

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **CHESELBOURNE VILLAGE SCHOOL**

Cheselbourne, Dorchester

LEA area: Dorset

Unique reference number: 113663

Headteacher: Mrs. Margaret Ann Herridge

Reporting inspector: Natalie Moss  
22685

Dates of inspection: 18<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> November, 2002

Inspection number: 247385

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 to 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Cheselbourne Dorchester
Postcode:	DT2 7NT
Telephone number:	01258 837306
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Appropriate authority:	Dorset
Name of chair of governors:	Ms. Lesley Dowsett
Date of previous inspection:	17 <sup>th</sup> February, 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
22685	N. Moss	Registered inspector	<p>English</p> <p>Provision for pupils with English as an additional language</p> <p>History</p> <p>Geography</p> <p>Music</p> <p>Religious education</p> <p>Educational inclusion</p>	<p>Information about the school</p> <p>The school's results and achievements</p> <p>How well are pupils taught?</p> <p>How well the school is led and managed?</p> <p>What should the school do to improve further?</p>
9710	R. Burgess	Lay inspector		<p>Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development</p> <p>How well does the school care for its pupils?</p> <p>How well does the school work in partnership with parents?</p>
14706	B. Knowles	Team inspector	<p>Science</p> <p>Art and design</p> <p>Provision for pupils with special educational needs</p>	
22026	J. Paull	Team inspector	<p>Mathematics</p> <p>Information and communication technology</p> <p>Design and technology</p> <p>Physical education</p> <p>Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage</p>	<p>How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?</p>

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Cheselbourne Village School is in an attractive rural setting in Dorset, close to Dorchester. It is much smaller than other primary schools, with 46 pupils currently on roll, from the reception class to Year 4. Pupils come from a wide area of local villages and from a breadth of different backgrounds. No pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals, which is well below the national average. All pupils are from white United Kingdom backgrounds. There are no pupils who speak English as an additional language. About one-fifth of the pupils have been identified as having special educational needs, both specific learning and behavioural, which is above the national average, while the percentage with statements of special educational need is broadly average. Children enter the reception class with levels of attainment which vary from year to year from close to the national average to below it. In the current reception class, children are all very young and attend on a part-time basis. The school teaches its pupils in three classes, two of which contain pupils of mixed ages. The school has very recently undergone extensive building work, which has, by its nature, been disruptive, but which has greatly improved the facilities and accommodation.

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

Cheselbourne Village School provides its pupils with a happy and harmonious environment and a good education. Pupils overall reach above average standards by the time they leave the school and make good progress when measured against their earlier attainment. Teaching is good, and frequently very good, throughout the school. Teachers successfully encourage good attitudes to learning, good behaviour and very good relationships. Pupils are well cared for and guided by the staff and their personal development is well nurtured. The headteacher provides excellent leadership, working closely with other staff and governors. The school has been successful in improving the building and its facilities well. Taking into account pupils' good progress and the good quality of education, the school provides good value for money.

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

- Teaching is good throughout the school, so that pupils learn well.
- Pupils reach above average standards in English, mathematics and science.
- Pupils have positive attitudes towards their work and their behaviour is good, in and out of lessons.
- The very good relationships in the school make it a friendly, family community, where pupils support each other.
- The curriculum provided for pupils and activities outside lessons are good.
- The school's support for its pupils is very good and good provision is made for pupils' personal development.
- The leadership and management of the school are very good.

#### **What could be improved**

- The facilities for children in the reception class, especially for outside play and activities.
- Further extending the amount of writing accomplished by pupils.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school was last inspected in 1997, when it was judged to be a caring school with a variety of strong features. There has been good improvement since that time. The key issues for action have been successfully addressed. Standards in design and technology have risen, through the use of detailed planning, greater opportunities for pupils to generate

and make their own designs and the increased knowledge of staff in the subject. Standards in music have also risen, with the use of a strong policy and specialist singing teaching. In information and communication technology (ICT), standards have risen well; the school now has a detailed and thorough policy, good resources and staff have been trained to teach and use the subject well. In addition, standards in religious education have improved and are now good. Teaching is now good overall, and often very good. Planning for the whole curriculum is good. The leadership and management of the school are very good, with each subject having its own efficient co-ordinator. The headteacher and governors have succeeded in improving the very limited accommodation by a recent programme of building and refurbishment, which has contributed significantly to the improvement of the environment for pupils' learning. These features, together with the school's plans for future development, demonstrate that its capacity for further improvement is very good.

## STANDARDS

Care must be taken when analysing the test results from a school which has such a small number of pupils in each year group. As there were less than 10 pupils who sat the national tests at the end of Year 2 in 2002, a table of results is not published here. Results vary widely according to the nature of year groups. Over the last three years, pupils' results in these tests have exceeded the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Inspection evidence indicates that the current Year 2 pupils are also attaining above average standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science. The school is implementing some effective extra measures to ensure good progress for all pupils.

Inspection evidence shows that most children enter the reception class with below average levels of attainment in literacy and numeracy. They make good progress and are well on the way to achieving all the early learning goals by the time they enter Year 1. Pupils attain above average standards in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 2 and by the time they leave the school at the end of Year 4. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. The national literacy and numeracy strategies have been well implemented and are helping to raise standards. The school is, however, aware of the need to extend the amount of written work accomplished by pupils in order to raise attainment in this area further.

Pupils attain standards in art and design, music and religious education which are above those expected by the end of Year 2 and Year 4. In ICT they attain above expected standards by the end of Year 4 and standards in line with those expected by the end of Year 2. In all other subjects, standards are in line with those expected by both age groups.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils like coming to school and enjoy both their work and their play. They work with effort and interest.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good, characterised by the way in which pupils work and play together harmoniously, regardless of age, gender or ability. Pupils are friendly and courteous to each other and to adults.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils are encouraged to respect each other and the staff and they do so with thought and care. Pupils are encouraged to take on responsibilities within the school and do so willingly. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff are very good.
Attendance	Very good. Levels of attendance are well above the national average.



## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 4
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	Good

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

Teaching is good throughout the school and was very good, in over one-third of lessons observed. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen during the inspection. Teachers have good subject knowledge and teach basic skills very well. A major strength of the teaching is the high quality of the planning, which enables pupils to learn well and to make consistently good progress. In Years 1 to 4, in particular, time and resources are used to very good advantage to support the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils, use effective and varied methods in their lessons and manage pupils' behaviour well, setting good role models for them. The quality of their marking of written work is good, as is the level of praise, encouragement and help they offer during lessons. Teaching is good or very good in English, mathematics and science, enabling pupils to reach their full potential. Teachers ensure that both literacy and numeracy skills are well promoted throughout the full range of curriculum subjects. The school provides well for meeting the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, higher attaining pupils and those in the two mixed age classes. As a result, progress in learning is good.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The curriculum covers all statutory areas of learning well. Planning is good and ensures that the full range of needs in mixed age classes is well met. Very good use is made of links with the local community.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils receive good support from the co-ordinator for special needs and from the teachers and support staff. They are helped well to make good progress towards their learning targets.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Very good provision is made for pupils' social development, leading to very good relationships and a clear sense of responsibility and tolerance towards others. Pupils are made aware of the difference between right and wrong and their spiritual awareness is heightened both in assemblies and in lessons. Their cultural and multi-cultural awareness is developed well through the curriculum, religious education lessons and visitors to the school.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. The school knows and understands its pupils well and provides them with a high quality of care. Pupils benefit from the very good support and guidance given them by staff in their learning and in their personal development. Assessment procedures are used well to evaluate and inform teachers of pupils' individual academic needs.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	The school has established very effective links with parents and provides them with very good information on their children's progress and well-being. Parents make a good contribution to their children's learning and to the day-to-day life of the school.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher provides excellent leadership by her vision and commitment to creating a school which promotes high standards in learning and behaviour, as well as being a purposeful and happy community. She is well supported in these aims by the other teachers, who also carry out their subject management responsibilities well. Teachers and support staff enable the curriculum to be very well taught.
How well the governors fulfill their responsibilities	Good. The governors fully meet their legal responsibilities. They work well and closely with the headteacher in helping to maintain the strengths of the school and address its areas for improvement. They are realising their role in helping to shape the future direction of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. Assessment is now used well to track pupils' progress and help them attain more highly. Teaching and learning are carefully monitored and the school has a rigorous and excellent plan to determine and implement the school's next priorities.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The headteacher and governors work closely to ensure that teachers are most effectively deployed. Funds are very well used to obtain maximum benefit for pupils' education and finances are very well monitored to ensure that the best value for money is obtained and used to best advantage. Although accommodation has been vastly improved recently, it is still limited in facilities for reception children and for physical education, games and lunches. Learning resources are good in quality and quantity, significantly so in ICT.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school and are happy.</li> <li>• Children are well taught and make good progress.</li> <li>• They are comfortable with the way the school handles questions or problems and think the school works closely with them.</li> <li>• Their children behave well and are helped to become mature and responsible.</li> <li>• Teachers have high expectations of their pupils.</li> <li>• The school is well managed and led.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The amount of homework set.</li> <li>• The range of activities outside lessons.</li> </ul>

Half of the parents returned the pre-inspection questionnaire, though very few attended the meeting for parents. The inspection team agrees with the positive views expressed by parents. A few parents were not happy with the amount of homework set, but inspectors found that the level of homework was suitable for children of this age group. The range of activities outside lessons was judged to be good, offering pupils a selection of clubs and other activities, as well as visits out of school to enrich the curriculum provided.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. When children enter the reception class, their level of attainment varies a great deal within, and especially between, year groups. For instance, the current reception children are particularly young, none reaching their fifth birthday until next February. Overall, they are below average in attainment, especially in literacy and numeracy. However, teaching is good in the reception class, pupils are well supported by all staff and the curriculum is now firmly based on the recommended activities and areas for the age group. Pupils are well on course to achieve the early learning goals by the time they enter Year 1, and possibly to exceed them in personal, social and emotional development and creative development. Progress is least rapid in physical development, since the lack of outdoor facilities for play restricts the opportunities offered to pupils. Attainment is average overall, whereas it was judged to be above average at the previous inspection, and children's progress is good, but was only sound at that time. Year groups in the school are very small, so that standards vary a great deal from year to year. The trend over the last three years in the national tests at the end of Year 2 show that standards have exceeded the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. The 2002 results were average in reading, well below average in writing and above average in mathematics when compared with standards nationally. When compared with similar schools, those with a very low percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, they were below average in reading, very low in writing and close to the average in mathematics. The unreliability of one year's results is, however, well demonstrated by the fact that one-third of the pupils in this year group were on the school's register of special educational needs. Inspection evidence of pupils currently in Year 2 is that standards are above average in reading, writing and mathematics. The very good teaching seen in literacy and numeracy is helping pupils to attain well. Reading and mathematics are particularly strong and pupils make good progress in them. Writing is technically good and varied in purpose, but pupils do not always have the opportunities to produce the longer and more sustained pieces of writing which would help them to perform well in timed test conditions. Standards in mathematics have improved well since the previous inspection. Inspectors agree with teachers' assessment of standards in science as above average. Pupils are interested and involved and well stimulated by opportunities for investigative work. Overall standards of attainment have improved since the previous inspection and are now good.

2. By the time pupils reach the end of Year 4, they have built well on the good foundation laid in earlier years. Standards seen during the inspection were above average in English, mathematics and science. Pupils speak confidently and eagerly, answering questions and offering opinions with clarity. They are encouraged in this by the good role models provided by their teachers. Reading is often well above average in fluency and comprehension of what is read and pupils are provided with a good range of books suited to their individual abilities. In mathematics, higher attaining pupils can solve problems expressed in words with facility and have a good concept of shape and space. Most pupils have a good grasp of number and a variety of methods for arriving at answers. In science, investigation is used well. Pupils attain above average standards, are taught to record the results of their experiments and to conduct them with accuracy. These standards show an improvement on those at the time of the previous inspection.

3. The skills of literacy and numeracy are well stimulated throughout the school. In the reception class, number rhymes and songs are used to familiarise children with both words and numbers. In Years 1 to 4, pupils learn to write in appropriate styles for different situations and purposes, such as recording facts in history and geography and writing

stories, poems and newspaper articles. Mathematics is used in the form of charts in science and geography and in the growing use of ICT.

4. Pupils attain standards in art and design which are above nationally expected levels by the end of Year 2 and Year 4. This is an improvement on the time of the previous inspection. Although it was not possible to observe any lessons in art and design, the range and level of work on display made it clear that pupils are stimulated and challenged to produce interesting work and that they are learning the basic skills of the subject well. In music, only singing lessons could be observed, taught by a visiting specialist teacher. Pupils enjoyed the lessons, worked hard in them and attained standards above those expected nationally. The planning and range of instruments used showed a good degree of familiarity with the fundamental skills of music-making and standards are now good, rather than unsatisfactory, as at the previous inspection. In religious education, standards are above those expected by the locally agreed syllabus, as they were at the time of the previous inspection. The subject is taught with enthusiasm, covering a good range of knowledge of other faiths and beliefs and a sense of spiritual discovery which make it both valuable and accessible to pupils. Information and communication technology standards have improved well, so that they are now at the expected levels by the end of Year 2 and above average by the end of Year 4. The nationally recommended scheme of work is enabling pupils to save, retrieve and access information easily and to use other tools, such as the Internet. They learn rapidly, making good progress through their teachers' ability to help and advise. Standards in history, geography, design and technology and physical education are in line with nationally expected levels in Year 2 and Year 4. Resources in physical education are limited in terms of space and restricted access to playing fields, but the school works hard to supply pupils with as many opportunities as possible, so that progress is generally satisfactory.

5. Pupils with special educational needs achieve standards which are appropriate for their age and ability. They are well supported in classrooms by teachers and learning support staff and make good progress, as opposed to the satisfactory progress noted at the previous inspection, towards the targets in their individual education plans. Work is carefully matched to their learning needs and teachers' planning provides well for this. This support is particularly effective in English and is being developed further in mathematics. In other subjects, teachers and learning support assistants spend extra time with pupils to ensure success. Pupils with special educational needs are fully included in all the school's activities.

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

6. Good standards of behaviour and positive attitudes to school have been maintained and the quality of relationships seen between pupils, staff and other children are better than at the time of the previous inspection.

7. Pupils' attitudes to school are good overall. They come to school enthusiastically and are happy there. In lessons, all groups of pupils respond well to their teachers' high expectations. They show high levels of interest and concentration. This was particularly evident in a Year 3/4 practical science lesson when they were conducting an experiment in sieving materials, with concentration and effort, finding their discoveries exciting. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 showed very good self-discipline in a singing lesson, in which they listened carefully to the teacher before they clapped the rhythm of the song. Pupils were observed using desk and laptop computers with confidence to prepare a PowerPoint presentation. Children in the reception class take part whole-heartedly in activities, for example, when playing a number game in the playground. In their first half term they have learnt the routines expected of them at the start of the school day. Their concentration is spasmodic, but they ask questions, for example, when listening to a story. All the children, including those with

special educational needs joined in the phrase “I’m scared” which is repeated in the story of ‘Can’t you sleep Little Bear?’

8. Behaviour overall in the school is good. In lessons, it is consistently good and even those with behaviour problems respond well to teachers’ requests. Pupils behave well in assemblies. Although a few, mainly boys, can be fidgety, the majority were enthusiastic in their response to the rewards given in a celebration assembly for showing how they could be a good friend to others. Pupils move around the school sensibly and are especially careful when they are escorted across the road to the village hall for lunch or lessons. In the playground, behaviour is good. No children have been excluded for inappropriate behaviour.

9. The absence of oppressive behaviour, including bullying, sexism and racism, is very good. The atmosphere of the school is friendly and harmonious and pupils show very good understanding of the impact of their actions on others. Pupils’ personal development is good. They show very good respect for other people’s feelings, values and beliefs, as was apparent in a religious education lesson where the Jewish story of Hanukah was being told and a real spirit of celebration prevailed. Older pupils are happy to take responsibility in the school, for example, acting as milk monitors and they show great eagerness to do their job well. Relationships throughout the school are very good. Adults provide very good role models and pupils of all ages play and work happily alongside each other. Children under five understand the rules for their quiet discussion times and take turns well, waiting while others finish talking before they say their piece.

10. Pupils with special educational needs enjoy the activities planned and have very good attitudes to learning. These pupils usually behave well, wish to succeed and take a pride in their work. Most have good self-esteem.

11. Attendance is very good and well above the national average for primary schools. There is no unauthorised absence. Generally, pupils are punctual.

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

12. Teaching is good throughout the school, with many very good features. It has improved well since the time of the previous inspection, when it was judged to be sound. In this inspection, teaching was almost all good or very good and there was no unsatisfactory teaching. Since the previous inspection the school has had an almost complete change of teachers and has experienced an unsettled period in the last year because of teachers’ sickness. There is now a good team, led by the headteacher, who teaches half a timetable. This team has quickly adapted to the needs of the pupils, as well as coping with the inevitable disruption of the building works earlier this term, and is enabling pupils to make good progress through the school. The consistently good teaching is built on a foundation of shared planning, close relationships and commitment to pupils’ success.

13. Teachers all have good knowledge and understanding of what they teach. All place particular emphasis on the basic skills of literacy and numeracy and ensure that these are consolidated throughout the curriculum subjects, not just in English and mathematics lessons. All have gone to great pains to ensure that they have the necessary skills in other areas, such as ICT and design and technology, to enable them to teach with expertise and enthusiasm. This ensures that pupils are able to make progress in all subjects and to use their knowledge to good advantage.

14. The strongest feature of the teaching lies in its planning. National literacy and numeracy strategies are used very well to plan for these subjects and recommended national schemes for most other subjects. From these, teachers construct their day-to-day planning, with particular reference to the way in which one lesson will build on what has

gone before. Plans are very well designed to reinforce previous learning, to move pupils forward and to stimulate their interest by the variety of methods and activities provided within them. Teachers always share their objectives with pupils at the beginning of lessons and take the opportunity to assess how good learning has been by a good recapitulation at the end of lessons. Above all, teachers plan very carefully and thoroughly for the very wide range of ability in their classes, especially in Years 1 / 2 and Years 3 / 4, which are both mixed age classes. Work to be done individually or in groups is graded in difficulty, so that the lower attaining pupils find it accessible and relevant and the higher attainers are able to stretch themselves to their full potential.

15. Teachers have realistic, but always high, expectations of their pupils. They constantly challenge them to further effort, providing opportunities for pupils of all levels of ability to become engaged in the work and to make good progress. Extra classes are provided in English for lower attainers and action is taken to ensure that pupils who are especially talented in any area are enabled to advance more rapidly by, for instance, joining a higher class for that particular subject or activity. Teachers use their very good knowledge of the pupils and assessment information to ensure that learning activities are closely matched to the whole range of age and ability in mixed age classes.

16. Within lessons, teachers vary the range of activities well, so that pupils have little time to become bored and they move on quickly to the next phase of learning. This ensures that time is well used and that pupils make consistent progress. Teachers use questions well to ascertain how much pupils have learnt and to help in future planning. They explain ideas well to the pupils and are careful to ensure that pupils are given the necessary vocabulary to deal with specific subjects. Support staff are used to very good advantage, both to support those pupils with special educational needs and to ensure that during group work pupils are kept on task. Resources are very well used, particularly in ICT, as are the limited facilities of the accommodation.

17. Pupils' behaviour is well managed by teachers, who treat them with the respect they expect in return. Lessons are always happy and purposeful and pupils work willingly and with effort for their teachers. When sanctions are needed, teachers use them with sensitivity and tact.

18. Teachers know their pupils well and take every opportunity to assess the degree of learning each pupil has achieved. They do this through questions, through testing pupils' knowledge at the conclusion of lessons and through helpful marking of written work, which shows pupils how they can improve. Homework is used appropriately to reinforce work done in lessons.

19. Pupils with special educational needs are well taught. Teachers know their pupils. All staff are familiar with pupils' individual education plans and try to ensure that tasks are relevant, so that pupils make good progress. Basic skills are taught very well. Support staff are used effectively, maintaining records of pupils' gains in skills, knowledge and understanding. The Dorset Area School Partnership (DASP) works effectively with the school advising on behaviour targets and support

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

20. The previous inspection reported that the curriculum for children in the reception class was appropriate and balanced. What was taught met their needs in literacy, numeracy, educational play and knowledge of the world. Since then, national requirements for the age group have changed considerably, so direct comparisons are not possible. What is now taught meets the new requirements well. Reception children are now taught in a separate

class. Although space remains restricted, this arrangement is clearly an improvement, as it helps staff to provide more opportunities to meet the specific requirements of the age group. All six areas of learning are taught with due regard to the development of young children's skills and knowledge.

21. In the previous inspection, in Years 1 to 4, legal requirements to teach the National Curriculum and religious education were being met. However, several minor weaknesses were identified. For example, in design and technology, ICT and music, elements of what should be taught were missing. Furthermore, in mathematics, an insufficient emphasis on practical and investigative mathematics was identified. These weaknesses have been corrected. Planning of the curriculum is now thorough and ensures that all required elements are taught. The governors' policies for teaching sex education and about the misuse of drugs meet statutory requirements and are supported in science lessons and through personal, social and health education. These lessons include and foster understanding of what it means to be a good citizen.

22. Since the previous inspection, the national literacy and numeracy strategies have been introduced well, ensuring that long term planning of English and mathematics is good. Planning in ICT and design and technology has improved. In other subjects, planning of what should be taught, and when, is also strong, ensuring that skills, understanding and knowledge are taught in relevant sequences. In the past year, with the support of a specialist in ICT, the school's planning has been computerised and includes useful links to nationally recommended schemes of work. The hard work that was involved in setting up the system is now paying dividends, as what is to be taught in lessons can now be accessed easily and printed out by class teachers. The school's improvement plan shows that regular reviews of subject policies are taking place.

23. Measures taken to ensure that all pupils have access to learning at levels that meet their individual needs and that they have equal opportunities to progress are a very good feature of the school's provision. For example, the provision for pupils with special educational needs is good under the leadership of a knowledgeable co-ordinator. Because the school is small, pupils' individual needs are often very different from one year group to the next. Two years ago, for example, many pupils in Year 4 were gifted, whereas, in other years, more pupils have been identified with special needs. Fluctuations of this kind present the staff with particular challenges, as the level of what is taught must change considerably in a short time and be suited to individual needs. The headteacher and staff are very aware of this and their adaptations of the curriculum have generally met pupils' requirements very well.

24. There are clear guidelines for responding to the needs of pupils with special educational needs. Pupils are given the same curricular opportunities as others both inside and outside the classroom. The school provides good support for these pupils, who are fully integrated into school life. Additional support in lessons is carefully considered and provided, and ensures that activities are relevant to pupils' particular needs.

25. The school's links with other educational institutions and the local community are very good. Links with a local group of schools that support each other, with the help of the local education authority, (referred to as the 'Pyramid'), are a particular feature of this. This group helps to provide up-to-date information about good planning and practice, as well as expert advice and support. For example, a technician is available to correct computer faults. Links are also maintained with local middle schools to help pupils in the process of transfer to the next stage of education. Such links also enhance specialised resources in subjects such as physical education, enabling the full curriculum to be taught. The school's own potential to be involved in the training of new teachers is strong, as what it offers is good practice and provides examples from which teaching skills can be developed and acquired.

Good links with the community include visitors who contribute to pupils' appreciation of, for example, the arts and the acquisition of specific skills, such as knitting. Links with the wider community include theatre groups, a local community policeman and other local residents, such as the owner of the old school house.

26. Several activities are provided outside lessons, including French, knitting, a residential school trip and other visits that arise from time to time. Bearing in mind the size of the school and the age of the pupils, the range of these activities is good, although it is limited in the area of physical education.

27. At the time of the previous inspection, provision for pupils' social and moral development was a strength of the school and the provision was satisfactory for their spiritual and cultural development. Arrangements for spiritual and cultural development have been improved and are now also strong. Therefore, provision for pupils' personal development is now consistently good throughout the school.

28. The area of personal, social, health and emotional development is very well planned and taught in the reception class. Planning here, and throughout the school, includes a strong emphasis on looking after living and growing things, co-operating with each other and appreciating what others do, as well as working and playing kindly with each other.

29. Good opportunities for spiritual development are built on a strong commitment to support pupils' belief in what they can accomplish and developing self-esteem through praise, encouragement and an appropriate system of rewards. Pupils are encouraged to be excited about the created world, human achievements and what they learn. Examples of this are seen not only in religious education, where it might be expected, but in subjects such as mathematics, for example, in which pupils are allowed to take time to express their wonder at large numbers or patterns. Assemblies are very well planned and fully meet statutory requirements. Values such as respect for the beliefs of others, tolerance and the worth of each other's contributions to the community are promoted consistently well

30. Arrangements for moral development are also good. Teachers' expectations of behaviour, politeness and kindness towards others are high. Rules of behaviour contain complementary 'do' and 'do not' statements and include a good framework within which everyone can work. All adults employed at the school set good examples of courtesy and respect, demonstrating these attributes towards their pupils. Clear examples of the difference between right and wrong were given explicitly during stories and examples of real situations were provided in assemblies.

31. Provision to develop pupils socially is very good. Older pupils help children in the reception year to learn routines and to feel comfortable, acting as 'buddies'. Opportunities to work together on topics and tasks, both with a partner or as part of a group, are planned in most subjects. Good examples were seen during the inspection in science and ICT. Teachers set good examples of teamwork and co-operation and older pupils are frequently encouraged to help and care about those younger than themselves. The results of co-operation are specifically pointed out and praised.

32. Pupils' cultural development is also planned well. In geography and religious education, for example, teachers provide positive images of other countries, different cultural practices and ways of life. British and broader western heritage is promoted well in subjects such as history and art and design. Pupils' pride in their locality is also supported through the use of the village and its immediate surroundings in environmental work and visits.



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

33. The level of care provided for pupils has improved since the previous inspection and is now very good. Pupils' progress and personal achievements are well monitored, so helping to raise standards and enabling appropriate support to be given to all pupils.

34. Procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare are very good. The headteacher is the designated child protection person and has received appropriate training, which has been shared with other staff. Very good care is taken in maintaining the health and safety of all pupils. Teachers, other staff and governors maintain a secure environment for pupils. There are good arrangements to deal with minor emergencies and first aid. Pupils, and their individual circumstances, are very well known by their teachers and other adults in the school.

35. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are very good. Attendance is carefully recorded, reasons for absence always sought and the services of the educational welfare officer are used well. Good behaviour is well promoted by good adult role models and by consistent reference to the 'Golden Rules' which are displayed around the school. Pupils are appropriately rewarded for good work and behaviour. A record is kept of the pupils who achieve certificates in assemblies for good work or attitudes. Very good support for pupils whose behaviour gives cause for concern is provided through arrangements with the local pyramid of schools.

36. Good procedures are in place to assess how well pupils are doing and their progress against national expectations is monitored each term. Data from termly assessments, national tests and optional tests is well used both to track individual progress and to arrange special lessons to ensure that pupils meet their full potential. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 set their own targets for learning after completing a specially marked piece of work. Information and communication technology is well used to track progress in mathematics; both the teachers and their pupils are able to see how well they are getting on at any time. Teachers make good use of the information to ensure that lessons meet the needs of pupils and that they understand each stage or have mastered the appropriate skills before moving on.

37. The educational guidance for pupils is very good. Teachers and other staff in the school know pupils very well, which allows them to provide appropriate support and guidance. Children's progress is carefully monitored in line with early learning goals when they start school in the reception class. Pupils with special educational needs and those who are gifted or talented are appropriately identified.

38. Teachers ensure that everyone is included in all aspects of school life. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and all statutory requirements are met. In the very small classes, needs are identified early. Outside agencies are used effectively. Teachers ensure such pupils receive the necessary support. All pupils are encouraged to do well, with achievements rewarded and praised. The good provision enables pupils to make good progress towards their personal targets in their individual education plans. The targets are shared with pupils, parents and teachers, along with regular reviews of progress. In the reception class, early assessment information is used effectively to plan children's learning. Teachers' assessments are detailed and help to identify specific achievable learning targets.

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

39. Most parents and carers feel that this is a good school which their children enjoy attending. About half of the children's parents replied to a questionnaire, but only three attended a meeting with the registered inspector. The inspection team agrees with most of the parents' views and comments. Their findings support parents' views that teaching and

teachers' expectations are good, the school is very approachable, children are helped to become responsible and mature and are happy there. The school works hard to involve parents and is responsive to parents' suggestions. The team found that the amount of homework set is suitable for children at a first school, there is a good range of clubs and visitors to the school, and that visits outside school broaden the academic and personal experiences of pupils well.

40. There are very effective links between the school and parents. The school provides very good quality information and parents generally respond well to its requests for them to become involved. Contact with parents before their children start in the reception class is very good. Parents are given very good written information about the school and its procedures through the prospectus, curriculum guides and regular newsletters. They are appropriately informed about their children's progress with a written report at the end of each year, supplemented by formal meetings with teachers. Suggestions are made so that parents know what their child must do to improve. In addition, parents are able to talk to teachers at the beginning or end of the school day, or by appointment at other times.

41. Parents and guardians of pupils with special educational needs are actively involved on a regular basis and are fully involved in review procedures. They are very supportive of the work of the school and happy with the provision for their children.

42. The impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school is good, as is their contribution to children's learning. Many listen to their children read at home, make written comments in their reading book and help with spellings. A number help to supervise children on the way to swimming or games at other venues. Most parents attend consultation evenings, but very few attend the workshops provided by the school to explain, for example, about national tests in Year 2, or the introduction of a new reading scheme. Parents organise or support events through the Friends of Cheselbourne to raise substantial funds that have contributed to improvements in learning resources and to the learning and play environment.

43. Since the previous inspection the school has improved the range and quality of information which it offers to parents, and the partnership established remains a strength of the school.

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

44. The quality of leadership and management in the school is very good. The excellence of the headteacher is clearly demonstrated by the improvements she has instigated since taking up post, the way in which she has coped confidently and capably with the recent disruption of building works and her handling of staffing problems of sickness in the last year. She has brought together a dedicated and committed team of teachers and governors and works with great energy and determination, as well as good humour, to raise standards in the school in all ways. Her vision for the school ensures a very friendly, caring environment, in which pupils learn with pleasure and effort. She is well supported by other teachers, who obviously like and respect her and are ready to work hard to achieve high standards for the pupils. Relationships in the school between headteacher, staff and governors are very good, ensuring that the school's aims and values are reflected in its work and that the school has excellent priorities for its further development. Leadership and management have improved well since the previous inspection and the school is clearly moving forward at a rapid pace.

45. Delegation of management responsibilities is difficult in a very small school, with so few teachers. However, the school has succeeded in providing good co-ordination for all subjects of the curriculum, so that work in each subject is systematic, ensures good

continuity in learning and pupils' attainment and progress are well known and fostered. In addition, the school has recently developed an effective system for monitoring teaching and learning. The headteacher, sometimes in conjunction with local authority advisors, regularly observes teaching and learning in lessons and looks carefully at teachers' planning and the standards of work pupils are reaching. She is helped in this by the co-operation of subject co-ordinators and, increasingly, by governors. This leads to informed planning and review and involves governors in an understanding of the school's curriculum areas and ways in which standards may be raised.

46. The headteacher has also introduced manageable and effective systems for monitoring the school's educational provision. The ways in which pupils' performance in national tests and other means of assessment are analysed have contributed to the excellent school development plan, which identifies priorities with clarity, forethought and relevance.

47. There is good management and administration of the provision for pupils with special educational needs. The co-ordinator has expertise and maintains the register of pupils efficiently. Once identified, pupils receive additional support and different work, if necessary, to meet their needs. Outside agencies are involved as required and the governing body is kept well informed by the head teacher, special educational needs co-ordinator and the responsible governor.

48. The school's governors fulfill all their statutory duties well and with enthusiasm. They are committed to the school, visit it on a regular basis and have an understanding of the changes which have taken, and still are taking, place. They now have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and of how further improvement can be achieved. Most have undertaken training provided by the local authority. They are beginning to develop their role in shaping the direction of the school by informed input into the school improvement plan and close collaboration with the headteacher in suggesting strategies and priorities. They have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and of areas where improvement is needed. Governors are determined to secure the best possible value for pupils in all areas of school life, as demonstrated by the time and care they have taken to oversee and help with the recent building and refurbishment works and their determination in providing good resources and training for ICT throughout the school. They use resources, such as the Dorset school pyramid, well in order to compare the school's performance with that of others. Under the eye of a governor with much financial expertise, the quality of financial management is very good. Funding is used very well and spent wisely on matters of priority, such as the provision of good resources and a good level and quality of learning support staff for pupils with learning difficulties.

49. The school now has a full number of good teachers to meet the needs of pupils. Together with the high quality learning support staff, pupils' needs are very well provided for. The school's administrative assistant provides valuable help to the headteacher, although she works only part-time. All adults in the school show concern and care for pupils and offer them good role models.

50. Although the school's accommodation has been vastly improved of late, offering better classroom provision for the older pupils and more space for ICT resources and pupils' libraries, it is still inadequate in some ways. The reception class has no facilities for creative play in the form of sand or water trays. There is no secure outdoor area for play for these reception children, which limits their physical development on large apparatus. For lunch, music lessons and physical education lessons, pupils still have to cross the road to the nearby village hall. In order to take part in team games, they have to be taken to another school, since the school has no playing field of its own. The refurbishment programme has helped to create a warm, attractive and coherent learning environment, as well as providing

the headteacher with a much-needed office. The school is maintained well; it is clean and bright, and every opportunity is taken to cover the walls with good displays of work of which pupils can be proud.

51. Resources are good overall, particularly in ICT and English, and at least satisfactory in all other subjects. They are appropriate to pupils' needs and up-to-date. As already reported, there is little opportunity for some creative resources for reception children at present. The school is to be congratulated particularly on its provision of good information and technology resources, which are being well used to raise pupils' standards of attainment in the subject. There is a good range of fiction and non-fiction books to stimulate pupils' reading and research skills.

#### **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

52. In order to improve the standards in the school further, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- (1) improve the facilities for children in the reception class by extending the facilities for play, especially for outside play and activities.  
(Paragraphs: 1, 20, 50, 55, 65, 70)
- (2) improve the standards in writing by providing opportunities for pupils to write at greater length.  
(Paragraphs: 1, 74)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	23
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	20

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	8	14	1	0	0	0
Percentage	0	34	62	4	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	YR – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	43
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	10

#### 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	1
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.3
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
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)**

Where the number of pupils in the year group are ten or fewer the results are not published

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### **Ethnic background of pupils**

### **Exclusions in the last school year**

<b>Categories used in the Annual School Census</b>	<b>No of pupils on roll</b>	<b>Number of fixed period exclusions</b>	<b>Number of permanent exclusions</b>
White – British	46	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

*The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, 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)	3.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	14
Average class size	14

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

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	59

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2001/2002
	£
Total income	158 249
Total expenditure	153 112
Expenditure per pupil	3 062
Balance brought forward from previous year	6 616
Balance carried forward to next year	11 753

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1.6
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2.6
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1.6
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	46
Number of questionnaires returned	24

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	58	33	8	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	50	50	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	38	54	0	8	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	38	38	21	0	4
The teaching is good.	71	29	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	43	43	13	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	67	29	4	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	63	38	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	46	46	8	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	33	46	13	0	8
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	58	42	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	26	30	26	17	0



## **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**

53. Currently, seven part-time pupils attend the reception class each morning. They are all under five years old and will not attend full-time until January. The oldest of these children will not reach the age of five until February, which means that, overall, this particular year group is unusually young.

54. The school's provision for the age group is working well, meeting a range of different individual needs. Children are taught the six areas of learning for their age group as laid down in *The Curriculum for the Foundation Stage* (a government publication that explains what to teach children in nursery and reception classes). What is now provided represents good improvement since the previous inspection, when children of this age were taught in a mixed age class that included pupils in Years 1 and 2. The quality of planning is good and contains considerable detail, which is used to good effect to support teaching and learning. However, it is not possible to make direct comparisons with previous findings, as national requirements have been considerably altered since the last report. For example, children now continue to work on areas of learning until the end of the reception year, rather than up to their fifth birthday, which was previously the case. Furthermore, *early learning goals* and *stepping stones* are now used to describe stages that children would normally be expected to pass through as they acquire knowledge, skills and understanding. Currently, teaching is based very firmly on these recent recommendations.

55. In lessons during the inspection, teaching was consistently good, meeting pupils' different learning needs well, and some aspects were very good. For example, the teacher is very aware of young children's social, personal and emotional requirements. She approaches the children with considerable sensitivity. As a result, they are very secure in what they do and are ready to listen to her and to follow her instructions nearly all of the time. Her knowledge and understanding of the areas of learning are strong, which is resulting in good planning and subsequent learning of basic skills. However, the lack of a securely fenced area outside their classroom prevents children from having permanent access to outdoor facilities. This deficiency limits opportunities for physical development and for work with sand and water. Links with parents are clearly good and parents were welcomed into the classroom to help in the process of settling their children at the beginning of the day.

56. Records show that children's attainment on entry to the reception class varies widely both from child to child and year to year. However, taken over time, it is close to what is usually found. In the present year, it is a little below the *stepping stones* for the age group, especially in the important areas of literacy and mathematical development. However, good teaching is likely to help children make sufficient progress to meet the *early learning goals* by the time they enter Year 1.

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

57. Children's personal and social experiences before they enter the reception class are varied. Some have come from private nurseries, others attended local playgroups and, occasionally, a child may come straight from home. As a result of such varied pre-school experiences, adults have to work hard at first to ensure that all children understand the need to sit still and listen and to take turns when speaking and using resources. During the inspection, children were learning these skills very well, which was the result of very good teaching of this area of learning. The teacher is very ready to praise and encourage children when they help each other, show respect for others, and demonstrate good attitudes

towards work. Frequent opportunities are planned for children to share toys, equipment and resources, and to work and play together in ways that structure their social learning and help them to settle quickly. However, it does not end here. Times are planned when they sit in a circle, taking turns to explain what they have done and how successfully they played or worked together. In this way, they begin to accept responsibility for what they do. Their teacher is very sensitive to children's different needs, such as offering special encouragement and consideration to those who are less confident. During a very good session, some girls from Year 1 were brought into the group, which balanced the numbers of boys and girls. These slightly older ones also acted as good role models, explaining what they had learnt and how much better it is to make friends with everyone. As a result of this very good provision, children learn the routines of school very well and enter into harmonious relationships with each other and with adults, growing in maturity and acquiring good behaviour. They show interest in what is provided for them and are ready to learn effectively.

58. All adults in the school, including their class teacher, provide good examples for the children. They co-operate with each other, and consistently speak with respect to the children. This very good teaching sets the tone for personal and emotional development. The children learn well from it and make good progress. They are likely to attain, and possibly exceed, the *early learning goals* in this area.

### **Communication, language and literacy**

59. Children in the reception class are making good progress in this area of learning. Owing to good teaching, they are generally confident in speaking about their experiences, likes and dislikes. Planning of communication, language and literacy is very thorough, which is helping to ensure that the area is taught well and provided fully. The class teacher is also adept at using situations that arise to extend children's vocabulary. A good example occurred when they were returning from the village hall in bright sunlight. The teacher stopped in the school's playground and drew attention to the children's shadows. Much associated language arose and was consolidated well. Good links that extended children's knowledge and understanding of the world were also made. Pictures of shadow puppets and ideas about artificial sources of light, such as candles and bulbs were introduced. As a result of this type of teaching, children are learning new words and extending their uses of spoken language at a good rate. Children are also taught to associate letter sounds with shapes and to handle books correctly. In another lesson, the teacher's interesting reading style helped pupils to respond to *The Bear and the Scary Night*. They understood several simple features of the story, and the names of the author and illustrator were pointed out. Children can identify simple familiar words in the text. They are also beginning to convey meaning by making marks on paper to represent letters of the alphabet. They are beginning to recognise printed or written words, and labels on their displayed work show that they are starting to copy their own names. What is planned is adapted well to meet the different needs of children in the class. Judged overall, attainment on entry, in September, was a little below what is usually found, although a wide range was also apparent. It is clear that good progress is being made and so it is likely that children will reach the *early learning goals* for this area.

60. Teaching consists of a variety of good approaches. Different methods included guided activity, planned educational play, and explanations, including clever questioning, to help children reach correct answers for themselves. As a result, all the children are beginning to understand that writing and print convey meaning. Management, organisation and ongoing assessment of what the children can do are also contributing to good teaching and learning.

## Mathematical development

61. Similar methods are being applied to children's mathematical development as those found in communication, language and literacy. That is, at this early stage in the year, times when children are expected to sit and listen are kept short. This approach is working well. Opportunities are taken to encourage the development of counting and recognition of numbers. For example, in a good session that took place outside, nearly all the children showed that they could recognise numbers up to ten. Good planning had put children's learning into the context of a game. Numerals were placed around the playground and they ran to the point where the requested number was displayed. As a result of this method, they were all fully involved. The teacher was aware of those few who were less sure of where to go, directing particular questions to them in order to help. Ideas involving one more were also introduced. Opportunities to use real situations, such as checking the date, are also used well to encourage an interest in numbers and how to use them to count. In other situations, nearly all children said their numbers in sequence up to five or ten. They are also beginning to relate numbers to a series of objects or people, counting, for example, the number of soft toys, people in their room or objects in a group. They are also beginning to recognise simple shapes such as circles and squares, and to match and group using colours.

62. The quality of teaching in mathematical development sessions is good. It is based on good planning and good knowledge of the needs of individual children. As a result, the learning of basic skills is good and progress is maintained at a good rate. When they joined the reception class in September, overall attainment in this area was a little below what is usually found. However, owing to this good progress, nearly all children are in line to reach the *early learning goals* for mathematics by the end of the reception year.

## Knowledge and understanding of the world

63. Children are taught about the natural world through their immediate environment, as well as in pictures of places and events that are displayed in their classroom. During the inspection, work on sources of light was apparent. The use of sunlight to explore shadows was extended into ideas about light and shade. Outside, children were shown that a shaded area was really the result of a large shadow cast by a building. Indoors, as a result of good teaching, children thought of other sources of light such as bulbs and candles. A group of higher attaining children was encouraged to record on paper different sources of light that they could recall. Several of them produced ideas such as the moon, stars and electricity. Planning shows that children have opportunities to make models and to use kits and layouts to develop ideas about design, making, travel and transport. During the inspection, they also used a computer program, demonstrating good skills in using a mouse to move objects across the screen. The program involved feeding of farm animals and taking them to appropriate sheds or pens.

64. The quality of teaching that was seen in the inspection was good. Planning is of good quality. As in other areas of learning, it is based on the *stepping stones* and *early learning goals*, ensuring that each step builds on what has gone before and that children meet the desired goals by the time they enter Year 1.

## Physical development

65. Children's physical development is promoted successfully in several ways. Teaching is generally well planned and pupils are given many opportunities to run, jump and balance. For example, in a session on the playground, they were challenged to run to various points and to return to the middle. Tasks such as standing still on a marked red line and holding position were introduced and carried out well. Plenty of praise and encouragement was

offered to pupils who succeeded particularly well or tried hard. Opportunities are also provided to use large wheeled toys. However, despite this good teaching, progress is at a satisfactory, rather than fast, rate. The main reason is that the school has no securely fenced area where young children can go outside at any time when their teacher sees a need or necessity. As a result, learning is sometimes restricted, although the majority of children should reach the desired goals by the time they enter Year 1.

66. Children's control of muscles in their hands and fingers is developed well when they use small tools and instruments such as pencils to mark paper, crayons and paintbrushes to colour. Planning shows that good opportunities of this kind increase as the reception year progresses.

67. Overall, the quality of teaching in this area of learning is good. Management of children is very good. In the lesson that was seen, instructions were clear and the children responded well.

### **Creative development**

68. Children's creative development is well promoted through simple games, imaginative play, and art and design. Work displayed was of good quality for the age group. Musical activities and singing are also provided. For example, a specialist, well supported by the class teacher, taught various simple tunes. All the children were interested and concentrated well. The quality of singing was particularly strong. Several children were accurate in pitch. They are clearly beginning to pick the correct starting note and stay together in a simple rhythm. A good example was when they sang *We can bake a cake for tea*.

69. Teaching in this area of learning is good. During the lesson that was observed, the teacher demonstrated very good knowledge of the subject, confidently singing the tunes of simple songs. As a result, children were enabled to respond accurately and thereby make progress. Good links with personal development were established when several showed a willingness to sing their names solo during *Can you sing your name to me?*

70. Creative play is sometimes limited by the lack of space or outdoor amenities for sand and water play. Nevertheless, children are likely to meet the early learning goals in this area by the time they enter Year 1.

### **ENGLISH**

71. Pupils make good progress in English and generally attain standards above the national average by the ends of both Year 2 and Year 4, though national test results vary greatly from year to year, since year groups are very small. The 2002 results at the end of Year 2 were average in reading and well below average in writing. Over the last three years, however, standards in the national tests at the end of Year 2 have been above the national average. At the time of the previous inspection they were in line with national expectations and there has been good improvement.

72. By the end of Year 2, and even more so by the end of Year 4, pupils speak with confidence. They are eager to talk and present their ideas, often with much clarity and a wide vocabulary, as observed in a Year 3 / 4 lesson in which they were eager to explain their own ideas on an ideal tree house before writing an account of them. They listen carefully to their teachers and discuss the activity in hand with common sense and courtesy to each other when, for instance, they discuss the methods of separating materials by sieving or magnetism in a science lesson. They explained the designs they had constructed in design and technology for the school's new 'quiet garden' with enthusiasm and coherence.

73. Pupils read well. By the end of Year 2, most read with fluency and confidence, showing good understanding of what they read. Many, by the time they reach Years 3 and 4, are reading books of a higher level of difficulty than would normally be expected of pupils of this age. They read aloud with expression, in the main and many show a good sense of an appropriate style of speech to match what they are reading. Most are able to give clear accounts of books they have read and demonstrate good comprehension skills. Most can approach unfamiliar words with some facility, with an ability to blend letter sounds and correct their own errors. By Year 4, pupils can discuss the works of a range of authors, know how to use a library and are familiar with the conventions of reading, such as the uses of 'contents', 'index' and 'glossary'. Standards in reading are very good. By Year 4 pupils discuss the works of a wide range of authors. Higher attainers read well above the average level and pupils of lower attainment and those with special educational needs make good progress. Parents nurture their children's reading well by listening to them read the books they take home regularly and by writing helpful comments in their reading record books.

74. Pupils' writing skills also progress well, though the range of different abilities is more obvious in this aspect of English. By the end of Year 2, although written work shows areas of weakness in spelling, punctuation and grammar, standards are generally above the average. Pupils write with interest and concentration, as in a Year 1 / 2 lesson which was centred around the construction and asking of questions. Good progress is made through Years 3 and 4, as pupils increasingly use punctuation correctly in the form of speech marks, question marks and exclamation marks. Spelling improves rapidly, with pupils keen to use new vocabulary and make credible attempts to spell difficult words. Presentation of work is usually neat and handwriting clear and legible. Pupils write for a variety of purposes, such as letters, instructions, short stories and descriptions. They frequently write imaginatively and creatively in their 'First of the Month' books. By Year 4, pupils can discuss the works of a range of authors, know how to use a library and are familiar with the conventions of reading, such as the uses of 'contents', 'index' and 'glossary'. Standards in reading are very good. They do not, however, always have the opportunity to write at length and complete pieces of sustained writing. They write regularly in the appropriate sections of the literacy hour, but do not write for the longer periods of time, which would equip them for writing under test conditions. The school is aware of this and is planning new strategies by which to provide these opportunities, as part of their priority of focus on the improvement of pupils' writing skills. There are good examples of writing stimulated by shared reading of stories and poems and many pupils are eager to write at length when given the opportunity.

75. Throughout the school, pupils are provided with good opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills, as observed in a Year 1 / 2 lesson in which pupils were improvising on the theme of questions as presented in their shared reading of *I don't want to go to bed*. They make good progress in reading and make good use of the good library resources. They have good opportunities to experience a wide range of written styles, from non-fiction to drama and poetry. The recent building work at the school had clearly engaged their imaginations, as seen in a poem about the builder's animal 'assistants' and much descriptive writing depicting the knocking down of walls and the hustle and bustle of the construction work. Even these enthusiastic pieces of work would, however, have benefited from more time to write about the activities at length. Whilst the lower attainers have a more limited vocabulary and less fluency in writing, they too make good progress in all aspects of the subject.

76. Teaching is at least good. Teachers approach the lessons in a structured manner, based on the national literacy strategy, but also with great enthusiasm and ingenuity. The varied activities provided through good planning not only succeed in maintaining the interest of pupils, but also in motivating them and ensuring that they work with concentration and enjoyment. In a Year 3 / 4 lesson, pupils were bursting with eagerness to suggest further developments in the story they were reading together and the teacher successfully

converted this oral interest into effortful written work. Through the variety of activities planned, pupils work together collaboratively and co-operatively or by themselves with application and motivation, so that progress in learning is good. Teachers have very good knowledge of the skills demanded in the learning of English and present lessons in a lively manner and at a pace which encourages pupils to learn rapidly and with pleasure. Teachers' methods give firm focus to the statement of objectives, so that pupils know what they are going to learn, and they show expertise in ensuring that work is graded appropriately for all pupils, so that all attain the objectives. A particular strength of the teaching is the use of questions by teachers to assess the degree to which individual pupils have understood and remembered the learning in a lesson. Lower attainers, including those with special educational needs, are given much praise, encouragement and support, which gives them confidence to progress. Teachers know their pupils well and manage their behaviour effortlessly. Throughout the school, teachers work hard to involve pupils of all levels of attainment fully in lessons. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by teachers and teaching assistants and higher attaining pupils are always given scope to stretch themselves to their full potential through the stimulation offered to them.

77. Literacy skills are well promoted in English and through other subjects throughout the school. Teachers provide pupils with good role models for speaking and listening and encourage high standards in these areas. Reading is emphasised in the form of researching for subjects such as history and geography, and writing through recording and reporting experiments in science. Pupils learn specialised vocabulary for such subjects as mathematics, design and technology, science and religious education. One pupil, when discussing the novel she was currently reading, described it as 'phenomenally good'. Teachers are making good use of information and technology to allow pupils to present their work, to conduct research and to teach using an interactive whiteboard. A very good combination of literacy and ICT skills was also seen in pupils' making of their own PowerPoint presentations in religious education.

78. Pupils have regular handwriting practice, which helps them to present their work neatly and clearly. They do not, however, have sufficient opportunities to write at length, other than the regular assessment pieces in their 'First of the Month' books, which provide teachers with the opportunities for assessing pupils' level of attainment and planning for special action for individual pupils. Teachers' marking is thorough and regular, so that pupils are left in no doubt as to their strengths and areas for improvement, as well as showing them how they can improve their work.

79. The subject is very well led by the co-ordinator, who regularly observes teaching and learning in the subject. She regularly checks teachers' planning and pupils' written work, enabling new targets to be set for each pupil at frequent intervals. Present priorities are the continuation of valuable guided reading sessions, the provision of books to engage the interest of boys in reading more readily and the extension of the amounts of writing completed by pupils. Resources have recently been reviewed and replenished, so that there are good, appropriate reading schemes and a good supply and range of fiction and non-fiction in the libraries. Displays throughout the school demonstrate the range of work covered, as well as the increasingly good use of ICT in the subject.

## **MATHEMATICS**

80. At the time of the previous inspection, attainment in mathematics was in line with national expectations at the end of Years 2 and 4. Pupils' progress was described as 'sound' and the overall quality of teaching was satisfactory. Attainment in Years 2 and 4 is currently above average and teaching and learning are now good. These are clear improvements. In Year 2, these judgements match the 2002 National Curriculum test results closely. However, it should be born in mind that in the case of small year groups, such as those at

Cheselbourne, large fluctuations in the percentages gaining a particular level of attainment are caused by differences in the results of only one or two pupils. For example, results in 2001 were much lower than in 2000. Nevertheless, judged over time, results at the school are improving and are a little above average. Standards of attainment in Year 4 generally reflect and build on what was attained by the same groups of pupils when they were in Year 2. Compared with average starting points when they begin work on the National Curriculum, pupils' achievements are therefore good by the time they leave in Year 4. Often, pupils with special educational needs also achieve well, when measured against their earlier levels of attainment.

81. In Year 2, pupils' understanding of number is generally good for their age. For example, nearly all pupils explain clearly that the position of a digit in a number alters its value. In a very good Year 1/2 lesson, several higher attainers understood the relationship between subtractions such as  $7 - 2 = 5$ ,  $70 - 20 = 50$  and  $700 - 200 = 500$ , identifying the link correctly as everything being 'ten times bigger in each part of the sum'. A few even reached the next stage, recognising that '7,000 take away 2000' must 'make 5000'. This work builds on well from what they do in Year 1. In the same lesson, the younger pupils were 'number detectives', using number lines to seek missing numbers from bundles of numeral cards. Pupils with special educational needs were also well supported. Careful adaptations of what was planned allowed them to make good progress, also working with numbers. Previous work shows that pupils are also learning well about shapes and measures. They use rulers accurately to draw lines to a given length and name basic regular shapes, such as circles, squares and triangles. Several higher attaining pupils are beginning to link particular properties, such as three corners or sides, to the correct shape.

82. Pupils continue to learn basic skills well in Years 3 and 4. Again, this progress is based on good teaching. For example, in another good lesson, pupils in Year 4 knew instantly that addition and multiplication by whole numbers made answers greater, whereas subtraction and division made them smaller. They understood that this knowledge could be used as a simple first step in estimating whether an answer might be correct. The main focus of the lesson was on the use of the partitioning method of multiplication to solve problems. Pupils learnt how to convert problems in words into simple mathematical sums, such as  $18 \times 4$ . They then partitioned these numbers into  $10 + 8$  and used techniques of doubling and re-doubling to arrive at their answers. Nearly all pupils were successful by the end of the lesson. A few higher attainers in Year 4 solved several fairly complicated word problems this way and began to explore how it could help with sums over 100. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs were also well supported and these pupils made progress at similar rates to others, albeit at a slightly lower level. Previous work shows that pupils in Year 4 are nearly all working at the expected level for their age and that a few are above this level. Some of their work is well above it. For example, when they use co-ordinates to identify a particular position within axes, they are clearly working at an advanced level for their age group. Understanding of shape and space is also generally good.

83. Standards of numeracy throughout the school are good. Pupils, for their different ages, have a good sense of the relative sizes of numbers and they can recall a reasonable range of number facts that they use to speed up written calculations. They recognise basic shapes in the world around them and demonstrate understanding of simple tables and charts that convey information. Examples observed of the use of ICT suggest that new technology is used well to support work in mathematics.

84. The overall quality of teaching is good. As a result, nearly all pupils enjoy mathematics and keep up a good level of effort, trying hard to follow what is taught and working carefully when they carry out tasks. These good attitudes contribute strongly to good learning. Pupils are well managed and teachers' planning is consistently good in both classes, demonstrating good knowledge of the national numeracy strategy, which is adapted

well to meet the particular requirements of mixed-age classes. Organisation of resources and the use of teaching assistants are also good. It is clear that teaching assistants are contributing well to the good quality of learning that occurs. They question pupils well and know their individual needs. As a result, they are able to support class teachers strongly in their work. These attributes are especially apparent when pupils work in groups. On such occasions, the quality of teaching assistants' work with pupils enables teachers to set different tasks for different age groups and levels of attainment, in the knowledge that support for groups and individuals will be thorough.

85. Co-ordination and management of the subject are good. Although the co-ordinator has only recently been appointed, she has begun to use informal methods of monitoring to assess the quality of what is taught and to judge standards that pupils achieve. Her action plan shows that, as this type of information builds up, it will be used to adapt teaching to ensure that any gaps that are identified in pupils' knowledge are rectified. The potential of ICT in the study of mathematics has been explored well. For example, pupils in Year 1 were seen using the computer to consolidate their recognition of numbers and number bonds. They showed that they could click on, say, two objects in red and three objects in blue to make a total of five. Programs of increasing complexity and covering different themes are available through the school.

## **SCIENCE**

86. Standards are above average at the end of Year 2 and Year 4. Pupils have a broad knowledge across all the attainment targets in the National Curriculum Programmes of Study, with particularly good emphasis on scientific enquiry work and good use made of extra-curricular science activities, such as pond-dipping and the study of birds. Both progress and standards of work have improved since the previous inspection. Planning in the mixed age and ability classes is well defined in a two-year cycle, to allow for clear progress. Topical opportunities are used as they arise, for example, from local exhibitions and newspaper articles.

87. Year 3 and Year 4 are increasing their earlier knowledge of the characteristics of materials. They know how to separate mixtures of different solids, for example lentils, macaroni, pearl barley, salt and flour, as well as paper clips and milk bottle tops. They select appropriate apparatus and record their observations methodically and reflect upon how and why their experiments work. Pupils understand the nature of fair testing. In an experiment to investigate the stretchiness of tights, a given weight was suspended in the toe of a variety of tights and measurements were taken regularly to show which stretched the most and the least in a given time. Results were recorded in bar graphs. Year 1 and Year 2 pupils separated materials using magnetism. They predicted which materials would be attracted to the magnet and which would be repelled. They communicated their findings orally and reviewed whether their predictions were correct. In Year 3 and Year 4 In their classification of solids and liquids, they had performed experiments on the conservation of volume and how the shape of a liquid changes to fit the container. They also knew the dangers of electricity and that electricity does pass through metals but not through plastics and that is why metal is used for cables and wires and plastic is used for switches.

88. The teaching of science is good, enthusiastic and there is a strong emphasis on learning through experimentation which is a positive characteristic of most science teaching. Pupils showed real enthusiasm in working in small groups to gather evidence and to reach credible conclusions. The reality of new buildings being constructed around them has been used well in science, as well as in other cross-curricular activities. Lessons are pitched at different levels for the different learning needs of pupils, with all being challenged to their full potential. Pupils with special educational needs were seen to achieve good success in practical activities. All are making progress and extending their thinking.



89. The curriculum has breadth and includes interesting and motivating activities appropriate for the different abilities in these mixed age classes. Assessments are made following each topic and each pupil's progress is regularly reviewed. Leadership and management of the subject are being developed positively and the subject development plan has pinpointed the linking of ICT with microscope work as the way forward. What has been accomplished so far this year is good. Resources are well controlled and are adequate for the curriculum.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

90. It was not possible to see an art and design lesson being taught during the inspection. The judgments are therefore based on scrutiny of the wall displays in classrooms and a portfolio of past work. The standard seen is above average compared with that seen nationally at the end of Year 2 and the end of Year 4. As in the previous inspection, some good features were seen throughout the school.

91. A strong feature is the art and design which arose from the building development and became a source of inspiration. The pupils looked at shapes and patterns around the school, taking rubbings with wax crayons. A collage was made of these and was painted with a wash of watered-down paint. This was after the style of Paul Klees' *Florentine Villas*. Another artist's work, *Men have built the skyscrapers of New York* by Fernand Leger inspired the younger pupils to represent *The day the diggers came to the school* using wax crayon. The older pupils used charcoal and chalk to sketch urban impressions. Using recycled newspaper and magazines, they contrasted urban life with typical Dorset scenes. Combining with cross-curricular geography and history, they used maps of their locality and imagined walking along a lane in 2002, comparing what they would have seen in 1880. Pupils have explored the use of clay as they created gargoyles. They also use sketchbooks to explore ideas. Pupils investigated colour in experimentation with printing and mixed colours for a painting when 'taking a line for a walk'. In cutting and creating paper collage, they explore texture and patterns to a good standard.

92. Pupils' art and design is valued and well displayed in the recently constructed and reorganised classroom areas. A temporary co-ordinator is managing the subject. She shows good leadership and stimulates much interest in the subject. For example, Year 1 and Year 2 pupils created a black and white design in a competition for a book cover, in which they subsequently won first and second prizes for their age group, as well as the overall prize. The book will promote learning for higher achieving pupils. There was a good standard of art and design displayed in their entries.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

93. At the time of the previous inspection, standards of attainment were below normally expected levels at the end of Years 2 and 4, largely because elements of the National Curriculum were not taught in sufficient detail. Currently, what is taught meets requirements well and standards are in line with what is normally expected. Improvements have therefore occurred. What is taught follows a nationally recommended scheme and ensures that pupils are learning about the links between designing and making models and products, and evaluating what they make to improve its effectiveness, appearance or performance.

94. In a good lesson in Years 1 and 2, pupils of different attainment, including those with special educational needs, used sketches of a garden area as designs for building three-dimensional models. Pupils throughout the school had previously seen and discussed builders' plans that were used for a small extension of the school. This opportunistic use of real-life examples represents good practice. During a discussion with pupils, they were able to explain well the reasons for their garden plans. In the lesson, different modelling kits

provided challenges to meet the needs of pupils of different prior attainments. Pupils with less dexterity, usually in Year 1, used a plastic kit, which was easier for them to join together successfully. Older pupils and higher attainers used small clay bricks and cement to carry out their work, developing skills that had been acquired earlier. In another good lesson in Years 3 and 4, good links with mathematics were introduced. This lesson focused on the use of triangles to ensure stability in structures. Good examples were available for pupils to handle and to see for themselves. As a result, their own ideas when they were set a designing task were good, showing that they had absorbed teaching points well. In discussion, many pupils in Year 4 were able to explain the importance of good designs and of evaluating how a design works out, so that construction can be improved as it goes on. All of this evidence illustrates that pupils understand well the basic characteristics of the subject. They also recalled a good range of materials that they had used in the past, including cloth, knitting wool, plastic, card and shiny foils. Knitting skills were being taught to small groups of pupils in Years 1 and 2. Pupils were already beginning to suggest that they might design 'patchwork scarves', knitting coloured squares and joining them together afterwards.

95. The overall quality of teaching is good, which is a considerable improvement since the last inspection, when teachers' own knowledge and understanding of the subject was criticised. This aspect is now good. Teachers' explanations of what they expect of their pupils are now strong. As a result, pupils understand what to do to make progress and are generally enthusiastic about tasks, learning and acquiring new skills effectively.

96. Co-ordination is good. However, storage of materials and equipment is a difficulty, as little space is available. Whenever a design and make project is undertaken, it requires an audit of stock to ensure that all materials will be readily available. It is a credit to the school's management that the subject is now taught as well as it is and that pupils are learning so effectively.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

97. Provision for geography has continued to be satisfactory since the previous inspection, so that pupils are now reaching standards in line with what is expected nationally by the end of Year 2 and the end of Year 4. The school uses nationally recommended schemes of work which ensure that pupils consistently acquire further knowledge of the skills demanded by the subject. The modules of work are deliberately tailored to fit into those of other schools in the local pyramid, so that pupils begin at the middle school with the same knowledge and experience.

98. Year 1 and Year 2 pupils learn an awareness of their immediate surroundings and neighbourhood. They draw plans of their school, informed and enlivened by watching the builders at work recently. They also draw maps of the village, using local landmarks, and they begin to compare these features with other environments, particularly urban centers which are unlike their rural environment. In this way, observational skills are encouraged and a vocabulary suited to the subject encouraged.

99. By the end of Year 4, pupils know the different continents of the world and can discuss the main features of major countries when looking at a map of the world. They have a good understanding of the nature of settlements, studying villages in their area, the county of Dorset and other counties in the south-west. They compare the characteristics of this area with those of Africa, particularly in a study of houses and villages in Kenya. In a Year 3 /4 lesson pupils were excited by a newspaper travel article on Kenya, following a visit from a local resident who had worked for many years in Kenya. During this lesson they learned that countries consist of various different areas, from large towns to mountainous terrain. They begin to explore climate and human geography, through examining farming and crops in the

Rift Valley. They are able to use photographs to identify natural features and develop some good vocabulary, such as 'savannah' and 'plain'

100. It was only possible to observe one geography lesson during the inspection, so that judgements on teaching are based largely on scrutiny of pupils' written work and discussion with teachers and pupils. Teaching is clearly at least satisfactory. Teachers understand the subject well and take great pains to foster the learning of geographical skills. Good links are made with literacy, in the way in which specific vocabulary is promoted. Teaching and learning opportunities are enlivened whenever possible by practical work, in the form of farm visits, following the course of the village stream and other good use of local resources. Planning effectively links the development of new knowledge and skills to what pupils have learned previously. For example, Year 3 and Year 4 pupils are able to use Internet sites to study other countries, such as Greece, and compare them with this country. Pupils with learning difficulties are carefully included in all activities linked with the subject and work is provided for them which matches their level of attainment. As a result, they make satisfactory progress, as do their peers.

101. In the lesson seen, pupils showed great interest and enthusiasm, were very ready to participate and behaved very well. Their written work is neat and painstaking. The interest they had taken in the building works at the school is reflected in their drawings and plans. There is also evidence of good links with other curriculum subjects, as in design and technology, where pupils are building their own version of a quiet environment for the school grounds, the use of ICT in helping them in their research when comparing environments and the historical visits to places such as Dorchester, where they are able to look at the changing nature of settlements.

102. The experienced co-ordinator brings a high degree of enthusiasm to the planning of the subject. She has continued to develop planning, monitoring and useful assessment in the subject. Resources are very good for Years 3 and 4, but not yet quite as plentiful or varied for Years 1 and 2. They are used well by all teachers. The subject is enlivened by extra-curricular activities such as orienteering and map-reading, and tree planting. Older pupils' understanding of the need to care for the environment through recycling procedures, their respect for and interest in other cultures such as Kenya reflects the school's caring ethos. Pupils' cultural horizons are widened by learning about other countries, their people and their customs. The subject contributes well to pupils' personal and social development.

## **HISTORY**

103. Standards in history are average, as they were at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make sound progress and achieve standards in line with those expected nationally by the end of Year 2. Over time, pupils' progress in Years 3 and 4 is also satisfactory and by the end of Year 4, standards are average. As in geography, the school has revised its curriculum to meet that which is nationally recommended and to fit in with the rest of the local pyramid of schools, so that pupils enter the middle school with the same range of experiences and skills in the subject.

104. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a clear understanding of simple chronology and are able to discuss past, present and future with confidence. They show knowledge of some past events in history, such as Guy Fawkes and the historical events which have occurred in their village. They know that they can find evidence of how people lived in the past by examining items from the period, as observed in the Year 1 / 2 lesson in which pupils were describing the characteristics of household objects in the past and comparing them with those in the present, with the use of toy artefacts and furniture from different periods of history. Exploration of the ways in which lavatories had changed caused huge interest and enthusiasm! Pupils begin to develop feelings of empathy and to widen their imaginations,

using a local resident who remembers the village well in the past as an inspiring human resource.

105. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 continue to build on these early skills and acquire much knowledge of past times. They use the local environment very well for this purpose, studying varied house styles in the village, learning the history and legends of the past, such as the Cheselbourne Giant. They are able to empathise with the experiences of children who lived there in the past, visiting the old schoolroom and learning how pupils were taught then, as well as examining the lives of children working on farms in the past. They develop some knowledge of figures of historical importance, such as Guy Fawkes and Florence Nightingale. They have the opportunity to study the Roman era through visits to Roman Dorchester. They develop good skills in finding information from many different sources of evidence, such as newspapers, videos, photographs, visitors and the Internet. By the end of Year 4, pupils have a good range of historical skills, especially surrounding their own community, but have less knowledge of major events in national history.

106. It was only possible to observe one history lesson, but this was lively and inspiring, employing a very wide and carefully prepared range of resources and employing a variety of skills. For example, drama was well utilized in the form of role play on making a meal in a microwave oven and ordering shopping on the Internet. Pupils were encouraged to use their imaginations and they responded with enthusiasm and an eagerness to know more. The lesson gave them a good sense of the factual sources on which historical knowledge is based. Work was very carefully graded for different levels of attainment, so that pupils with special educational needs were able to participate fully in the lesson. Teaching has improved since the previous inspection and provides many opportunities for pupils to discover about the past for themselves, through research using ICT and a good programme of visits to local historical sites and museums. For example, pupils visit the museum in Dorchester, as well as Kingston Lacey and Cranbourne Ancient Technology Centre. They prepare well before visits so that, for example, pupils visited the old school house with the understanding of changes which could take place in schools evidenced by the simultaneous changes being made to their present school.

107. Teachers make good use of the very good resources in the school. Pupils are surrounded by a broad and varied range of material, enabling them to learn to use their own research skills. Many artefacts from the local community are used to absorb pupils and to bring the past to life. Very effective links are made with other subjects. For instance, art and design is stimulated well by the study of village architecture and geographical visits are often planned hand in hand with history, so that maximum benefit is gained. Skills in literacy are well promoted in written work and in role play in lessons. Pupils enjoy the subject; they participate with interest and behave very well.

108. The co-ordinator for history is also the co-ordinator for geography and brings much experience and enthusiasm to the planning of the subject. The new schemes of work provide well for teaching the subject with consistency throughout the school. Management is good, with clear procedures to check pupils' attainment and progress and the quality of teaching and learning. Resources are very good and teachers make good use of ICT. Many good displays throughout the school show that the subject contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development, in its emphasis on understanding how things were in the past and on realizing why people behaved as they did. Pupils are encouraged to understand themselves through the knowledge of their heritage.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

109. At the time of the previous inspection, the school had no clear planning documents for information and communication technology that showed what should be taught and when. As a result, it was unclear that all elements of the subject were taught in sufficient depth. Furthermore, teachers' confidence in the subject was not well developed. The level at which pupils were working in relation to the National Curriculum was unclear, although attainment was described as "satisfactory, sometimes good". This judgement was largely based on pupils' skills in using computers to support work across the curriculum. Currently, this aspect remains strong. Pupils in Year 1, for example, were seen using a program effectively, which supported their work in mathematics. In Years 3 and 4, pupils used a *PowerPoint* program to begin work on a presentation for religious education. Since the previous inspection, a nationally recommended scheme has been introduced, improving what is taught. For example, in Years 3 and 4 especially, pupils' knowledge of how to save, retrieve and access information is well developed and they understand terminology well. Consequently, they follow their teacher's instructions easily and quickly. They use toolbars and buttons to control several applications within the program, including the use of text-boxes and graphics. Samples of work demonstrated their understanding of uses of CD-ROM and the Internet. Work of this standard is indicative of attainment above that normally expected of pupils in Year 4 and represents considerable improvement on what was found in the previous inspection.

110. Standards in Year 2 are broadly in line with those normally expected. Pupils who were seen using the computer handled the mouse effectively, clicking on areas of the screen accurately and dragging objects into positions that they required. Progress through the school is good. Planning shows that pupils' learning is built carefully on what goes before. Younger pupils understand how to key information into floor robots, controlling the direction and extent of their movement. Older pupils are confident in the use of both keyboard and mouse.

111. Pupils' attitudes are good. They enjoy using computers and work together co-operatively in pairs whenever they are asked. They concentrate well and listen to their teachers' explanations of what to do next. As a result, time is used well, so learning is maximised, contributing well to pupils' progress.

112. The quality of teaching is good. It is supplemented strongly with regular contributions from a specialist. This teacher's knowledge of the subject is exceptional and is helping to raise the expectations and confidence of the whole staff. Teachers remain present during her lessons, which helps to raise their expertise. For example, part of a lesson was observed in which she taught pupils in Years 3 and 4. Her use of a data-projector and interactive whiteboard engaged pupils' interest. At the same time, their teacher acquired new ideas in its use and potential. In other lessons, class teachers explained clearly what they wanted pupils to do and questioned them well. As a result, pupils' learning and acquisition of skills are good, which helps them to make good progress and attain standards that are often above those expected by Year 4.

113. Computers are used well for pupils with special educational needs. For example, the school uses a program in mathematics that presents material at each individual's particular level. As pupils use this program, skills are introduced that lead on clearly from previous learning. As a result, pupils make good progress.

114. Co-ordination is very good. Recent developments have been the introduction of opportunities for pupils to use E-mails, musical composition programs and a range of new software. Specific funding for the development of expertise in the subject has been spent wisely and has been an important feature of the improvements that have been made since

the previous inspection. Another important aspect of the school's development has been its increased use of new technology to support the work of staff, including computerised schemes of work, systems of assessment and planning of lessons. These uses of computers are directly related to increases in teachers' confidence, knowledge and understanding.

## MUSIC

115. Although it was only possible to see two music lessons, both in singing, it is clear that standards in the subject are now above those expected by the ends of Year 2 and Year 4. Other evidence, such as discussion with pupils and the co-ordinator for the subject, show that there has been good improvement since the previous inspection, when the level of attainment in music was unsatisfactory. Since then, a nationally recommended scheme has been introduced which has successfully extended the range of learning experiences, as well as the engagement, through the local pyramid of schools, of a specialist singing teacher who conducts 'Voice Works', under the auspices of DASP, with each class. Standards seen in the two singing lessons were above average.

116. The curriculum for music is now based on nationally recommended guidelines and encompasses singing, composing, performance and musical appreciation. Although few lessons could be seen, there is ample evidence that all these areas are taught with enthusiasm and expertise. Evidence of pupils' compositions on tape, using pitched and unpitched percussion, pupils' compositions based on *The Jungle Book* and performance of Saint-Saens' *Animal Magic* demonstrate their ability to compose and perform with pleasure and interest. For appreciation, pupils listen to and evaluate different kinds of music, which varies from classical pieces to music from Kenya and 'pop' music. They listen to, and discuss with interest, music played in assemblies. The new scheme of work ensures that pupils receive a comprehensive range of learning experiences. This aspect has clearly improved since the last inspection.

117. In the singing lessons observed, teaching was very good. Year 1 / 2 pupils learned well through absorbing singing games, which illustrated the dynamics of singing and focused on pupils 'finding their voices'. The teacher skillfully introduced many aspects of music, from clapping to emphasise rhythm and enhance tempo, to physical control of the voice and timing, using mimed actions and internalizing words from *Tony Chestnut*. The pupils responded with great enjoyment and interest, taking pleasure from their success and working with effort and response. Another singing game, *Hickety Tickety, Bumble Bee* was used very successfully to promote independent singing. Good links were made with improvisational drama through the use of *My Machine*, as well as with science and design and technology. In the lesson observed with the reception class, children demonstrated that they have become used to repeating simple sung tunes and patterns of notes and that they are aware of rhythm sequence. Good opportunities were offered for children to extend their vocabulary.

118. In whole school assemblies, the quality of singing was good. Pupils sing enthusiastically and in tune, showing skill in controlling their voices. Many older pupils show initiative in forming their own 'Girl Band' and 'Boy Band', who devise and perform their own music with enthusiasm and energy. Pupils have many opportunities for exposure to music and performance, often through the services of the Dorset schools pyramid. They are involved in concerts at the local senior school, take part in Remembrance Day services and carol services and perform at celebrations such as Harvest Festival. Their singing of *Drop in the Ocean*, which had been practised and performed for the previous term's Leaver's Service, was tuneful, controlled and sensitive to the meaning of the words. Peripatetic teachers give pupils the opportunity to learn keyboard, recorders and guitar.

119. The subject co-ordinator works well and hard in monitoring pupils' work by observation of all musical activities within the school. Pupils are assessed informally against the expectations of the national scheme used. Above all, she encourages and nurtures music in the school by her own enthusiasm and commitment. Resources are now good and include instruments from other cultures, such as African drums. Accommodation, however, is restricted by the need for pupils to move to the village hall for singing and music lessons.

120. The subject makes a very effective contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, as pupils sing songs from other countries, learn to capture different moods for different occasions, join in with other schools in the pyramid for musical activities. Pupils benefit from a range of visits and visitors.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

121. At the time of the previous inspection, attainment in physical education was generally in line with what is expected nationally. Little direct teaching was observed, but what was seen was good. These standards have been maintained. For example, in a good dance lesson, involving Years 1 and 2, it was clear that pupils could move expressively, with good regard to available spaces. Pupils showed that they could put together a series of simple actions to achieve appropriate sequences of movement to fit the requirements of the music. They demonstrated an awareness of the needs of others, ensuring safe practices. Pupils of different prior attainment, including those with special educational needs, worked together successfully, albeit at different levels. The teacher was aware of pupils' performances and encouraged them to improve and hone activities appropriately, although opportunities to introduce work at floor level, crouches and jumps were sometimes missed. A discussion with pupils in Year 4, together with a sample of photographic evidence, suggests that attainment by the time pupils leave the school is also generally around expected levels. Pupils recalled several lessons in which there had been a strong emphasis on the development of games skills, such as work with different sized balls, gymnastics, dance and swimming. A selection of photographs showed pupils engaged in a variety of jumps and balances. Their use of technical vocabulary is good. For example, they spoke of "star jumps", "tucked jumps" and "pencil jumps" correctly, and were able to explain the need for warm-up activities before undertaking vigorous exercise. Records show that nearly all pupils have either attained or are close to the government's minimum standard for swimming (the national safety in water requirement), and several exceed it easily.

122. Pupils' attitudes during the discussion were very good. They enjoy the subject and especially like going to the middle school, where they use a much wider range of equipment than is available to them in Cheselbourne. This provision is an example of good co-operation between local schools and is clearly having a positive impact on pupils' learning and acquisition of skills.

123. Only one lesson was directly observed. However, teaching in this lesson and all other evidence suggests that the overall quality is good. The National Curriculum is known and understood by staff and planned thoroughly. Although resources at the school are limited, they are used well and augmented by what is available at other local schools. For these reasons, the quality of learning is good and pupils make progress and achieve well, compared with their starting points.

124. Management of the subject is good. It has sought and successfully found ways of ameliorating lack of space and facilities in the school itself, such that these difficulties are overcome. As a result, pupils see the subject very positively. The subject contributes well to opportunities for pupils' social development through a residential school journey, attendance at local dance festivals, including country dancing, and joining in sports and matches with other schools.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

125. Standards in religious education are above those expected by the Locally Agreed Syllabus for pupils by the ends of Year 2 and Year 4. Standards have improved since the previous inspection. Pupils make good progress throughout the school and teachers provide their pupils with a good curriculum which involves pupils spiritually, teaches them to understand and respect their own and other people's faiths and gives them the opportunity to experience and understand other faiths.

126. Pupils enjoy their work in religious education. Pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 listen carefully to stories and ask questions with interest and comprehension of what they are learning. An emphasis is placed in these years on the celebrations and festivals of Christianity and other world faiths, such as Christmas and Diwali. In Years 3 and 4, pupils study Islam in some detail, comparing and contrasting its beliefs and customs with their own and their knowledge of Judaism. They are able to discuss customs and beliefs with pertinence and thought. For example, in a Year 3 / 4 lesson, pupils were absorbed in the teacher's skillful exposition of the Qur'an, its use in prayer ceremonies and its treatment. They became very aware that the text represented the word of Allah, learned much about prayer customs and the role of the Imam. They followed this by researching for themselves on the Internet, producing their own PowerPoint presentations on the Qur'an, using prayers, pictures and sound. In this way, they gained much of cultural, social and spiritual benefit, as well as enhancing skills in literacy and ICT. Pupils showed good understanding and respect of the beliefs and values of other religions. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress.

127. The curriculum across the school is broad and balanced. Religious education is taught with sensitivity, which enhances the quality of learning by pupils. In the two lessons seen, teaching was very good, with teachers displaying very good knowledge of the subject and making great efforts to ensure that pupils were introduced to a breadth of experience, of both a personal and a spiritual nature. Year 1 and Year 2 pupils learn about the main events in the Christian calendar and of special festival celebrations. This was well illustrated in a Year 1 / 2 lesson on the story of Hanukkah in which pupils also learned how it is celebrated. The lesson became an exciting and inviting experience, as the menorah and the lighting of its candles were explored, home-made latkes were passed around and pronounced delicious, as well as doughnuts. The lesson achieved a very real sense of celebration, which will remain with pupils. Links were forged with the recent Remembrance Day ceremony and the wearing of poppies. Very good use was made of human resources in the form of the learning support teacher, who, as well as cooking the celebration food, enthralled pupils with an account of her own memories of Hanukkah. Pupils are introduced to stories from many religions and are helped to understand the teachings in New Testament parables. By the end of Year 2 many pupils can recognise the moral of a story and the difference between stories and fact. By the end of Year 4, pupils have been introduced to the some major world faiths and have a good understanding of the beliefs and customs associated with Hinduism, Judaism and Islam. They can detail the Five Pillars, know about Moslem weddings and birth ceremonies, tell the difference between halal and haram and describe the Hajj. They use the appropriate vocabulary in their descriptions.

128. The school makes good efforts to develop pupils' spiritual life through assemblies and its general ethos. The theme for assembly during the inspection week was 'Friendship' and several good assemblies were observed, during which pupils sincerely thought about the nature of friendship and how friends should be treated. In one assembly, the story of Mary and Martha was used very successfully to stimulate pupils to think about the priorities of life and how important it is to have time for one's friends. Good links were made with art and design as the teacher used a painting by Velasquez as an illustration of close attention



to the detail of domestic life. The story was told with good dramatic sense, involving all pupils.

129. The headteacher is the new co-ordinator for the subject and brings to it knowledge, understanding and skilled planning. Lessons are planned in detail to ensure that experiences are relevant and vivid. Assessment of pupils' progress is made at the end of each module of work. Very positive links are made with other subjects, particularly literacy in pupils' written and spoken work and ICT for research and communication. The vicar is a frequent visitor to the school and services are held regularly in the local church. Pupils join in local ceremonies, such as the Remembrance Day service with Bovington soldiers.

130. There are currently few opportunities for pupils to undertake visits to local places of worship to improve their first-hand experiences, but the school has good resources in the form of CD-ROMS, videos, books and artefacts and uses them well. The headteacher makes much good use of her ethnic minority family and friends to enable pupils to understand the social and cultural makeup of society today. The subject reflects the caring moral ethos of the school very well, as well as enhancing pupils' spiritual and cultural development.