pupils learn and achieve has been very positive, notably in literacy work. More time is needed for staff to observe each other teaching to make the most of strengths and overcome weaknesses.

30. The outcomes of good quality teaching are in the quality of pupils' learning. In English, numeracy and science this has been translated into standards which are at least above average by the time pupils leave the school.

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

31. Overall the curriculum is broad and relevant. It meets the requirements of the National Curriculum with the exception of information and communication technology (ICT) and aspects of music. Although ICT is identified within some other subjects, it is underdeveloped, primarily because of insufficient resources to meet the needs of the subject and lack of staff expertise. There is strength in the standards of pupils' singing and performing but the composing aspect of the subject is not covered. The daily act of collective worship meets statutory requirements.

32. The school has successfully implemented the literacy and numeracy strategies and these are now well embedded in the curriculum. The English curriculum is rich in opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening, reading and writing skills which all impact positively on other areas of the curriculum.

33. Overall provision, which includes the quality of teaching and support, for the Foundation Stage is good. The curriculum provided for this age group is satisfactory. It provides a good range of learning opportunities which cover all required areas of learning. This is a similar picture to the previous inspection. There is a seamless transition into National Curriculum subjects and the planning is good. An example is the excellent planning and record keeping system for teaching reading. There are good relationships with the on site pre-school group and this ensures good transfer systems into mainstream education. The school is aware that more opportunities for children to make choices and show initiative would improve the curriculum still further.

34. The good intentions for pupils with special educational needs identified in the last report have been maintained. All pupils have full access to the curriculum with appropriate support where necessary. Girls and boys have equal opportunities and there is good awareness amongst teachers of the need to promote positive relationships. An example was seen when boys and girls worked well together, and class seating arrangements which actively support the school's commitment to equal opportunities. The Code of Practice for special educational needs is met.

35. Curriculum planning is satisfactory overall. Termly planning is thorough and relates fully to the revised National Curriculum and schemes of work, some of which have yet to be completed. There are no appropriate schemes of work for ICT and music, with more work still to do for design and technology. The school has identified this in its school improvement plan. The curriculum is appropriately planned around a two-year cycle which takes account of any projected need for mixed age groups. Although some planning does not take full account of progress from year group to year group, teachers plan together effectively across year groups. As in the previous report, the quality of teachers' short term plans is still variable. Planning for some subjects does not include a range of tasks suitably matched to pupils' prior attainment.

36. Provision for pupils' personal and social education is sound. The newly revised personal, social and health education policy includes training for citizenship, drugs misuse and a statement about sex education, which was identified in the last inspection as an

omission. The policy is not yet fully embedded, although aspects such as circle time which provide discussion opportunities to enhance pupils' self esteem are having a positive impact on pupils' personal development. There are satisfactory transfer arrangements for Year 4 pupils which include welcome visits to ease transition to the local middle school.

37. Extracurricular provision is satisfactory. It has improved since the previous inspection. It includes sporting activities such as football, tag rugby, ball skills and music clubs such as choir and recorders. Pupils represent the school in football tournaments, swimming galas, country dance displays and music festivals. The school has had some recent successes, notably the girls relay swimming team win, and choral speaking certificates. The curriculum is enriched by good use of the local environment such as Swanage beach, Durlston Country Park, Studland Nature Reserve and Corfe Castle. Visits to local churches and Kingston Lacy House support the religious education and history curriculum. The curriculum is enhanced by visitors such as a drama specialist. These opportunities have a positive impact on standards of attainment in many areas of the curriculum.

38. Moral and social provision are very good and a strength of the school. Spiritual development is good. However multicultural opportunities remain unsatisfactory. The very recent introduction of a personal, social and health education scheme of work which includes citizenship, promises to bring further improvements.

39. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good with important contributions from the revised religious education scheme of work and from some very good acts of worship led by local ministers. Music, reflection, prayers and hymns are used well to engage all children in a sense of spirituality. Across the curriculum teachers draw out spirituality appropriately, for example in poetry about the sea, art work on the 'Madonna and child', and in composing Christmas music. Ministers and many members of staff are able to communicate well their own spiritual sense to the children, and they in turn feel able to ask thoughtful questions such as, "How can God be everywhere?"

40. Moral provision is very good with pupils showing a very clear understanding of right and wrong. From the Foundation Stage children regularly discuss the importance of rules to the benefit all. Teachers' reinforcement of good behaviour, with very genuine praise, is very effective. Pupils have written their own classroom rules and are thoughtful about each other, appreciating the security this brings. The recent introduction of a 'Buddy Stop' in both playgrounds, which allows children feeling 'left out' to wait at the 'Stop' for an invitation to play, is much approved of as a good initiative to benefit everyone.

41. Social provision is very good. A powerful contribution is made by some particularly good examples set by staff, for instance sympathetic listening and thoughtful responses to children in any distress, speaking with pupils as equal partners, or thanking and praising children for thoughtful actions. Children from a very young age are able to work well in pairs and groups, taking turns and listening to each other. Co-operative tasks, such as measuring around a tin with a piece of string, promote responsible partner work. Visits to local community centres and projects for charity, give children opportunities to think of others. Whole school projects on friendship provide children with guidance on making and keeping good relationships. Children are given opportunities to take responsibility for tasks for the class. However, further opportunities could be given for pupils to lead initiatives and explore more freely.

42. Provision for cultural development remains unsatisfactory as multicultural education is underdeveloped in the curriculum. Teachers draw on the local culture with, for example, projects exploring the seaside resort and, recently, the Punch and Judy tradition. However teachers are not fully aware or sufficiently confident to discuss racial issues with children. The library has insufficient material to promote multicultural awareness and charity work tends to promote a limited view of other peoples. A project on Kenya with older pupils in geography and art, and religious education work on comparative religions make some good

provision. However, the curriculum needs further enrichment, especially for the younger children, with further examples in art, literature, geography, history and music. Insufficient attention is being given to preparing pupils for living in a diverse society and the school needs to ensure that the new personal, social and health education policy, and curriculum development, actively promote respect and understanding of diverse cultures and ethnic groups.

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

43. Pupils receive good support and guidance during their time at the school. Their care and welfare is of the utmost importance to staff and arrangements to ensure individual needs are met, are good. Arrangements for monitoring pupils' academic progress have improved since the last inspection particularly in the core subjects of English and mathematics, although there are still no formal assessment procedures for most other subjects.

44. Attention to matters of health and safety is a high priority of the school. The recent appointment of a new cleaner in charge has had a very positive impact on the day to day management of the safety of the site. Procedures, such as fire drills, fire alarm testing and risk assessments are now carried out systematically. Office staff deal most efficiently with children who have hurt themselves or are unwell. All incidents and accidents are recorded diligently. Other members of staff hold first aid qualifications and the whole staff will receive basic training during this term. Pupils are well supervised during break and lunchtimes.

45. Procedures to monitor attendance and levels of absence are very thorough and the use of computer recording since September 2000 has increased the efficiency and effectiveness of this monitoring. Patterns of absence can be monitored at the touch of a button. The headteacher works closely with the education welfare officer to support any pupils giving concern. All unauthorised absence is followed up carefully and parents contacted to explain the reasons for absence. Parents are reminded through school newsletters to bring their children to school at an appropriate time in the mornings to ensure they are supervised when they arrive on the school premises. However, as attendance rates are well below average, more could be done to promote the importance of regular attendance when communicating with parents.

46. The school now has a child protection policy and the designated teacher responsible has received additional training very recently. Following her own training a session was then organised for all teachers to raise their awareness and ensure consistent implementation of the policy. The most relevant key points are published in the staff handbook making easy reference for all members of staff. Requirements are fully met.

47. Monitoring and promotion of good behaviour is an integral part of each teacher's practice. The pattern of high expectations of pupils' behaviour is set right at the beginning in the reception classes and then continued throughout the other year groups. Procedures are very successful but unobtrusive. The school is not complacent and still strives to refine its practice; a revised behaviour policy has just been agreed. This document is very comprehensive and sets out clearly the school's procedures including those in relation to bullying. There are opportunities for pupils to receive recognition for both good work and good behaviour. Parents have full access to the praise book, which is available in the reception area. Classes decide their own class rules and enjoy receiving praise and encouragement from their teachers.

48. A personal, social and health education policy and programme of work was introduced in January and promises a more cohesive approach to learning in these areas. Circle time observed during the inspection makes a positive contribution to pupils' personal development. During the routines of the school day pupils receive much informal support and guidance by all adults in school. Although most teachers, and indeed the headteacher, know individuals

well, no formal record keeping or monitoring of pupils' personal development is currently in place. This would be the natural next stage of development following implementation of the programme of work.

49. A comprehensive policy for 'planning, assessment, recording, reporting, monitoring and target setting', carefully brings together many areas of the work of the school. This policy and the procedures outlined are designed to ensure each child makes maximum progress as they move through the school. Baseline assessment takes place soon after children begin school and the outcomes used to plan appropriate work for them. As well as undertaking statutory tests as required, pupils are assessed and tested in English, mathematics and science at specific times during the year. Levels of attainment are carefully recorded and analysed. English assessment procedures, leading to analysis, tracking of pupils' progress and target setting, are exemplary. If analysis of pupils' progress suggests underachievement either by individuals or groups of pupils, the reasons why are investigated and action taken to remedy the situation, for example by organising additional support or making changes to planning. Arrangements for mathematics and science are developing along similar lines. However, there is no formal monitoring for most other subjects which was the case at the time of the last inspection. Teachers draw on informal records to report to parents at the end of the year for these subjects.

50. Procedures to monitor and support pupils' progress in English are now well established across the school and the results of analysis are being used very effectively to raise expectations and standards. Steps are now being taken to adjust planning to ensure pupils reach the targets set for them. Significant improvements have been made since the last inspection, most particularly in English, but much work still remains to be done to ensure pupils' academic progress in all subjects is monitored and supported at an appropriate level.

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

51. The school continues to work hard to maintain a good partnership with its parents. Most parents are satisfied with the work of the school and what it provides. They are particularly pleased with the good standard of behaviour achieved and conclude that their children are taught well, are expected to work hard and therefore make good progress. Most responding to the Ofsted parents' questionnaire feel the school is well led and managed and their children are helped to become mature and responsible. However, although parents feel comfortable about approaching the school, a number of parents have concerns about aspects of their partnership with the school. For example, a small number do not feel well informed about how their child is getting on; and some individuals voice concerns about relationships. A significant minority is unhappy with arrangements for homework, some parents do not feel the school provides an interesting range of activities outside of lessons.

52. Inspectors agree with parents' positive views and in part agree with their concerns. Homework arrangements for the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 mostly are appropriate, but in Years 3 and 4 there is a lack of a well communicated policy and consistency of practice. This inhibits parents' ability to support children's learning at home. There are two formal opportunities to talk with teachers about children's progress and an annual written report at the end of the year. Overall reports are satisfactory – the best state clearly actual levels of attainment compared with what is expected for that age group in the core subjects. Suggestions are made regarding how work can be improved further. Unfortunately not all reports provide this information and parents might be left wondering exactly how well their child is progressing. More activities are being provided after school, but many are for the older children. Arrangements to organise additional clubs are well in hand. With regard to concerns over relationships, the school takes all complaints seriously and seeks to address them through appropriate procedures.

53. Parents appreciate the information provided in the fortnightly newsletters. Information is well presented and diary dates are provided well in advance of events. Newsletters are always available in the reception area if parents think they might have missed one. Due to the major changes to personnel on the governing body the annual governors report was postponed. Plans are now well advanced for the publication of this report. The current prospectus is missing much of the statutorily required information, but this too is due for review and update, as shown on the school development plan. The headteacher is very aware that the current document does not reflect the work of the school. Good information about what is to be taught is sent out to parents at the beginning of each term.

54. New parents to the school are invited in on several occasions before children join the school and good links with parents are established at this stage. Parents support children well in the Foundation Stage with sharing books and helping them as they start learning to read. A number of parents come in and help in reception classes in the afternoons. Very few parents help in classes in the other year groups, a number do however help with swimming and out of school visits. Parents are, however, very supportive of the activities and events organised by the Parents' Association. A good number of 'helpers' support the small committee in their successful fund raising events. The school appreciates the efforts of the Association and funds are used well to enhance facilities and resources for pupils. Ninety per cent of parents returning the Ofsted questionnaire report that they find the school approachable.

55. In an improvement since the last inspection the creation of an inviting reception area encourages parents to come into school to seek information. Excellent staff 'man the office'. They are knowledgeable and strive to answer parents' queries. Their welcoming approach is an asset to the school and promotes good relationships with parents.

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

56. The last report was highly critical of the leadership and management of the school. Since then, but predominantly in the past two years, following the appointment of the present headteacher, very good progress has been made in addressing the many key issues identified.

57. Through the very good management of the now good school improvement plan the head is successfully leading the school in order to raise and maintain standards. Equal attention in the school's good educational direction is paid to pupils' personal as well as academic development. The strengths in the previous inspection report concerning behaviour and pupils' good attitudes have been effectively built upon. Whilst some of the time deadlines of subject leaders' action plans, which form part of the overall improvement plan, need tightening, the whole plan is well constructed, appropriately costed and prioritised. It would be further improved by stating more clearly the criteria for success to gauge progress by, and by the planned restructuring staff responsibilities to spread workloads. This is much needed and will capitalise on the good joint planning within year groups. It will guarantee that all work builds systematically on what pupils have previously undertaken. An excellent model has been created in the school's literacy planning which results in high expectations, high standards and the very positive response of pupils. A particularly successful feature of such subject leadership has been in the skilful monitoring of coverage, standards and teaching in English. Other subject leaders have less (and in some cases no) opportunity to observe actual teaching and confirm that all elements of the curriculum are suitably emphasised. This has negative effects on what leaders know about what happens elsewhere in the school and how they can support colleagues. It has allowed some aspects of the curriculum to become underemphasised: for example:

- Shape, space and measures in investigations in mathematics;
- Composing and appreciation in music;

- Geography, which is not featured sufficiently often enough to consolidate skills learnt;
- Too little use made of ICT to support other subjects.

58. Together head, staff and governors have done very well in managing finances towards overcoming the large deficit inherited from the time of the last report. Notwithstanding the need to review the organisation of classes to match the numbers on roll in the near future, the budget is now under control. The large number of negative comments of the county auditors three years ago have been replaced by a recent commendation. The efficiency of very good office staff, complemented by the work of the governors sub committee, ensure that finances are effectively managed, best value principles are met, and all grants are used appropriately. Because of the tightness of the situation, little money has been available to subject leaders to develop their curriculum areas. Nevertheless the 'poor resources' reported in 1997 have been improved to what is now a satisfactory profile. There are a few exceptions, notably insufficient equipment for ICT (now being planned for); the lack of required large ride on toys and climbing equipment outdoors to promote the Early Learning Goals for the Foundation Stage; and sufficient good quality books to restock the library. Subject leaders have used finance well and resources are well organised and accessible. The school's policy to maintain single age classes, has proved expensive in terms of staffing and severely restricts how much money is available to support the running of the school.

59. With good individual education plans and good planning and procedures to support pupils and staff, the management of special educational needs by the co-ordinator and class teachers is good. This is a good improvement over the last report and the result of more time having been made available for the co-ordinator to focus on such needs.

60. There have been significant changes to the governing body over the past year following a breakdown in communication and some relationships. The new governing body is well organised to build upon the good work previously begun and gives the school good support. It is particularly successful with regard to finance; developments to the building and grounds; and special educational needs. The exceptions are: ensuring that all statutory elements of ICT are taught; and that all requirements concerning the information in the school brochure are met.

61. Although a small minority expressed their disagreement, 95 per cent of the 73 parents who returned their Ofsted parents' questionnaires think that the school is well led and managed, and 90 per cent feel that the school is approachable. The inspection team judge that communications with parents are of good quality, and that the school's management is effective in maintaining links between school and home. The very supportive Parents' Association is a good example of the success of this. However, 20 per cent of parents expressed concerns about homework and inspectors find that management of the process needs improving to develop consistency.

62. A testament to the head's very good management is the sensitive way in which he led the school through the sudden death of a senior, long serving teacher in the week before the inspection. Whilst coming to terms with his own feelings he, with the positive support of the deputy, enabled staff, pupils, governors and parents still to present the school's good ethos to inspectors. This demonstrated considerable personal strength and professionalism, and is a credit to the school.

63. There is a good match between the generous number of teachers and the curriculum needs of the school. This was the position at the last inspection. This number ensures classes are below average in size, with the exception of the Year 4 class. The good number of support staff is well deployed throughout the school and makes a significant contribution to pupils' learning. This is especially true of the staff who work with pupils who have special educational needs.

64. All members of staff have comprehensive job descriptions, which form the basis of discussions in the school's approach to performance management. Three team leaders carry out the tasks of performance management, which is successful in setting targets for teachers, linked to the staff development programme.

65. There is a good programme of support for newly qualified teachers, which follows the national model, which in turn is supported by the local authority. However, currently, a minor weakness is the lack of opportunities for the newly qualified teacher to observe other colleagues at work, whose skills in particular areas of the curriculum are recognised.

66. Whilst there is still no official programme for the induction of teachers new to the school, the school's current practice works well and is well supported by the comprehensive staff handbook. This enables new teachers to settle quickly into the routines of the school, to the benefit of all pupils.

67. The accommodation is good in terms of adequacy, but its layout requires much effort to ensure time spent moving from classrooms to central facilities such as the hall, is kept to a minimum. Teachers work hard to overcome any disadvantages and good use is made of the available space. Classrooms are bright, well maintained and spacious. They are enhanced by good quality displays and standards of cleaning are very high. Pupils therefore enjoy a pleasant, stimulating learning environment. Several improvements have been made to the accommodation since the time of the last inspection, including a welcoming reception area, staff and office accommodation, and toilets in the main block. All these improvements have been most worthwhile, impacting positively on the smooth organisation and running of the school. Playground areas have been improved and more work developing the outside environment is planned.

68. As a part of the inspection academic standards and pupils' response and behaviour were considered in the light of provision (not least of which is good teaching) and then matched against expenditure per pupil. Although the school costs are above the national average, they are in line with the county average for first schools and it is clear that Swanage First School is an effective school and currently gives satisfactory value for money. Since the last inspection changes to expectations and the way schools are funded mean that far from being a less favourable judgement than in the last report the school has done well to overcome its deficit and still represents sound value.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

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

- Raise standards in information and communication technology by:
  - Improving the management of the subject to ensure that all statutory requirements are met;
  - Further improving resources;
  - Increasing teachers' confidence, knowledge and understanding of the subject through further programmes of in-service training;
  - Developing assessment and record keeping procedures to gauge progress;
  - Making yet more use of ICT to support other subjects.

Paragraphs: 7, 10, 19, 27, 31, 35, 57, 58, 60, 100, 104, 114, 120, 123, 125, 148, 149, 151, 155, 156.

- **Develop** still further, as intended, the roles of senior teachers and subject leaders to include:

- Completing schemes of work that are continuous across the school and detail associated assessment procedures;
- Providing more opportunities for monitoring of actual teaching, in addition to planning and the quality of pupils' work;
- Ensuring a better balance to the delegation of responsibilities amongst the staff as a whole;
- Confirming the balance of the curriculum to ensure that all aspects are suitably emphasised, notably in mathematics, geography and music.

Paragraphs: 8, 27, 29, 35, 43, 49, 50, 57, 108, 111, 112, 114, 128, 133, 140, 141, 142, 143, 147, 157, 160, 161.

- **Improve** still further the quality of teaching to develop the pace of some lessons, confirm that higher attaining pupils are suitably challenged, and that homework is consistently used.

Paragraphs: 23, 27, 28, 51, 52, 61, 76, 92, 107, 116, 118, 121, 127, 170.

- **Provide** a suitable range and quantity of outdoor equipment to support the curriculum needs for the Foundation Stage.

Paragraphs: 58, 70, 91.

- **Improve** further, provision and resources to encourage pupils' awareness of multicultural issues.

Paragraphs: 11, 38, 42, 100, 131, 164.

In addition the following minor issues should be considered as part of the governors' action plan.

- Improving as intended the quality and range of books available in the recently upgraded library area.

Paragraphs: 11, 19, 58, 100.

- Developing, as already begun, the quality of pupils' handwriting in a cursive style.

Paragraphs: 7, 104, 144.

- Improving attendance rates to continue the school's upward trend of autumn 2001 towards the national average.

Paragraphs: 20, 45.

- Fulfilling statutory requirements with regard to the content of the school brochure.

Paragraphs: 53, 60.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed

68

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

25

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	10	30	24	4	0	0
Percentage	0	15	44	35	6	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 more than one percentage point.

### 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)

208

Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals

9

#### Special educational needs

YR – Y4

Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs

3

Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register

36

#### English as an additional language

No of pupils

Number of pupils with English as an additional language

0

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

No of pupils

Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission

17

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

24

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.7
National comparative data	5.6

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
National comparative data	0.5

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 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	20	45

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	24	24	23
	Girls	19	19	20
	Total	43	43	43
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	96 (90)	96 (92)	96 (100)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	25	23	25
	Girls	20	19	19
	Total	45	42	44
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (95)	93 (100)	98 (97)
	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	1
Indian	2
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	205
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

### Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

### **Teachers and classes**

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR–Y4**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.8
Average class size	23

#### **Education support staff: YR–Y4**

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	97.5

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2000 – 2001
	£
Total income	437067
Total expenditure	433303
Expenditure per pupil	1909
Balance brought forward from previous year	0
Balance carried forward to next year	3764

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3.5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2.5
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	207
Number of questionnaires returned	73

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	64	35	0	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	67	29	1	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	53	41	3	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	44	36	17	3	0
The teaching is good.	69	30	0	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	50	35	10	6	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	71	19	1	6	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	58	38	1	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	53	33	8	3	3
The school is well led and managed.	64	29	0	3	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	57	39	1	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	29	26	24	10	11

*Due to rounding percentages do 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**

70. Successes, noted in the previous inspection report, have been maintained and in some cases improved in the intervening years. It is only in the provision of outdoor play activities and its effect on children's physical development that the work in the Foundation Stage of learning is less effective than it should be.

71. Good relationships with the on-site playgroup together with a range of helpful pre-school meetings and visits for parents and children ensure that entry to the school for its youngest children is very positive. The school now offers all children the opportunity to take on full time education in the Foundation Stage from the January in the academic year they become five. This move is already having a positive effect on the progress the youngest children are making.

72. Provision is good overall and children of all abilities, including the small number with special educational needs, make good progress in their learning. This means that all but a very small number of children are clearly on track to achieve the Early Learning Goals for almost all areas of learning, with a very significant minority, possibly exceeding these goals in reading, writing and mathematical development. A significant feature of life in the reception classes is the very good personal and social development of all children, many of whom have already met and surpassed the goals in this area of development at this mid point in the school year. This in itself plays a particular and significant part in the overall success of children's learning.

73. The quality of teaching is almost consistently good and never less than satisfactory, with both teachers and their teaching assistants working very well as a team and having a firm understanding of how children learn. However, on occasions, wishing to keep good control of their children, teachers do tend inadvertently to limit children's scope to show initiative and take responsibility in their learning. Teachers are aware of this shortcoming. The classroom environment is of a high quality and offers stimulus and support in all areas of the curriculum.

#### **Personal, social and emotional development**

74. By the time they are five, children, in this important area of development will have made good, and often very good progress, towards achieving the Early Learning Goals, as noted in their attitudes, self-care, behaviour and self-control. These foundations are laid down very well in the early weeks in classes. The high expectations shown by teachers, encourages children to choose activities, set out and clear away their apparatus and resources, put their name on the board as they go to the toilet and relate readily to many other routines and procedures. This affects positively the pace of learning. Children are seen working effectively in paired activities, in both mixed gender and single sex groups without fuss. They wait their turn and offer help and support to friends. This is noted equally at play times and in circle time, where the children sit in a circle and with their teacher discuss issues of caring and friendship, often related to play times and lunch hours. They talk freely about looking after their friends and even helping them to 'unpack their lunchboxes'.

75. The good progress children make in being able to sit and listen quietly, allows the teachers and their support staff to embark on ambitious literacy and numeracy lessons, the length of which might well be too taxing for other children. As a result children are able to cover much groundwork in these areas of learning, showing the positive effect of good personal and social development.

## **Communication, language and literacy**

76. Any speech and language problems are spotted early, through the good use of assessments as children start their first term in the school. Good support systems then help this small number of children make good progress. The overall average profile of language skills shown by these assessments point to good progress being currently made by children in both the older and younger classes.

77. All children enjoy listening to stories and a small group readily shared their ideas with the inspector about the story, characters and events about which they were reading. All adults use talk to good effect, creating good, young, active listeners. A parent, working with a small group of children on the soft play equipment, was asking them about the colours and shapes of the pieces of equipment as well as encouraging their movements. However, on a few other occasions, the higher attaining children might be encouraged to contribute a little more at a slightly higher level, asking questions as well as giving answers in other lessons.

78. By the end of their time in reception, all but one or two children will have reached the Early Learning Goals and many will have surpassed these targets. Even now a small number of children are already reading at levels within the full National Curriculum. The reason for such good progress is found in the good teaching of phonic skills to help children 'sound out' words they meet. Reading records are of a very high quality and are used widely to support the very good progress children make. When reading to the inspector, even the weakest reader had some of these skills, which enabled the child to make some sense of his book, without too much help.

79. Elements of the National Literacy Strategy are used well by teachers, who, because of children's ability to sit, listen and concentrate well, are able to carry out literacy lessons of high quality over considerable periods of time. As a result, children can name sounds and letters, they have a go at writing for relevant purposes and at times get to practise writing the shapes of letters through tracing and copying opportunities. One girl, during a free choice period, went straight to the writing corner and wrote her friend a short note. Letters were well formed and even on blank paper, showed an ability to write in lines. There were no spelling mistakes and she could read back the message without fault. The use of such things as puppets to promote and retain children's interest during these lessons is effective.

80. Children are already developing a love of stories from their own culture. At a wet playtime, a group of thirty children were sitting spellbound watching a video, not of modern high speed characters that speak with strange voices, but a video of fairy tales with traditional costumes and story lines.

81. Work with class stories is very often used as the vehicle for learning in other areas. 'The Three Bears' is linked with work in art, construction activities and a general widening of understanding of the world.

## **Mathematical development**

82. Children make satisfactory progress in their mathematical development from a slightly lower level on entry to the school, when compared with their literacy skills. In spite of this the vast majority will achieve the Early Learning Goals for this area of learning, as a result of good teaching.

83. Daily numeracy lessons follow the structure of national guidelines and are well planned to secure skills, knowledge and understanding of mathematical concepts being built systematically on what children have previously learned. Displays in the classrooms illustrate children's work on shapes with train pictures made from a variety of two-dimensional shapes which children could name for the inspector. In one lesson, children were working at the

computer on a shape program, while the main class were consolidating their previous work on shape, paying particular attention to new vocabulary.

84. Teachers assess and record what each child can do, and not do, extremely carefully and use this information to guide their planning for individuals and small groups as they work within numeracy lessons. Good opportunities are then given later to consolidate learning before moving on. Some opportunities are taken to develop mathematical skills through other activities, but this does not happen as often as it might. For instance, when watching free choice activities in both classes, it was difficult to see any which would obviously support the children's development of mathematical knowledge, whilst it was clear to see good examples of support for literacy and language skills. Activities relating to sand play were not checked or supported enough in order to guide children in exploring mathematical ideas, such as measuring, filling or pouring from small to large containers, or comparing the size of containers.

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

85. The teachers and their assistants work hard to teach children about the world around them and as a result children make good progress in their learning, with the vast majority likely to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the time they are six years old. Children are taught new knowledge, skills and understanding in adult led sessions and then often have opportunities to practise and extend their learning further. The work is often related to a theme such as 'The Three Bears' or 'Nursery Rhymes'. This helps children to see how one area of work is linked to another, freeing them of the rigid compartmentalisation of learning. For example, 'Mary, Mary quite contrary' links well to children learning about plant growth and seeds, whilst 'Humpty Dumpty' allows children to explore the use of construction equipment to build walls.

86. Photographic evidence shows that children go to all parts of the school looking at a range of things, whilst in addition travelling outside the school environment, visiting shops and parks in order to extend their learning. Children behave well and respond well at all times.

87. In this way children begin to learn very basic skills of geography whilst at the same time discussing events in the past, which for some children may only be the recollection of events from last month or last year. Through their stories and discussions they recognise a range of food products and vegetables and understand that living things grow in similar ways.

88. Information and communication technology skills are developed satisfactorily. The computer is nearly always available for children, who regularly use it to improve skills of moving the mouse in order to click on icons, within a small number of well chosen programs.

89. The teaching, and opportunities for learning about designing and making things, are good. Resources covering construction equipment are good. Children have good access to them and make beds and chairs for the three bears' house, for example.

### **Physical development**

90. In some aspects this area of development is strong, whilst in others it is slightly weaker. For example, children have good opportunities to use equipment, which enhances their fine hand skills. This is often promoted through activities linked to their topic themes. Children are seen cutting out carefully, tracing while trying hard to follow the line and joining paper and card together through liberal use of adhesives and tape. Music shakers have been carefully made using plastic pots and paper. These are attractive and work effectively.

91. Whilst children have a regular weekly opportunity to move, and develop physical skills in the hall, teachers, in their aim to keep close control of the children, inadvertently create

some restriction of movement for the children. However, as the children behave so well, it is seldom necessary to keep such rigid control and children could be given more opportunities to experiment freely with space and equipment. The lack of opportunities for outside play linked with the use of climbing equipment or large wheeled toys does again restrict their opportunities to develop skills directly associated with this type of equipment. This was noted at the last inspection, but has yet to be adequately addressed by the school. As a result, children will not always achieve all of the Early Learning Goals in this area of work

### **Creative development**

92. Most children will reach the Early Learning Goals in creative development, because of the good emphasis given to imaginative play, the enjoyment of music and opportunities to use a variety of media in art. This is an improvement since the previous inspection at which time opportunities for role play were noted as being less well developed. Children are seen playing in the role play area in the 'Little Pigs' house, but fortunately they do not consider the visiting inspector as the 'Big Bad Wolf'! In the music room, children use class stories as the basis for adding sound effects, although some time was lost as the teacher took too long to give out the equipment.

93. The stimulating environment and the opportune interventions of teachers help children learn about using tools such as paint brushes, crayons and pencils, exploring shape and colour and manipulating materials. Children are seen using malleable materials and cutting them into shapes. Others are seen creating leaf patterns with the careful support of a teaching assistant. Other children are busily carrying out rubbings of different surfaces in the classroom. Children talk with pride about their pieces of work when they are displayed individually or when they are part of classroom displays and friezes. Work is well presented, showing children that their work is recognised and giving good support to their self esteem and progress.

### **ENGLISH**

94. The school has been successful in building upon the standards described as "at least in line with national averages" in English. Throughout their time in the school pupils make very good progress in speaking and listening, reading and writing from average attainment on entry, with standards now above average at the end of Year 2 and likely to be approaching well above, when pupils leave Year 4. Pupils respond very well to the subject and are eager and enthusiastic especially in reading and writing.

95. National Curriculum assessments for seven year olds in 2001 show:

- Improvement over a four year period which is consistent with the national profile;
- Both boys and girls exceeding the national averages for their age; with boys reading success a notable feature;
- Nearly all pupils achieving the expected level nationally in reading and writing. This means all but the most extreme special educational needs pupils perform to national expectations and indicates the school's special educational needs support is of good quality;
- Higher attaining pupils doing well in reading with 38 per cent compared with 29 per cent nationally achieving the higher level, Level 3. In writing the school's performance for higher attainers is in line with the national average. This has been the focus of much planning and attention since last year and current more able Year 2 pupils are already working above expectations;
- School analysis and targeting procedures are effective in helping pupils to reach at least the next level.

96. The findings of this inspection based on lesson observations, scrutiny of planning, records and pupils' work, and discussions with staff and pupils, are that standards continue to rise. Pupils make clear gains in communication skills in Year R emerging as readers and writers and consolidating good speaking and listening.

97. Speaking skills are good for pupils' ages. They benefit from teachers' good example and the expectation that pupils will answer clearly in complete sentences. Pupils benefit from many opportunities to express opinions and explain how things affect them: for example Year 3 pupils role play in drama as children stranded in a jungle; and Year 1 pupils talking about Christian artefacts in religious education. By the end of Year 4 most pupils are confident and articulate, and even those with special educational needs communicate effectively: for example explaining accurately their strategies for solving problems in mathematics to inspectors.

98. By the end of Year 2 pupils' reading is good with their profile being above average. The majority of higher attaining pupils are well above average, reading independently and responding well to a range of texts and styles. A strength of the school is in the frequency pupils in all years of all abilities read to teachers and teaching assistants and the high quality of records kept. The result is that pupils read at correct levels, appreciate their own progress, and are enthusiastic about reading, knowing that adults value it too!

99. Good progress in reading is maintained throughout Year 3 and Year 4 and standards are well above average for the large majority by the time pupils leave. Higher attaining pupils in Year 4 are reading at levels usually associated with eleven year olds. For example they show very clear understanding of significant characters and various themes of Harry Potter stories and explain with considerable imagery their response to them. "It's as if the villain sucked the happiness out of him," exclaimed one child making specific reference to the text.

100. The last report was critical of pupils' higher reading skills as a result of weaknesses in the library. Recent work to resite the library and make it more attractive and accessible has had positive effects, but the overall range and quality of books is still lower than should be expected. Many non fiction books are out of date and very few present a broad enough view of multicultural issues. Pupils, even the most able, have little understanding of the classification system and have more experience of choosing books from the classroom rather than the library. However, pupils have satisfactory opportunities to make use of specific texts to research: for example history topics; and although underemphasised as yet, are beginning to read from CD-ROM and the Internet.

101. Writing is very well taught especially in Year 2, Year 3 and Year 4. Considerable evaluation, target setting, and planning by the literacy subject leader (and for special educational needs pupils, the special educational needs co-ordinator and class teachers) has been very successful in identifying areas for improvement in provision. Although some Year 1 work is not always of satisfactory quality pupils' progress is good across the Year 1 and Year 2 age groups, and very good in Year 2. As a result of very good teaching and the successful introduction of the National Literacy Strategy, pupils age seven write in a structured, imaginative way. They frequently use extended sentences and generally observe the rules of punctuation and spelling. Both Year 1 and Year 2 pupils enjoy writing and this is obvious in their retelling of traditional tales such as 'The Gingerbread Man', and in detailing the character of villains like the wolf in 'Red Riding Hood' for their 'Wanted' posters. Very good unaided writing is a feature of Year 2 in particular, with Christmas stories and accounts of being flooded showing techniques well above expectations for this age group.

102. By age nine pupils' writing is clearly thoughtful. Average and higher attaining pupils show they can sustain ideas, choose very good vocabulary, use connectives effectively and are starting to use speech marks and paragraphs accurately. This is well above national expectations for this age. Pupils write well for a range of purposes for example:

- Very clear instructions for the making of Roman catapults;
- A good range of poetry about the wind and sea conditions, in Year 4;
- Inventive calligrams (letters in the shape of the words they represent) in Year 3;
- Perceptive writing in the first person describing how both Romans and Britons felt about invasion;
- Using story boards to plan and extend stories from a common starting point in Year 3 work on the 'Ring of Fire';
- Year 4 reviews of Harry Potter stories to report on the structure of 'The Philosopher's Stone'.

Writing is well used to support other subjects across the curriculum.

103. Spelling is well taught, often tested and pupils are helped to appreciate rules and patterns. Consequently standards of spelling are good throughout the school. This is very closely linked to good reading and secure phonic (sounding out) strategies developed from Year R.

104. An area for improvement already identified by the school is in handwriting. Although most presentation is at least satisfactory, pupils' work suffers from having no lines in books, being almost exclusively in pencil (even in Year 4), and the lack of teaching of a consistent cursive style at an early stage. Handwriting standards are generally below average as a result. Throughout the school too little use is made of computers as word processors to support writing.

105. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in English throughout the school. Most targets of the good individual education plans are linked to literacy skills. Teachers, and in particular teaching assistants, are successful in including such pupils in all activities in addition to providing extra support, and learning is good.

106. The quality of teaching in English is good, and often in Years 2, 3 and 4 very good. Relationships in lessons observed were good. Teachers use questioning techniques which involve the majority, if not all, pupils, and require them to reason and explain their opinions or preferences. Teachers use assessment well to identify areas for improvement and manage pupils very well. The quality of day to day planning derived from the exemplary work of the subject leader is consistently good and most often allows for work to be pursued at different ability levels. As a direct result, more able pupils benefit especially and reach above average levels.

107. Areas to further develop are in improving the pace of some lessons, and the consistent use of homework, which although supporting spelling and reading effectively is not sufficiently well managed in each class. Pupils and parents do not always know what to expect and when, and this can cause confusion.

108. The leadership of the subject has been excellent. Staff know what to expect, training has been very good, and planning, assessment and careful monitoring of support staff and the curriculum is extremely good. Procedures are particularly well documented and, notwithstanding the tragic death of the subject leader, the school is very well placed to continue to raise and maintain standards. The school is already planning carefully to improve the delegation of responsibilities to avoid any member of staff having responsibility for literacy and numeracy.

## **MATHEMATICS**

109. Pupils in Year 2 in 2001 attained standards in National Curriculum tests which were broadly in line with those expected for their age. This shows an apparent fall in standards from the comments of the last inspection. This may well be as a result of a great deal of emphasis being put on work in literacy and less on mathematics overall. The school has received support and in-service training for literacy but not as much for aspects of mathematics. When mathematics results are compared with similar schools they are broadly similar.

110. Since the last inspection, the school's results have kept pace with, and mirrored, improvements noted nationally, with a slight plateauing of results this year

111. Scrutiny of previously completed work in all year groups, shows that whilst the National Numeracy Strategy has helped both teachers and pupils improve standards in aspects of arithmetic including computation, other aspects of mathematics, notably work in shape, space, measure and data handling is often completely missing from the workbooks. At the same time, very little time has been spent on encouraging pupils to put their good arithmetical understanding to good effect in investigations. Discussions with teachers reveal that whilst they plan for all aspects of mathematics, as prescribed by the National Curriculum, their practical efforts are often focused too much on numeracy with the result that pupils' knowledge of other aspects of mathematics is very limited.

112. Although there has been monitoring of planning in mathematics by members of the senior management team, this has not been extended to checking the work taught against the work planned. If this had been the case, then gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding of elements of shape, space and measures, for instance, would have been apparent.

113. A feature of the work in mathematics is the improvement seen in teachers' assessments. There is a good range of assessments completed by teachers and the use they make of these assessments is seen in the way activities are planned for different groups of pupils. A clear picture of the progress pupils make is seen in the analysis of results of both national tests and school tests, which is now leading the school well into tracking progress and predicting outcomes for different year groups of pupils.

114. By the age of seven, pupils have a good understanding of place value to 100, but do not make enough use of it in problem solving or investigations. They can measure small lengths using a ruler and know a little about different two-dimensional shapes. Many are able to shade in, or highlight, fractions of a whole shape or number, but have little experience of graphs or pictograms. Work in this area receives no support from information and communication technology, which is generally missing in all areas of mathematics.

115. By Year 4, pupils can make calculations with numbers up to one thousand and are able to use a number of different strategies to do this. Work in providing pupils with a range of strategies for calculations is very successful and pupils are able to explain the strategies and make judgements as to which methods they prefer. Some work is noted in symmetry, but otherwise the overriding emphasis is on arithmetic.

116. The progress made by pupils with special educational needs is good, and relates well to their particular planned programmes. They are well catered for by their teachers and where extra support is available it is often used for groups of pupils who are less successful at mathematics and often includes those with special needs. In virtually all lessons the different ability groups have different work. However, although the work is always different it is not always challenging to them. Too often the higher attaining pupils are made to practise calculations for too long before being given more challenging applications of their well practised skills. In this respect, they do not always make the good progress they should. Although statistics show that girls achieve marginally better than boys, the school is at pains

to make its teaching in mathematics fully inclusive by giving equal support to both genders, and placing extra support where it is needed.

117. Opportunities for pupils to make progress in their own personal development is a little hindered by the lack of opportunities for them to show initiative and take more responsibility for their own learning. Their social development receives good support from their work in mathematics as quite often pupils discuss problems together in groups and make sure that they listen to each other while they are addressing the class.

118. Overall, teaching of mathematics is good. Half of lessons were satisfactory, a quarter were good and a quarter were very good. Teaching is better in Years 2 and 3, and very good in Year 4, in spite of weaknesses in covering the whole curriculum. Where teaching was very good, as in the two Year 4 lessons, the well planned work was delivered with pace, including clear explanations and very good direct teaching of skills: for example in the addition of large numbers using different methods. The teacher's questioning technique was very good as was her insistence that pupils should explain their strategies to the class. Work set in the activities section of the lesson, not only related to clear ability groups in the class, but at the same time challenged all pupils. As a result, all abilities within the class made good progress in their learning. A minor weakness in this, and in most lessons of mathematics, was the slow initial mental/oral start to the lesson, which did not make use of the many resources available to motivate pupils, add fun and excitement to the start of the lesson and help pupils speed up their responses and improve their mental agility.

119. The attitudes of pupils to their work in mathematics was never less than satisfactory and in three quarters of the lessons was good or very good. The good progress pupils made in many lessons was partly as a result of their good behaviour, their willingness to concentrate on their work and their good attitudes to the subject.

120. An overall weakness in the subject is the lack of use made by all classes of information and communication technology. The school has yet to ensure that computers are used to their maximum to aid pupils' progress in mathematics and give them opportunities to utilise some of their technology skills.

## **SCIENCE**

121. In 2001 teachers assessed standards for the seven year old pupils in science as above average compared to those of other schools nationally. The picture is similar to the last inspection. When children first join the school, their knowledge and understanding of the world is at expected levels and all pupils make good progress throughout the school. Pupils with special educational needs achieve particularly well in science. This is because their interest in the subject is well harnessed and supported. Higher attaining pupils achieved well above average standards in the assessment of physical processes because the good teaching was underpinned by new, effective resources. Fewer seven year olds achieved the high levels in other aspects of the subject, because the teacher input was limited in lessons where several different subjects were taking place. This results in underachievement by higher attaining pupils who are insufficiently challenged.

122. Standards of work in Year 3 and Year 4 indicate that by the time pupils leave the school their attainment in science is likely to be above average. Pupils have a detailed knowledge and understanding of many aspects of science such as the physical properties of solids, liquids and gases, life processes, nutrition and electrical circuits.

123. There are minor weaknesses in the way pupils record their work which is sometimes too prescribed, and insufficient use is made of information and communication technology. For example, there are too limited opportunities for pupils to use databases or produce graphs and tables to show the results of experiments.

124. Pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 learn about forces such as pushing and pulling. They eagerly took part in a classroom investigation about which actions move things. They made predictions about what they expected to find and recorded the actual results on a survey sheet. Pupils develop their thinking well due to teachers' skilful questioning. When encouraged to think of other ways that things move, one boy who was sitting close to a window said, "The wind is moving my paper." Pupils are keen to contribute to discussions. When asked to think about twisting movements, one girl suggested the lid of her lunchtime flask. The Year 2 pupils were given an increased challenge by attempting to compare movements of different objects so that they could understand that shape affects the force needed to move. Pupils in the group observed, gained a good knowledge of setting up an investigation and how to make a fair test. They recognised that all objects must start from the same place, have the same incline and be released without any pushing. Pupils worked together effectively on the experiment and showed that they had developed their understanding of fair testing. Six and seven year old pupils improve their scientific vocabulary and develop a better knowledge and understanding of chemical changes. A few pupils are still unsure about the difference between steam and smoke, and do not always use the correct term.

125. There is evidence of good learning taking place by the end of Year 2. The good teaching consolidates and extends pupils' knowledge and understanding. The rapid progress in acquiring literacy skills is evident in the pupils' growing confidence and ability to record results of investigations for themselves using a range of methods such as drawings, charts, diagrams and prose. There is, however, little evidence of ICT being used to record data.

126. Pupils in Year 3 and Year 4 have been learning about nutrition, electricity, the properties of materials and the changes that occur when materials are mixed. In Year 4, teaching made very good use of concept cartoons to help pupils who were confused about the terms melting and dissolving. All pupils can read and use thermometers to test water temperature. They confidently explain fair testing and discuss variables. Higher attaining pupils know at what temperature water freezes and boils. Pupils all make sensible predictions. Good questioning and well followed up investigations ensured that all pupils understood that the temperature of water affects the dissolving of substances. Pupils' independent recording showed that a significant minority were unclear about the difference between results and conclusions. This was quickly identified and clarified by the teacher. Some good features of Year 3 lessons seen in pupils' books were the extension activities for high attainers, evidence of prediction and opportunities for pupils to set out and record their investigations independently.

127. The quality of teaching is good overall and never less than satisfactory. Teaching is based on good subject knowledge that enables teachers to ask probing questions. In the better lessons teachers' enthusiasm for the subject and the brisk pace promoted effective learning. Less effective teaching is characterised by underemphasis on pupils independently recording their own experiments and occasional slow pace of lessons. This reduces the progress that pupils make in conveying their ideas in simple scientific language. Pupils' behaviour is very good in science lessons even when there are too many pupils in the group for everyone to see the demonstration, and classroom space is crowded.

128. Leadership of science is good, marked by the subject leader's experience and expertise which have not been fully exploited to co-ordinate effectively learning across the school. Planning for the subject is thorough and the curriculum covers all aspects in sufficient depth. There is a two year cycle of topics which are revisited to consolidate and extend pupils' learning. This works well. It represents an improvement since the last inspection. The subject leader has had responsibility for completing the scheme of work and this is on schedule. She has sampled pupils' work and is assembling a portfolio to show a range of levels. However, she has had no opportunity to monitor teaching. Teachers assess pupils' progress at the end of science topics but there are no formalised procedures for science assessment across the school. This is a weakness. The school's system for

National Curriculum teacher assessment in science has been dependent on a very experienced, long standing member of staff who is sadly no longer with them.

129. Resources, which were judged to be too limited in the last inspection, have been gradually built up and they are now sufficient. The school is situated in an area of environmental richness which enhances the science curriculum. Pupils visit the nearby Durlston Country Park and Studland Nature Reserve. They use the local beach environment and their own wild life area, where every tree has been planted by a pupil. Visitors from bird and animal protection societies, such as the RSPB talk to pupils about caring for wild creatures. New bird tables are currently being assembled for the school environmental site.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

130. Pupils' attainment in art and design is in line with national expectations at the end of Year 2 and Year 4, with some examples of good work. Only two art lessons were seen during the inspection, both in older classes, but displays around the school and an extensive collection of photographed art work over many terms, compiled by the subject leader, enabled judgements to be made. By the end of Year 2 pupils are able to explore ideas such as tone, colour and texture in a variety of materials, gaining skill with different tools and techniques such as painting, using collage or an ICT program. Pupils design ideas in drawings, for example of an imaginary machine, in order to then make moving parts in their collage. By the end of Year 4 pupils have refined their skills such as colour mixing and the use of shade to create stronger forms, for example in their portraits, and extended their range of techniques, such as using pen and wash, for particular purposes, in this case for illustration. They can compare different materials such as tissue paper mosaic with tile mosaic and describe ways to improve their own and others' work.

131. Much of the art seen is developed out of experiences and ideas from other topics, the more powerful of these leading to more successful and creative works of art. Some mixed media pictures by a previous Year 4 were inspired by fieldwork in the local landscape and pupils produced very individual and effective representations of the colours and textures of Swanage Bay. Teachers carefully display art work demonstrating appreciation of pupils' work. However, throughout the school there is little labelling to explain the techniques or qualities demonstrated in the work. There is a limited range in three-dimensional work, and too few opportunities to explore the work of artists and craftspeople either locally or from other cultures. Resources are just adequate.

132. Pupils enjoy and engage in exploring new techniques, using materials responsibly and confidently, giving their views about work, with good speaking and listening skills. However there is sometimes too much direction by teachers and too few opportunities to experiment and make choices. Examples of more imaginative and varied work were seen as a result of direct observation, or being stimulated by, and experimenting with, a very wide range of materials. Greater use of more varied collections of visual and tactile material would benefit pupils' preparation for art work.

133. The subject leader is a skilful artist and this is evident in her own classroom displays. She has developed the Year 3 and Year 4 scheme of work with her colleagues and advises and influences their teaching. However, she has had very limited input in Year 1 and Year 2 due to a lack of clarity in the school of the role of the leader and the need to gain an overview. Instead she has worked in an informal way, through observations, suggestions and a collection of examples of work. There is a need to identify greater difference in expectations between Year 1 and Year 2.

134. The subject leader for art rightly plans to develop the collection of work with evaluation and annotation so that it becomes a portfolio illustrating expectations in art and design. She highly valued training which she received and used effectively in developing the policy and

scheme. There has been no art training for other staff and this is reflected in their limited awareness of expectations in the subject.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

135. Standards in design and technology are in line with national expectations for pupils both by the age of seven and at the end of Year 4. Inspection findings are based on two observed lessons, scrutiny of pupils' past work, teachers' planning and records and discussions with staff and pupils. Since the last inspection, the school has maintained reasonable coverage of the subject, whilst prioritising literacy and numeracy.

136. Pupils of all abilities make satisfactory gains in learning as they consolidate and extend previous work. In Year 1, pupils use construction kits to make load bearing vehicles. They investigate wheels and axles to learn how they work and develop their own ideas for making vehicles from recyclable materials usually with fixed wheels. Year 2 pupils focus on ways of assembling and joining components. They use tape and glue to join and combine materials and use cutting skills well. They understand that the ends of the vehicle axles have to be secured to stop the wheels from coming off and they investigate a variety of materials with varying degrees of success. However, teachers do not always get the best from pupils because only a limited range of materials and components is available. Teacher input is restricted in the lessons where too many different activities are taking place at the same time.

137. Pupils in Year 3 and Year 4 designed and made Roman war machines. The majority of pupils chose to make a ballista although a few made battering rams. There was evidence of good development of pupils' joining and assembling skills which they used to good effect in the working models. Pupils demonstrated these during a Year 4 model test and evaluation lesson. Nearly all models operated successfully by launching a school rubber effectively. The teacher skilfully moved pupils' thinking forward when one group's analysis failed to identify the most successful model. Pupils were reminded of the design brief and asked to appraise how well their model would meet the user's need for mobility as well as its projectile success. The very effective teaching seen was influential in the good standards achieved in this aspect of the design and technology curriculum.

138. Pupils throughout the school enjoy the subject. In one class every pupil indicated that they had enjoyed the activity. Pupils take turns sensibly and work safely together. Older pupils support each other very effectively when they work as part of a team negotiating and learning to concede to the majority when facing real life situations. This reflects the very good pupil relationships within the school. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development.

139. Where teaching is good pupils make good gains in learning but pupils do not always get the help they need to improve because some teachers lack expertise and confidence in the subject. Teachers link design and technology effectively to pupils' learning in other subjects such as science and history. Examples are in Year 1 and Year 2 science lessons focusing on forces of pushing and pulling which is linked to vehicle making; and the Year 3 and Year 4 topic about the Roman Invasion during which pupils made their catapults. Pupils practise speaking and listening skills well when they discuss their projects with staff and other pupils, and ICT skills when they use a program to assemble a vehicle using selected shapes and components.

140. The subject leader has had insufficient opportunities to gain expertise in the subject and her role is underdeveloped. The first phase of the scheme of work is in place. It gives good detail and useful suggestions to help the less confident teachers and there is an appropriate balance of activities. The second cycle of the scheme is still incomplete but the school and subject leader have identified this in their planning. Currently there are no formal procedures for assessing and recording pupils' levels of achievement. As identified in the previous

inspection, resources for learning are still inadequate to support fully all strands of the curriculum. An example is the lack of wood working tools. The school is well placed to improve standards further by completing the actions identified in the subject development plan, raising the expertise and role of the co-ordinator and supplementing physical resources. However, some developments have taken too long to instigate and there is a need to improve this aspect of the subject leader's role.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

141. No geography lessons were seen during the inspection since the subject is timetabled alternately with history projects and this was the history term. Insufficient evidence was available of pupils' previous work in Years 1 and 2 to make a judgement. This, and discussions with pupils about their work suggests the subject is underemphasised. At Year 4 an earlier project on Swanage provided evidence of standards in line with national expectations. Pupils have knowledge of the features, character and some issues relating to their town, such as traffic congestion. They can use maps to locate the town and features in it; they can investigate geographical patterns comparing winter with summer, collecting, presenting and interpreting their data.

142. The scheme of work for Year 1 and Year 2 has appropriate content, but lacks a clear enquiry approach to give the activities purpose, cohesion and lead to geographical understanding about the nature of places and geographical processes. The scheme of work for Year 3 and Year 4 is based around good geographical questions and some interesting enquiries which have led to a more secure understanding by Year 4. However, at all stages expectations of the National Curriculum are not sufficiently clear. Each project is taught to two age groups in the two year rolling programme. Whilst this ensures continuity and team planning, it is not clear how expectations vary for the range of ages and ability.

143. The subject leader has good subject knowledge and promotes the sharing of good teaching strategies through leading team planning in Year 3 and Year 4. However, because of a lack of clarity in management roles, the geography leader has not influenced the teaching of geography in Year 1 and Year 2 and consequently does not have an overview of the progression across the school. Resources - such as maps, photographs, books, information packs and websites - are being gathered over time and are just about adequate. As at the last inspection, there is no guidance on assessment and expectations and this has led to a lack of formative marking and of challenge for some more able pupils. Plans to develop portfolios of annotated work will help the subject leader to monitor progress and advise colleagues. Overall the subject has made too limited progress since the last inspection, addressing some, but not all of the issues raised then. Training and support in geography for the subject leader has been good but whole staff development is needed to raise the profile of this subject and ensure that it does not remain underemphasised.

## **HISTORY**

144. Standards in history at the end of Year 2 and Year 4 are in line with national expectations, maintaining those seen at the last inspection. Evidence from lessons and samples of work show pupils are making secure progress in their knowledge and understanding of history. A clear strength is that pupils develop their chronological language from 'old' and 'new' in Year 1 and Year 2, to talking of periods in history, using dates and building a timeline in Year 3 and Year 4. Pupils are recognising some of the ways in which the past is represented: such as artefacts; photographs; and oral history; and offer reasons for events such as the success of the Roman army. Pupils use their literacy skills effectively to find information in books and write well about their impressions of events in history. They use a wide range of ways to organise and communicate their learning such as diagrams, annotated drawings, timelines, story boards and imaginative description guides, although the neat presentation of their work is sometimes impaired by the lack of lines for writing.

145. Most of the teaching seen was good or better. Teachers have good subject knowledge seen in their questioning and explanations and they use a wide range of accessible and motivating resources in lessons. These include a collection of old and new toys, and a video showing artefacts and dramatic reconstructions. When teachers structure lessons around key questions, such as 'Why was the Roman army so successful?' this provides a clear focus and promotes understanding of aspects of history. The teaching of non fiction research skills - use of the contents and index of history books - is helpfully featured in some lessons. The quality of independent work seen in Year 3 and Year 4 is sometimes limited either by too prescriptive tasks when all pupils produce nearly identical work, or by inappropriately broad tasks which give some pupils too little guidance to make effective progress. Better matching of work could be achieved with clearer expectations identified for each attainment group.

146. Pupils were seen to be learning well when teachers give them access to visual and tactile resources, and when the subject was made relevant to them, making connections with their everyday lives. For example, one teacher's analogy of a disciplined and organised Roman army with a disciplined and organised school was very effective. Pupils show interest and their attitudes are always good or better, giving attention to the teacher and engaging in the tasks. However, pupils' enthusiasm to ask their own historical questions is rarely harnessed to help them develop more independent thinking and enquiry skills.

147. The subject leader is new to the school and does not yet have an overview of history work across the age range. She has ensured that projects are adequately resourced, an improvement from the last inspection, making good use of loan services for books and artefacts. She is aware of the need for a greater multicultural dimension to the school's history curriculum. The two year rolling programme of topics ensures continuity when age groups need to be mixed, and the joint planning by teams of teachers ensures that good teaching strategies are shared. However there are no procedures for the assessment of history work and the proposed monitoring through a portfolio of assessed work has yet to be started. This has led to teaching plans which do not include clear expectations for pupils of different ages and attainment and a lack of formative marking. Whilst strategies are in place to support children with special educational needs, more able children are not always stretched further.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

148. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are unsatisfactory and pupils are making insufficient progress in their learning, by the end of Year 2 and by Year 4. The school is not yet able to meet the demands of the National Curriculum. Although the last report noted that standards were "broadly in line with national expectations", the world of technology has moved forward considerably, leaving the school in its wake. This has happened as a result of:

- Insufficient resources of computers and relevant software;
- A lack of a coherent, whole school scheme of work which builds systematically on what pupils know, understand and can do;
- No procedures for assessment being in place to check learning and pin point standards;
- Incomplete training for teachers, who had previously lacked both knowledge and confidence in teaching ICT;
- A lack of use of ICT to support other areas of the curriculum.

149. Since the last inspection, the school has focused on other areas of the curriculum and has only recently tried to redress some of the problems within the subject. However, the approach taken by the school has been 'piecemeal' and, as a result, there has been no overall plan of action for tackling the problems, with a clear timescale, details of costs and

time requirements and success criteria to check on the results of improvements across all aspects of this area of study.

150. Very little evidence was seen of work across the school. Most classrooms had few, if any, examples of work completed by pupils. Any work on display tended to come from one particular painting program.

151. In spite of this, pupils are developing basic keyboard skills, as many pupils have access to computers at both home and school. In a Year 1 lesson one pupil, working alone on the computer was using the mouse successfully to click on to screen objects and drag them across the screen to reposition them. Unfortunately the lack of computers in classrooms hampers the rate of progress of this work. In some cases, pupils wait over a week for their turn to practise the skills, which may have been briefly taught in the previous week. As a result the progress pupils make is slow and does not allow them to achieve to their potential. It is now an appropriate time to review resources and strategies for teaching, in order to overcome these difficulties.

152. Currently whole classes gather round one computer for the teacher to impart a particular skill. Due to timetable difficulties, some lessons were observed as only lasting fifteen minutes, insufficient for pupils to absorb the skills being taught.

153. Some examples of simple control technology were seen, clearly illustrating that pupils with special educational needs can make the same progress as other pupils. A programmable floor robot was seen being used in a Year 2 class, with one or two pupils being given the opportunity to programme simple instructions into the machine in order to make it move forwards and backwards. There is no evidence to show that older pupils then have enough opportunities to build on these basic skills and use similar control techniques in order to give instructions to the computer to draw shapes, trace patterns and follow a planned route on screen.

154. The development of modelling skills is underdeveloped across the school. Some younger pupils have access to a program in which they dress Teddy for different weather conditions. However, there is very little evidence to show that older pupils have access to games or simulations, which allow them to investigate options or see the consequence of the options they choose, often within games simulations.

155. The role of ICT to support numeracy is weak while in literacy it is in its very early stages of development. Opportunities to use computers to assist in recording data, drawing graphs and accessing stored information are unsatisfactory. Equally, very little evidence is seen of pupils regularly using word processing skills within their literacy work. In too many literacy lessons, the class computer lay idle, instead of being used within the activity elements of the lessons. As a result, although a set of examples was seen, showing class work in which pupils could change fonts, lay out text in different ways and use simple graphics to illustrate their work, this was certainly the exception rather than the rule. Some links were being made with science and design and technology. These were limited to the use of graphic programs and showed pupils making limited use of both skills and knowledge. Pupils in Year 3 had access to a website in which they gathered information on Romans, but use of the Internet is at a very early stage of development.

156. In the very brief glimpses of teaching seen during the inspection, it is clear that some teachers are confident, but restricted by the lack of computers upon which to work, whilst others are restricted rather more by their own lack of knowledge and confidence. This might well become better when all teachers have completed the appropriate training course, currently in place. In spite of teaching which is sometimes barely adequate, pupils sit quietly watching the small monitor in their class, enthusiastically answering questions and sometimes seeing the mistakes teachers make before they themselves do! This positive attitude towards the work is not yet fully utilised by teachers.

157. Although the subject leader has gained good subject knowledge through her training and experience, she has not yet managed to put together a plan of action, which takes into account all aspects of the subject in order to ensure that sufficient progress is made towards meeting the needs of pupils and the requirements of the National Curriculum.

## **MUSIC**

158. Music was not observed in the last inspection, but standards were judged as in line with expectations throughout. It was reported that opportunities were missed to capitalise on music played to enter and exit assembly.

159. From assemblies and the few lessons observed in this inspection, talking to staff and scrutinising planning, it is clear that standards of singing are well above average for pupils' ages notably at seven and nine. Pupils of all ages and abilities sing enthusiastically in both tune and time, sustaining notes and phrases very successfully. Teaching of singing is very good particularly in Year 3 and Year 4. Pupils' performance is notably improved as a result of the very good focus on techniques of staff in lessons and hymn practice. Good use is now made of entry music to encourage pupils to listen to and respond to music.

160. Planning shows that other elements of music including appreciation, composing and performing are to be covered, but evidence suggests that these aspects have a relatively low profile compared with singing. However, observations show that Year R children are satisfactorily introduced to a variety of instruments and that they enjoy copying rhythms and singing rhymes – some of which they add their own words to! In Year 1 pupils begin to understand that music can be written in a variety of ways. They show good control and attention when playing from a score as directed by the teacher. They made progress in the lesson because of good quality teaching based on clear objectives and good relationships. It is not possible to make a judgement about class music teaching in other years as no lessons could be observed.

161. The co-ordination of music is the responsibility of a 'stand in' subject leader who did not write the current policy. The development of music does feature in the school improvement plan, but this simply says that the scheme of work is under review. There are no assessment procedures or records kept of pupils' achievement as a result of music lessons. The subject is yet to be monitored in terms of the quality of teaching and learning and of coverage and this has resulted in the aforementioned aspects being underemphasised in some classes. The lack of a clear deadline for the implementation of whole school planning to make sure pupils build on skills from one year to the next has negative effects. Too many pupils will have left the school between the previous subject leader's departure in April 2001 and the completion of planning. The process is in need of speeding up.

162. The school has an adequate range and number of instruments, tuned and untuned, to teach music and this is an improvement since the last inspection. It is fortunate to have a room recently dedicated to the subject. Resources are well organised in boxes and trays so that they can be taken to classrooms. Plans are in hand to improve displays and storage in this room to raise the subject's profile.

163. Pupils, particularly in Year 3 and Year 4 and lately Year 2, have the opportunity to learn a variety of instruments in association with the Purbeck Instrument Loan Scheme. Sixty pupils are learning the recorder in school, well supported by teachers and teaching assistants and this group complements the very good work of the choir in performing in various places in the community as well as in school concerts. The school has a high reputation for singing and playing and has won a variety of awards for its participation in local school music festivals.

164. Good use is made of visiting musicians, some of whom are past pupils, to perform for pupils in the school. Overall music makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, but more could be made of the subject in promoting pupils' multicultural awareness.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

165. During the week of the inspection it was not possible to observe all aspects of the physical education curriculum. Inspection evidence is drawn from observations of lessons, which included games and dance, teachers planning and discussion with the subject leader.

166. Standards in physical education are in line with those expected in games, and above expectations in dance, both at the end of Year 2 and by the time pupils leave in Year 4. These findings are consistent with those of the previous inspection. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make sound progress in the subject.

167. Pupils in Year 1, work enthusiastically in dance. They compose simple movement patterns with developing awareness of rhythm, speed, level and direction, as they respond to well chosen music. They achieve well as they work collaboratively with other pupils, interpreting the music to produce a group dance. Pupils work well together, they use space effectively and they develop balance and co-ordination skills well. They practise and improve the accuracy, flow and control of their dance routines.

168. In games, Year 2 pupils work well with partners and develop the skills of receiving and sending a ball. The brisk pace of the lesson, especially the teacher's encouragement to 'keep the kettle boiling' injects enthusiasm, excitement and eagerness to improve during a mini team game.

169. In Year 3, pupils make good progress in dance. Opportunities are provided for pupils to explore a range of creative movements to respond to dots, squiggles and dashes. Pupils are encouraged to vary the shape, speed direction and level of their responses. Each pupil works sensibly with a partner taking turns to mirror each other's movements. They improve their work because teachers model their expectations, use pupils to demonstrate and maintain a brisk pace in lessons. Pupils concentrate well and develop a series of movements into an effective sequence.

170. In games lessons, teachers have clear expectations of behaviour and learning. Pupils are taught skills and techniques for ball and stick control when weaving in and out of a gateway of markers. Most pupils respond promptly to instructions, listen attentively and try hard to follow them. They concentrate on the activity, take care to avoid others and improve their hockey skills. Overall teaching in physical education varies from very good to unsatisfactory (in one dance lesson) and is satisfactory overall. Some staff lack knowledge and understanding and the pace of lessons suffers. However, most physical education teaching is effective.

171. Pupils in Year 3 and Year 4 learn to swim at a local pool. Tuition is provided by a qualified coach and certificates of achievement are awarded to all pupils to celebrate their successes. Many pupils attain above average standards. Financial support from the Parents' Association assists the school in ensuring that all pupils are fully included in swimming lessons.

172. Class activities are supplemented by a range of clubs, including football and tag rugby for Year 4 and ball skills for Years 1, 2 and 3. The football team enters local tournaments and the curriculum is enriched by country dancing and tennis coaching for Years 2, 3 and 4, and dance workshops for Years 1 to 4. The school enters an annual swimathon and swimming

galas with some successes, such as the girls Year 4 relay swimming team who gained first place in last year's area gala.

173. The subject is very well managed. The curriculum leader has revised the subject policy. The curriculum appropriately covers dance, gymnastics, games and athletics and a detailed scheme of work has been prepared to cover these aspects. The range and use of resources for physical education are good overall. This represents an improved picture since the last inspection when teachers' planning, resources, the use of the hall and the limited number of extracurricular activities were all criticised. Physical education makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through the elements of dance and the opportunities which pupils have to work co-operatively.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

174. School planning shows that provision for religious education takes into account the content of assemblies as well as work in conventional lessons. All classes from Year 1 to Year 4 have one religious education lesson a week. The last inspection noted standards were "broadly in line with expectations, but were variable, being better in some classes than others". Work shows that the situation has been improved, in that there is less variation. Pupils' attainment aged seven and nine now meets the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus.

175. Work is planned on a two-year cycle so that Year 1 and Year 2; and Year 3 and Year 4; cover the same topics. Pupils make satisfactory progress and make good use of literary skills in discussion, where they speak with confidence and listen well, and in the recording of work. Good reading skills are used efficiently: for example Year 3 and Year 4 finding out about different faiths and customs and Year 1 and Year 2 focusing on special places, objects and celebrations. Pupils of all ages are taught to be considerate and tolerant towards the beliefs of others and this has very positive effects on personal development. Pupils with special educational needs are fully included in all activities and make sound progress.

176. Themes for assembly present pupils with a wide range of viewpoints as well as introducing them to Bible stories and different religions. Pupils respond very well to the many visitors and clergy who regularly take assembly, and demonstrate very good recall and understanding. Requirements for collective acts of worship are met and pupils behave very well showing very good respect. Religious education makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and all pupils regardless of age, gender, ability or background are fully included.

177. In the few lessons it was possible to observe, relationships were good, learning objectives were clear and teaching was good. Teachers value the contributions of pupils and make good use of the much improved resources in terms of artefacts now available. For example, Year 1 are helped to understand Christian symbolism by focusing on a cross, candles and the Bible. This is extended by a visit to a church to see these in an appropriate setting and followed up with comparisons of other places of worship in Year 3 and Year 4 when studying aspects of Islam, Sikhism and Hinduism.

178. Areas still to develop in religious education, which is now considered a core subject, are in assessing and recording pupils' knowledge and understanding in order to gauge progress, suggestions for which are made in the locally agreed syllabus.