

INSPECTION REPORT

CANFORD HEATH FIRST SCHOOL

Canford Heath, Poole

LEA area: Poole

Unique reference number: 113706

Headteacher: Mr A Hind

Reporting inspector: Mr David Westall
2414

Dates of inspection: 7 –10 July 2003

Inspection number: 247391

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
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 – 8 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Learoyd Road Canford Heath Poole Dorset
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Paul Bishop
Date of previous inspection:	17/11/97

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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2414	David Westall	Registered inspector	Science Art and design Design and technology	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
1333	Elizabeth Forster	Lay inspector	Equal opportunities	How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with the parents?
19302	Chris Perret	Team inspector	Geography Physical education Religious education	How good are curricular and other opportunities
3856	Sandy Wellstead	Team inspector	English History Special educational needs English as an additional language	Attitudes, values and personal development
3349	Jacqueline Ikin	Team Inspector	Foundation Stage Mathematics	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

There are 445 pupils on roll, aged between four and eight years, and they are taught in 16 classes. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. However, no cooked meals are provided at the school, and it is likely that the actual eligibility is very much higher. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs is broadly in line with the national average. Four pupils have Statements of Special Educational Need, and four speak English as an additional language. On entry to the school, children's language and numeracy skills are generally below average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school which has some very good features. The leadership and management skills of the headteacher are key strengths, and the school benefits from able, committed staff. The overall quality of teaching is good, and enables pupils to make mainly good progress in their learning, including in English and mathematics. In addition, the school provides effectively for pupils' personal development, and this is reflected in their positive attitudes and very good behaviour. There are some elements of the school's work which require improvement but these are vastly outweighed by its strengths. Overall, it provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The leadership and management skills of the headteacher are very good.
- The overall quality of teaching is good, and means that pupils generally make good progress in their learning.
- Very good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs.
- Standards are above average in art and design and in design and technology.
- Pupils' attitudes are positive and their behaviour is very good.
- Very good provision is made for pupils' social and moral development, and good provision is made for their spiritual and cultural development.
- The school is a caring community where pupils' welfare is a high priority.
- Constructive links are established with parents, and they hold the school in high regard.

What could be improved

- Standards are too low in science in Year 2.
- The most able pupils sometimes underachieve, including in English, mathematics and science.
- Procedures for assessing pupils' standards and progress require improvement in most subjects.
- The roles of most subject leaders require development.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made satisfactory progress, overall, since its very positive inspection report in 1997. The headteacher's work continues to be a strength, and the good quality of teaching has been maintained. Standards in Years 2 and 3 are generally lower than in 1997 but this is an understandable result of changes in the school's context which mean that many children now enter reception with lower attainment. The school has successfully addressed areas for improvement, identified in 1997, in relation to provision for pupils with special educational needs. However, assessment procedures still need development.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
Reading	B	D	D	D
Writing	B	C	C	B
Mathematics	B	C	D	C

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

The table shows the results of the Year 2 tests in 2002 are below the national average in reading and mathematics, and are in line with the national average in writing. When these results are compared with the results of similar schools, they are below average in reading, average in mathematics and above average in writing. Inspection findings show that current standards in reading, writing and mathematics are broadly average in Years 2 and 3 and reflect good achievement, given pupils' starting points on entry to the school. In science, standards are below average in Year 2 but are broadly average in Year 3.

In religious education, standards in Years 2 and 3 are in line with those expected in the locally agreed syllabus, and standards are average in information and communication technology (ICT), geography and history. Insufficient evidence was available to judge standards in physical education in Year 2 but standards are average in Year 3. No overall judgement can be made about standards in music, although pupils' singing is excellent. Above average standards are evident in Years 2 and 3 in art and design and in design and technology. The work in art and design is a particularly strong feature in the school.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils enjoy coming to school, are keen to learn and to do their best.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' behaviour is very good, throughout the school day.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils form very good relationships with adults and with each other. They work together amicably and respect each other's opinions.
Attendance	Broadly in line with the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Year 3
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.

The quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in all but one of the 66 lessons observed. Good, and occasionally better, teaching was evident in two thirds of all lessons.

In the reception classes, children make a good start at the school, as a result of the effective teaching they receive. The teachers have a good understanding of the needs of young children, and provide ample opportunities for them to take part in practical and purposeful activities. In English and mathematics, the teaching is good, overall, in Years 1 to 3 and means that pupils progress well in these subjects. Teachers' planning is thorough, and they are making effective use of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy. Teachers have satisfactory knowledge and teaching skills in science but, in Years 1 and 2, weaknesses in planning mean that pupils have insufficient opportunities to do as well as they should, and their progress is too slow.

Teaching is good in art and design, history and religious education and enables pupils to progress well in their learning in these subjects. In physical education, too few lessons were seen in Years 1 and 2 to judge the teaching but it is satisfactory in Year 3. No overall judgements can be made about teaching in other subjects. However, an analysis of pupils' completed work shows the teaching enables pupils to make good progress in design and technology and sound progress in geography.

Across the school, lessons are characterised by very good relationships between teachers and pupils. Teachers ensure that pupils know what they are expected to learn, and they think carefully about the best ways to foster their progress. Effective support is consistently provided for pupils with special educational needs but teachers sometimes need to provide more challenging tasks for the most able pupils in their classes.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Children in the reception classes benefit from a rich range of well-planned learning opportunities. The curriculum for pupils in Years 1 to 3 is broad, relevant and good overall. However, insufficient time is allocated for science, and the subject is covered too superficially in Years 1 and 2. While pupils' ICT skills are developed well in lessons in the ICT suite, they need more opportunities to apply their skills in work in other subjects.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The school provides very well for these pupils.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional	Good.

language	
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school makes very good provision for pupils' moral and social development, and good provision for their spiritual and cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school is a caring community where pupils' welfare is a high priority. However, the school's procedures for assessing pupils' academic progress and standards need to improve, particularly in subjects other than English and mathematics.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher has very good leadership and management skills. He is able to inspire and motivate staff, and provides the school with a clear sense of direction. The headteacher successfully promotes teamwork among staff so there is a shared commitment to school improvement. He uses rigorous procedures to monitor the school's performance, particularly in English and mathematics, and keeps his finger firmly on the pulse of the school. The deputy headteacher fulfils her role well; and the senior leaders, who have responsibility for year groups, make an important contribution to the leadership and management of the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The school benefits from a highly committed governing body which fulfils its role well. The governors with particular responsibility for literacy, numeracy and special educational needs are all taking a keen interest in the school's work in these areas, and the chair of governors is conscientious, well organised and effective.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good, overall. The results of statutory tests are analysed carefully, and the headteacher and deputy headteacher carry out regular classroom observations and talk to pupils about their achievement. Senior leaders make an important contribution by evaluating teaching and learning in their year groups. However, most subject leaders have not established sufficiently rigorous strategies for monitoring their subjects.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes good use of its resources. The budget is analysed carefully, and the headteacher and governors take appropriate account of the principles of best value when making spending decisions.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
They believe that: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the school is well led and managed;• teaching is good and children make good progress;• staff are easy to talk to;• the school has high expectations for work and behaviour.	Some parents would like: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• more extra-curricular opportunities.

Inspection findings support parents' positive views about the school and show good extra-curricular opportunities.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. On entry to the school, children's language and numeracy skills are generally below average. These are lower than when the school was last inspected, in 1997, and reflect changes in the circumstances of the local area and in the catchment of the school. As a consequence, overall standards are now lower in most subjects in Years 2 and 3, compared with the situation in 1997. However, current standards represent good achievement, overall, given pupils' starting points on entry.
2. In the reception classes, children make good progress in all areas of learning as a result of effective teaching. In some areas, including in their personal, social and emotional development and in their creative and physical development, the teaching enables children to achieve above average standards by the end of the reception period. However, in the important areas of communication, language and literacy, and in mathematical development, overall standards are a little below average on entry to Year 1, despite children's good progress in reception.
3. The results of the standard assessments tests (SATs) in Year 2, in 2002, are below the national average in reading and mathematics, and are in line with the national average in writing. When these results are compared with those achieved by similar schools, they are below average in reading, above average in writing and average in mathematics.
4. Inspection findings show that current standards in speaking and listening, reading and writing are broadly average in Years 2 and 3, and reflect the good progress most pupils are making in English. The more able readers in Years 2 and 3 read fluently and expressively, and have very good comprehension skills. Pupils of average or lower attainment sometimes struggle to understand words and phrases which are not familiar to them, and often find it difficult to work out hidden meanings conveyed in figurative language or by the use of irony. By the end of Years 2 and 3, pupils can write for a suitable range of audiences; and the best writing, by some pupils in Year 3, includes lively descriptions of what may have occurred during the Great Fire of London. Spelling is an area of general weakness across the school, and other common weaknesses in the written work of many pupils include grammatical errors and the inappropriate use of colloquial language which reflects their everyday speech patterns rather than Standard English.
5. In mathematics, inspection findings show that pupils achieve well to reach standards which are in line with national expectations in Years 2 and 3. In science, however, pupils underachieve in Years 1 and 2, and standards are consequently below national expectations in Year 2. The main reason for pupils' slow progress is the lack of opportunity for them to cover the required curriculum in sufficient depth, including to develop their scientific investigation skills. In Year 3, teachers are ensuring pupils are making more productive use of the limited time which is allocated for science, and standards are broadly average at the end of the year.
6. Pupils' ICT skills are in line with national expectations in Years 2 and 3. Pupils make good progress in lessons in the ICT suite but would benefit from more opportunities to use and extend their skills in work across the curriculum. In religious education, pupils' standards are in line with those expected in the locally agreed syllabus, and

represent good achievement. The limited evidence available to judge pupils' standards in geography indicates they are average in Years 2 and 3; and standards are also in line with national expectations in history in these year groups. In physical education, insufficient evidence was available to judge standards in Year 2. However, in Year 3, pupils' overall standards in dance and games are in line with national expectations. Too few music lessons were seen to make a secure judgement about pupils' overall standards in the subject. However, their singing is excellent and contributes significantly to the sense of community during assemblies. In art and design and in design and technology, pupils achieve well and standards are above average in Years 2 and 3. The work in art and design is a particularly strong feature of the school.

7. Pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements, are very well supported and make good progress in relation to their starting-points and to the targets drawn up in their individual education plans. However, the most able pupils should do better, including in English, mathematics and science. Pupils for whom English is an additional language make good progress, and their achievements reflect their individual capabilities. No significant differences are evident in the achievement of boys and girls, across the school.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. Pupils of all ages and abilities have good attitudes. They enjoy being at school and appreciate the many opportunities they are given to interact with one another and to take part in interesting activities, whether in clubs, on visits or in the classroom. Most of those whose views were sought confess to some preferences amongst the subjects they study, but such preferences are carefully guarded and are by no means made obvious to the onlooker. Indeed, pupils show positive attitudes to learning in almost all circumstances and in all subjects. Because they feel valued by their teachers and other staff who work with them, and because there is a strong emphasis on inclusion, pupils of all abilities are willing to learn and do their best to live up to the adults' expectations of them. With very rare exceptions, they listen politely, whether to adults or to their peers, and they very seldom need to be reminded of what they are to do. In most lessons, they make good use of the resources available to help them, concentrate on their tasks and try hard to present their work neatly. The introduction of learning methods such as 'philosophy for children' and of various activities involving thinking skills sometimes results in pupils demonstrating levels of seriousness and maturity as learners that are unusual in pupils so young. All teachers work hard to raise pupils' self-esteem and to encourage them in their aspirations. Their sustained efforts are reflected in the confidence all pupils have in themselves as learners, irrespective of ability or special needs.
9. Pupils' behaviour is very good. Benefiting from the very good role models set by staff and informed by regular discussions about appropriate conduct, for example in assemblies and in 'circle time', they have a well-developed understanding of what is right and wrong. This understanding is made explicit when stories are discussed and when moral issues are raised, for example in religious education lessons, and pupils are accustomed to making judgements about the way people should or should not behave. They therefore have very good insights for their age into patterns of behaviour, and a good understanding of the impact of their own behaviour on others. With very rare exceptions, pupils can be trusted to behave calmly, sensibly and thoughtfully at all times and to show respect for the beliefs, values and opinions held by other people. Incidences of bullying are very rare and there is no evidence of racism.

10. When asked to discuss ideas in pairs or small groups, as is often the case in lessons, pupils very clearly take others' views seriously, and there is a genuine sharing of ideas. When working independently of an adult, they routinely and generously offer help to others where they can. In a dance lesson observed, two pupils were delighted when their efforts enabled a third to take part and to achieve good results. Relationships are constructive, supportive, friendly and very good at all levels. At lunchtime, pupils of different ages and from different classes engage in friendly chatter as they eat their lunch in groups 'engineered' by staff. In the playground, they play enthusiastically with particular friends, but also watch out for those children who might need help or 'friendship' of a more transient kind; and, during 'golden assemblies', pupils are spontaneous and warm in their applause for two young guitarists who have the courage to play and to sing to the assembled school. When all the pupils sing in assemblies, the harmony of their combined voices has a spiritual quality that reflects their sense of common purpose and identity within the school.
11. The personal development of pupils is also very good. Pupils are made aware of the reasons for what they are asked to do, and their ideas are valued. As a result, they are confident and approach all new tasks positively, without fear of failure. When given the opportunity to take responsibility, for example through the school council, they do so conscientiously and take their duties seriously. Even more significantly, however, the strong focus in the school on thinking and on social and moral issues prepares pupils well as future citizens. The pupils are reflective and are already, in many ways, mature and responsible in their attitudes and in their behaviour.
12. Pupils with special educational needs are confident and have very positive attitudes to learning. They work hard, show good powers of concentration within their own capabilities, and they relate very well to their classmates and to all the staff who work with them. Pupils for whom English is an additional language enjoy learning and are curious about how language works. They have the confidence to ask for explanations when they need them, a strategy which helps them considerably in their efforts to master the English language.
13. Attendance at the school is sound, being broadly in line with the national average. There are few unauthorised absences. Nearly all pupils arrive in good time and the opportunity for pupils to self-register before the start of the morning session helps pupils settle quickly and be ready for a prompt start to lessons. Registration procedures meet statutory requirements

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

14. The quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in all but one of the 66 lessons observed. Good, and occasionally better, teaching was evident in two thirds of all lessons. The quality of teaching was a strength of the school when it was last inspected, and this continues to be the case. While the percentage of very good or better lessons has reduced by half, the percentage of good lessons is notably higher than in 1997. The teaching enables pupils to make mainly good progress in their learning.
15. In the reception classes, children make a good start at the school, as a result of the effective teaching they receive. The teachers have a good understanding of the needs of young children, work well as a team, and provide ample opportunities for children to take part in practical and purposeful activities. An excellent lesson was

observed, focussed on philosophy and English, when the teacher was particularly effective in encouraging children to debate what they should do if they found a bag on the beach. The teacher posed very skilful questions to stimulate children's thinking, and they responded with a range of suggestions after listening carefully to the ideas of others and sometimes thinking laterally. This highly accomplished teaching meant children were working at the edge of their capabilities. Good teaching is evident in the vast majority of lessons in reception, and results in children progressing well in all areas of learning.

16. In English, in Years 1 to 3, the teaching is mainly good and is sometimes very good. As a result, pupils generally make good progress in the subject. English lessons are planned effectively, and teachers take care to provide frequent opportunities for pupils to learn through discussion and through visualisation procedures, such as 'learning maps'. Teachers provide well for average and lower attaining pupils, and this results in their good progress in English. However, they sometimes need to provide more challenging work for the higher attainers. On occasions, the very structured approaches to learning, which clearly benefit the vast majority of pupils, restrict the initiative of these pupils and their progress is slowed.
17. In mathematics, the teaching is also good overall, and results in pupils making good progress in the subject. Mathematics lessons are planned thoroughly, and teachers ensure that pupils understand what they are expected to learn. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well in numeracy sessions, but the highest attaining pupils sometimes mark time because the pace of lessons is too slow and they need more challenging work from the more advanced levels of the National Numeracy Strategy.
18. In science, the lessons observed during the inspection were satisfactory, overall, and evidence suggests that all teachers have secure subject knowledge. However, weaknesses in planning in Years 1 and 2 mean that pupils have insufficient opportunities to do as well as they should, and their progress is too slow. More effective use is made of the time available for science in Year 3, and pupils make sound progress in the subject in their final year at the school, as a result. Across the school, while pupils with special educational needs are supported well in science lessons, the needs of the higher attainers are often insufficiently considered so they tend to coast.
19. In art and design, history and religious education, the teaching is good and pupils consequently achieve well in these subjects. In ICT, insufficient lessons were observed to make an overall judgement about the quality of teaching. In the lessons seen, the subject was well taught but evidence from pupils' completed work shows that teachers need to provide more opportunities for pupils to use their ICT skills across the curriculum. In design and technology, geography and music, insufficient lessons were observed during the inspection to make secure judgements about the teaching. However, an analysis of pupils' completed work shows the teaching enables pupils to make good progress in design and technology and sound progress in geography. The teaching of singing appears to be particularly effective, given pupils' excellent skills. In physical education, insufficient evidence was available to judge the quality of teaching in Years 1 and 2. In Year 3, teaching in the subject ranged from very good to unsatisfactory, but was satisfactory overall. In the only unsatisfactory lesson seen during the inspection, Year 3 pupils underachieved because the games session was poorly managed and there was minimal learning.

20. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from effective teaching which takes due account of their individual and group needs. All teachers go to considerable lengths to plan work matched to the pupils' needs and capabilities and to make sure that they have the resources they need to help them with new learning. Carefully structured teaching approaches and the use of kinaesthetic and visual methods are of particular benefit to many pupils with special educational needs and enable them to gain a thorough grasp of 'new' knowledge and concepts. During group work in mainstream classes, pupils with special needs are often given specially structured 'writing-frames' which help them to organise their ideas. Often, too, they benefit from additional adult support as they work, either from their class teacher or from one of a number of very competent and well-informed teaching assistants. All teachers make sure that pupils with special needs have every opportunity to play a full part in all class activities. A number of pupils with quite severe speech and language difficulties also benefit from short periods of individual tuition out of class when they work with the visiting speech and language therapist on individually tailored programmes. Other pupils with similar but less pronounced needs take part in a specially designed oral language/narrative programme. Pupils for whom English is an additional language are encouraged to ask about things they have not fully understood. Teachers monitor their progress on tasks carefully, intervening when necessary to clarify their understanding or to help them 'find the right words' to make their communication clear.
21. Across the school, lessons are characterised by very good relationships between pupils and teachers, and an orderly atmosphere in lessons. Sound use is made of homework to reinforce and extend what is learned in school. The management of behaviour is very good, resources are carefully prepared, teachers explain tasks clearly and generally organise their lessons efficiently. The learning intentions of lessons are clearly defined and the teaching usually captures pupils' interest effectively. Teachers think carefully about how pupils learn, and are promoting pupils' life-long learning skills, particularly by encouraging them to engage in discussions, to raise questions and to adopt sensible strategies for achieving their learning objectives. As a consequence of the above, pupils respond well and demonstrate positive attitudes to learning by listening attentively to their teachers and peers, and concentrating on their tasks.

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

22. Children in the reception classes benefit from a rich range of well-planned learning opportunities which prepare them well for the National Curriculum. The curriculum for pupils in Years 1-3 is broad, relevant and generally well planned, as it was at the time of the last inspection. Generous amounts of time are allocated for literacy and numeracy, and this time is well used, demonstrated by pupils' good achievement. However, the balance of the curriculum has weaknesses. There is insufficient time allocated for science, so topics are sometimes taught in a superficial way in Years 1 and 2, and the more challenging areas of the curriculum are not tackled. ICT skills are developed well in discreet lessons, but there should be more opportunities for pupils to apply these skills to support other subjects. Although planning is generally thorough, there is a lack of planned extra challenge for the most able pupils.
23. The breadth of the curriculum is greatly enhanced by the very good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education, and pupils' reasoning and thinking skills are developed well through the addition of philosophy to the curriculum. A wide range of topics is covered during personal and social education sessions, preparing pupils

well for life in the outside world; and also pupils have opportunities to discuss relationships and to become very aware of the feelings of others. This reflects the caring ethos of the school where all individuals are valued. In one very good lesson, pupils were encouraged to think about transfer to the middle school from different viewpoints, helping them identify their concerns as well as their optimistic views of the future. At the end of the session, pupils felt very comfortable and positive about transfer as a result of concerns being shared in a very non-threatening way. Sex education and the awareness of drug misuse are dealt with sensitively at a level appropriate for the young age of the pupils.

24. The good range of extra-curricular activities offered to the pupils from Years 1–3 has been maintained since the last inspection, and these opportunities have a positive impact on learning for those pupils who attend. A wide range of visits and visitors to the school further enhances the curriculum. For example, a Jewish visitor shared her knowledge of a Jewish wedding with Year 2 pupils. Her significant expertise increased pupils' knowledge and understanding of Judaism.
25. There are good links with the local community, including parenting workshops and inclusion in such initiatives as 'Share', where children in the local community are supported. Links with the wider community are fostered through e-mail links with schools in Liverpool and Japan. These enhance pupils' understanding of life in a contrasting location. There is continuing good liaison between the school and the neighbouring middle school. Links with pre-school groups are also good. The staff benefit from links within the local pyramid of schools, sharing expertise and good practice. Transfer arrangements are thorough and ensure a smooth transition to the next stage of learning.
26. The school provides very well for pupils with a diverse range of special educational needs and has developed a variety of teaching and learning strategies, together with a flexible programme of additional adult support, which works well in the pupils' interests. Every effort is made by the school to secure full access to the whole curriculum for every pupil with special needs, and every teacher has full regard for the principle of inclusion as it applies to all pupils with special needs in their classes. The few pupils for whom English is an additional language enjoy equal access to all aspects of the curriculum. Where necessary, pupils in the early stages of English language acquisition receive additional support from staff from the local education authority's (LEA's) Ethnic Minority and Travellers' Educational Advisory Service.
27. The school places a strong emphasis on providing for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This was also evident when the school was last inspected. Provision for the pupils' spiritual development is good. Opportunities are given to pause and reflect on their experiences and feelings during the school day. For example, in a personal, social and health education (PSHE) lesson, pupils explored their feelings, relationships and ideas about growing up. During assemblies, pupils listen and reflect on what makes them feel happy, cross or disappointed. In a religious education lesson, pupils had an opportunity to experience stillness and to recognise its importance to Christians when quietly focussing on their own thoughts. Music is used well to set the calm and reflective environment in gatherings of the whole school and in lessons. 'Circle Time' and the PHSE programme provide pupils with opportunities to reflect on their own attitudes and behaviour, and are a valuable opportunity for them to think about what effect their actions have on others. Acts of collective worship meet statutory requirements in full. There are many opportunities in lessons for pupils to stop and reflect on their own development, voice their

concerns and their aspirations. Themes, such as making a big effort, are explored in assemblies and make a significant contribution to the pupils' spiritual development.

28. Provision for pupils' moral development is very good and ensures that pupils develop an understanding of right from wrong. There are clear school rules that are known and understood by pupils. They are positive, and easy to understand and focus on the importance of living collaboratively and of being responsible. Teachers and support staff provide good role models, for example, in the way they work closely together, and in their calm manner and willingness to listen to pupils' thoughts and concerns. The PHSE programme helps pupils cope with situations that they might find difficult to manage on their own and teaches them that sharing problems is helpful. They have opportunities to act out difficult situations and think about the dilemmas of making decisions between right and wrong.
29. Provision for pupils' social development is very good. In lessons, they learn to co-operate, to consider the needs of others and to work in a group. A feature of the school is the good opportunities for pupils to offer opinions and to listen to those of others. They are developing a social conscience through discussion on topics such as healthy lifestyles and the environment. Very few instances of inappropriate behaviour were observed, and pupils are given good opportunities to discuss issues concerned with living with others. Pupils understand the school rules well and take full advantage of the opportunities offered by the school council to play their part in decision-making. The school has introduced games for playtimes and systems for organising the lunchtimes, which help to promote social skills and good behaviour, and result in congenial breaks.
30. There is good provision for pupils to study their own culture and other cultures. Good examples of this are: work in history on living in Celt round houses; in geography when comparing climate, housing and the environment in other countries such as Japan; and the study of other faiths in religious education. Visits and visitors bring the curriculum alive for pupils, for example when a visitor helped pupils understand the rituals of a Jewish wedding during the inspection. Pupils have good opportunities to learn about the art, music and literature from different cultures, and there is a strong emphasis on developing pupils' awareness of the work of artists, both locally and worldwide.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

31. The school has a clear understanding of the importance of the needs of the whole child and provides good pastoral care for all its pupils. Relationships in the school are very good and all adults act as good role models for the pupils. The carefully planned induction programme, starting with contact at a pre-school setting, helps children to be well prepared to cope with school life. Pupils are helped not to be over-awed by the large size of the school by the use of fixed routines that provide a calm and welcoming atmosphere at the start of the day, enabling pupils to feel secure and ready to learn. Teachers use this time to get to know individual pupils well so that they feel valued members of the school community and any pastoral needs or concerns can be addressed. The school's coherent approach to pastoral care successfully supports all pupils and gives a firm foundation to their learning.
32. Arrangements for child protection are good, and all adults who might come into contact with pupils are appropriately vetted. The staff are particularly careful to ensure that younger pupils are released to known adults at the end of the day. Pupils' attendance is regularly monitored and action is taken, in conjunction with the

- education welfare officer, to follow up parents whose children are poor attenders or who persistently arrive late. Pupils benefit from a well-planned and comprehensive programme of personal, health and social education, including the promotion of healthy eating and drinking. Regular reminders are given about road safety, and drugs education is appropriately covered. Opportunities for pupils to discuss their feelings or views are planned into the curriculum, and this helps pupils develop positive attitudes to the school and learn to be sensitive to the feelings of others.
33. The school is very successful in promoting high standards of behaviour and very positive attitudes to learning. The policy, which places strong emphasis on praise, positive encouragement and the development of pupils taking personal responsibility for their actions, is consistently implemented. All adults are well trained to be good role models for the pupils and to set high expectations. Consequently, pupils know what is expected of them and are keen to have their efforts recognised either individually or as part of a class or group in the weekly celebration assemblies. Lunchtimes are peaceful and harmonious occasions and help set the tone for lively but well-disciplined playtimes. Instances of bullying or name calling are rare. The large mural on the playground reminds pupils how to deal with such problems. There are appropriate strategies to help the few pupils who find it hard to maintain the high standards expected, using simple behaviour plans. There have been no exclusions.
34. Health and safety issues are given appropriate priority, and regular inspections of the buildings and grounds are carried out by the designated staff and governors. Appropriate risk assessments are carried out for all off-site visits. Arrangements for first aid are sound and the specific medical needs of pupils are well displayed around the school so that immediate action may be taken where necessary. The grounds are adequately fenced and pupils are not able to access the wildlife area or nature trail without the appropriate adult supervision. The buildings and grounds are tidy and well maintained, and provide a pleasant environment for pupils.
35. Assessment in the reception class is good and is used well to inform planning for children's varying needs. The use of national assessment procedures at the end of the reception year is in place. The senior leader collates all the assessment data and uses this information to check children's progress and attainment and to inform her own planning for improvement in provision. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress in Years 1 to 3 are unsatisfactory, overall, because it is only in English and mathematics that they are fully in place.
36. In English and mathematics, assessment procedures are satisfactory. The results of baseline tests, statutory tests for Year 2, and non-statutory tests in Year 3, are analysed and the results used to set individual and whole-school targets. The results of the tests are tabulated and form a useful record of pupils' progress as they move through the school. They are also used to group pupils within classes, and to identify those pupils who need additional support. Half-termly assessments are used to check pupils' progress and to set future targets. There are also booklets which are meant to involve pupils in setting and keeping a record of their targets. However, these procedures are over-complex and this, in part, explains why they are not yet fully embedded and used to inform planning for the different needs of pupils.
37. Whilst formal assessment in subjects other than English and mathematics are underdeveloped, teachers know their pupils well and keep their own informal records of their work and progress. In the course of lessons, most teachers use questioning well to assess pupils' understanding of previous work, to establish starting points for learning and to put right misconceptions. Pupils' work is regularly marked and there

is good use of constructive comments to motivate learning and help pupils improve their work.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

38. The school has established a strong partnership with parents who rightly hold the school in high regard. From their first contact with the school, parents are given time to meet the staff and are very well provided with information. The 'starter pack' addresses the questions parents might have about school routines and expectations, as well as encouraging parents to share in their children's education with guidance about the support they could give at home. The staggered admission of new children allows for staff to get to know parents more easily. Parents find all the staff easy to talk to and welcome the opportunity to speak to them at the weekly surgery after school if they have any concerns or queries. They are confident that they will be kept informed if staff have any concerns about their children's progress or pastoral needs.
39. One example of good practice which makes a strong contribution to making parents feel involved in the school is the opportunity given to them to raise issues and to be consulted on new developments. By listening to their views and suggestions, improvements, such as the newly designed home/school link books, are made which meet the needs of parents, pupils and staff. The information given to parents is well written, and regular newsletters and termly summaries keep parents up to date with school activities and what is being taught. The school also holds workshops from time to time to explain aspects of the curriculum and the way teaching and learning are promoted. Parents have opportunities, each term, to discuss their children's targets and progress, and receive sound annual written reports towards the end of the school year.
40. For their part, parents are very supportive of the school and are confident that their children are receiving a good education. The dissatisfaction of a minority with the provision of extra-curricular clubs is not borne out from inspection findings. Some parents help regularly in classes or assist with after school clubs; they volunteer to accompany children on school trips and some are happy to share their knowledge and expertise when asked to do so. The parent support group undertakes not only fund-raising activities to improve the school resources and environment, and the parent development group has been involved in trying to encourage more parents to walk their children to school. However, reading records suggest that there is scope for more parents to hear their children read regularly at home, and this would help their children make faster progress in learning to read.
41. The school has established very good links with the parents of pupils with special educational needs. The majority of parents work well with the school to help their children, for example by supporting them with reading and with other work at home. Most also attend the review meetings arranged by the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) on a termly rota to discuss their children's progress. Any parents who are unable to attend are updated on a different occasion. Parents are consulted about changes made to the targets in their children's individual education plans, and evidence shows that their views are taken into account. The parents of pupils with Statements of Special Educational Need all attend formal review meetings involving external specialists.
42. Parents who are not living with their children are appropriately kept informed about children's progress and school activities. Parents from ethnic backgrounds are invited to share their culture with the pupils at festivals. The school is accessible to

those in wheelchairs and has toilet facilities for the disabled. The school provides free opportunities for parents to develop their skills in ICT.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

43. The headteacher is a significant strength in the school, and has very good leadership and management skills. He is able to inspire and motivate staff and pupils, and provides the school with a clear sense of direction. He successfully promotes teamwork among staff so there is a shared commitment to school improvement. The headteacher also fosters innovation, and this is evident in the emphasis given to the development of pupils' lifelong learning skills, across the school. He is knowledgeable about the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, and encourages teachers who observe his demonstration lessons to identify areas for development as well as strengths. This provides a good role model for staff in relation to their own professional development and helps to create a climate where all see themselves as learners. The school improvement plan has been formulated through effective leadership by the headteacher, with appropriate staff and governor involvement. The plan identifies relevant priorities, provides a firm steer to the work of the school and has a beneficial effect on the quality of education provided.
44. The headteacher uses rigorous procedures to monitor the school's performance, particularly in English and mathematics, and keeps his finger firmly on its pulse. He analyses the SATs results carefully and carries out very regular classroom observations to judge the quality of teaching and learning in these subjects. In addition, he talks to pupils about their achievement and examines their completed work. The leadership and management skills of the headteacher were also major strengths when the school was last inspected. The deputy headteacher shares the key responsibility for monitoring the school's work, and fulfils her role well. As a consequence of the focus on literacy and numeracy, pupils are now making mainly good progress in these key elements of the curriculum. There is also evidence to suggest that effective leadership and management strategies have had a beneficial impact on the quality of teacher's questioning skills in lessons, and in their promotion of pupils' thinking skills.
45. The deputy headteacher plays an important role in the strategic management of the school, and works well in partnership with the headteacher. Besides undertaking the regular monitoring which has been identified earlier, she ensures that newly qualified teachers are well supported, that the continued professional development of all staff is given careful consideration, and that teaching assistants have good opportunities to reflect on their work and to share good practice.
46. Senior leaders lead teams of four teachers, working with the same year groups, in the school. These key staff monitor teaching and learning in their year groups, including thorough planning, lesson observations and by examining pupils' work, particularly in English and mathematics. They provide useful feedback to their colleagues, which benefits their professional development. The senior leaders develop a valuable overview of the broad provision in their year groups, and the headteacher ensures that there are regular opportunities for these teachers to talk together to discuss whole-school issues. As a consequence, they make an important contribution to the overall coherence of the school.
47. While senior leaders sometimes focus on pupils' achievements in subjects other than English and mathematics, in their team meetings, this information does not form part of a coherent strategy for judging the quality of teaching and learning, or pupils'

standards, in most subjects. With the important exceptions of English and mathematics, this is apparent in discussions with most subject leaders. All are enthusiastic about their subjects, willingly advise their colleagues, and audit and organise resources efficiently. However, a number are still developing their own knowledge about their subjects, and most do not have sufficiently well-developed monitoring and evaluation strategies. For example, samples of pupils' work are not examined systematically by most subject leaders to judge pupils' progress and standards as they move through the school, and they do not analyse whole-school planning for their subjects. As a consequence, their impact on pupils' standards is restricted. The school now needs to develop the roles of most subject leaders so their work integrates more effectively with the well-established leadership and management strategies used by the headteacher and senior leaders.

48. The school benefits from a highly committed governing body which makes a valuable contribution to the leadership and management of the school. Appropriate committees are established and help to guide the school's work. The results of statutory testing are debated thoroughly, and governors regularly visit the school to observe it in operation. The governors with particular responsibility for literacy, numeracy and special educational needs are all taking a keen interest in the school's work in these areas; and the chair of governors is conscientious, well organised and effective. The governors have a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for development in the school, have a very positive relationship with the headteacher and sometimes ask appropriately challenging questions to hold him to account. The school budget is analysed carefully, and the headteacher and governors take appropriate account of the principles of best value when making spending decisions. Overall, the governors fulfil their role well and statutory requirements are met.
49. The leadership and management of special needs provision are very good. The SENCO is very effective in his role and is well supported by the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the special needs governor. Key issues related to special educational needs identified in the last OFSTED report have been addressed in full: pupils' curriculum entitlement is protected and individual education plans, with rare exceptions, include rigorous, short-term targets which are challenging but accessible. Policies, procedures and practices reflect the guidance and recommendations of the most recent Code of Practice, and the principles of inclusion are upheld for all pupils. Teachers and teaching assistants are suitably trained in those aspects of special needs most relevant to them in their work with specific pupils or groups of pupils. The SENCO makes every effort to keep abreast of developments in the field of special needs provision and to establish constructive links with outside specialists and with local special schools. There are particularly strong links with the nearby Montacute School whose staff have given teachers much helpful guidance, particularly in regard to practical classroom strategies. There are also particularly successful links with the educational psychologist and with the speech therapist. The special needs governor is supportive in his role. He ensures that statutory requirements in regard to special needs provision are fully met, has received appropriate training for his role and has undertaken some monitoring of special needs work in partnership with the SENCO. Funds provided for the benefit of special needs pupils are spent wisely, and staff are well deployed. There is very effective communication amongst all personnel involved in special needs work in the school. All adults are well trained in the promotion of a stress free approach to learning and equal opportunities promotion is embedded in school practice.
50. There are sufficient teachers and, collectively, they have the expertise and experience to cover the age and ability range of the pupils and the requirements of the National

Curriculum. The school benefits from effective teaching assistants who make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. The headteacher ensures that performance management is implemented well and wisely delegates responsibility for elements of its implementation to senior staff. Learning resources are sound, overall, and the accommodation provides ample space. A recently constructed ICT suite and library has considerably enhanced provision, and teachers take great care to create a stimulating learning environment through the display of pupils' work. There is sufficient playground space but the school appropriately recognises there is scope to improve the outside space for reception children. There is no school field which sometimes restricts pupils' work, particularly in sport.

51. The school makes good use of its resources. The quality of teaching is generally good, across the school, and pupils make good progress in their learning in most subjects. The school's provision for pupils' personal development is effective, and this is demonstrated in their positive attitude and very good behaviour. There are some elements of the school's work which require improvement but these are vastly outweighed by its strengths. Overall, it provides good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

52. In order to raise standards further, the headteacher and governors should include the following issues for improvement in their action plan:
- (1) raise standards in Year 2 in science by ensuring that more time is allocated for the subject, and that the required curriculum is covered in sufficient depth; (see paragraphs 5, 18, 22, 90, 94)
 - (2) improve the achievement of higher attaining pupils in English, mathematics and science by ensuring that they are given more consistently challenging tasks; (see paragraphs 7, 16, 17, 18, 22, 79, 87, 88)
 - (3) improve procedures for assessment in subjects other than English and mathematics, and ensure that assessment informs teachers' planning and has a beneficial impact on pupils' standards; (see paragraphs 35, 37, 95, 100, 104, 108, 112, 116, 121, 124)
 - (4) develop the monitoring roles of most subject leaders so they have a clearer view of their subjects, across the school, and can target areas for improvement with more precision. (see paragraphs 47, 95, 100, 104, 108, 112, 116, 118, 121, 124)
53. In addition to the key issues above, the headteacher and governors should consider the following, less important, issue for inclusion in the action plan:
- * ensure that pupils have increased opportunities to use and develop their ICT skills in work across the curriculum. (see paragraphs 19, 22, 113, 115)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	66
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	26

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	11	31	22	1	0	0
Percentage	2	17	47	33	2	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y3
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	n/a	445
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	n/a	10

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y3
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	n/a	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	n/a	81

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	4

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	17
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	24

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.4
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	66	53	119

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	55	61	62
	Girls	46	52	46
	Total	101	113	108
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	85 (83)	95 (89)	91 (91)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	53	60	54
	Girls	50	49	41
	Total	103	109	95
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	87 (87)	92 (90)	80 (85)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

Ethnic background of pupils**Exclusions in the last school year**

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	398	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	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	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	4	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	2	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	38	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 – Y3

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	18
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.7
Average class size	27.8

Education support staff: YR – Y3

Total number of education support staff	26
Total aggregate hours worked per week	508

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	n/a
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	n/a
Total number of education support staff	n/a
Total aggregate hours worked per week	n/a
Number of pupils per FTE adult	n/a

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	5
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2002-03
	£
Total income	1,032,219
Total expenditure	1,046,396
Expenditure per pupil	2,325
Balance brought forward from previous year	47,576
Balance carried forward to next year	33,399

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	445
Number of questionnaires returned	98

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	72	22	5	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	65	35	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	72	26	1	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	46	43	8	1	2
The teaching is good.	78	21	0	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	57	38	2	2	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	80	18	1	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	72	27	1	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	65	28	4	1	2
The school is well led and managed.	83	16	0	1	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	73	23	1	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	40	35	11	6	8

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

54. Children are admitted to the reception class in the September of the school year in which they become five. Induction arrangements are good and result in pupils having a smooth start to their schooling. They include opportunities for the children to visit the school before they start and a range of very well-organised opportunities for parents to find out about the school and the curriculum. Most children have attended some form of pre-school provision prior to starting school, including local pre-school playgroups. The school has good links with these groups.
55. There is a wide spread of attainment on entry to the reception class but, overall, their language and mathematical skills are below the levels expected. Children make good progress in relation to their starting points and reach standards in communication, language, literacy and mathematics which are a little below those expected for their age by the end of the reception year. Children with special educational needs make good progress as a result of good planning for their individual needs and the good support they receive from teaching assistants. Pupils who speak English as an additional language also make good progress.
56. Children are well prepared for the curriculum in Year 1 as a result of the good teaching they receive. A rich environment for learning has been created and there is a well-planned curriculum, which includes a good balance of opportunities for children to learn through play activities that they have chosen themselves, as well as through more formal tasks, which are directed by the teacher. A particular strength is the 'philosophy' sessions, which are very effective in developing children's language and thinking skills and encouraging them to ask and answer questions in all areas of learning. There are good procedures for keeping track of children's progress and assessing what they know, understand and can do as a result of taking part in activities. This information is used effectively to inform planning for future work. Assessments at the end of the reception year appropriately include the use of the Foundation Stage profile. Good links are maintained with parents and, as a result, they support their children's learning well. Appropriate 'homework' is set. For example, children take home 'fun bags' once a fortnight, containing toys and games with a purpose.
57. The Foundation Stage senior leader leads and manages the area well and sets a good example by the quality of her teaching. A strong sense of teamwork has been built, in which each member plays an important part and knows that their contribution is valued. The senior leader has a good overview of teaching, learning and standards in all classes as a result of observing lessons, working alongside other teachers and checking planning. Her plans for improvements in the area, which include the development of the outdoor play area, are good.

Personal, social and emotional development

58. Children have a wide range of personal, social and emotional skills on entry to the school but overall they are as expected for children of a similar age. They make good progress to achieve standards that are above average by the end of the reception year as a result of the very positive relationships that they have with their teachers. Teachers consistently model and encourage co-operation and politeness through a range of activities, and teach the children the skills that they need to work, play and

talk together. As a result, children are able to organise themselves, exchange views and ideas, help each other, and share equipment without supervision by the end of the reception year.

59. The children develop positive attitudes to learning as a result of the interesting activities that are provided and the opportunities that they have to take responsibility for their own learning. For example, they plan the activities that they will take part in and keep a record of this. They are expected to get out the resources that they need for themselves and to tidy away afterwards. This helps them to develop a sense of competence and the ability to make informed decisions and choices in the course of their work. The good encouragement and support that children receive from all the adults who work with them helps them to develop confidence when tackling new work and to persevere when things are difficult.
60. The children are encouraged to use the conventions of courtesy from an early stage, for example, they are taught to say 'please' and 'thank you'. They learn to look at people when they are speaking, to respond politely to their views and to take turns in conversations. Standards of behaviour are very good. There are good opportunities for children to learn the differences between right and wrong, and to understand the consequences of their actions on others. For example, in their work about the 'Rainbow Fish', they learn how his unkindness and selfishness not only makes him unhappy, but also other fish unhappy as well. They are very keen to help him improve his ways and write letters to him suggesting how he might do this. Evidence of their understanding of how to treat others is also reflected in numerous everyday actions when pupils show kindness and consideration to each other, particularly when they see their classmates having difficulty.

Communication, language and literacy

61. Assessments of children's early literacy skills, made during their first term in the reception classes, show that their oral language skills are generally below the level expected for children of a similar age. As a result of good teaching, children make good progress in relation to their starting points and attain standards that are a little below those expected for their age by the end of the reception year.
62. Most children develop a sound vocabulary and this enables them to name and classify objects, make increasingly elaborate statements and retell their experiences. This is as a result of the emphasis that teachers give to using words with precision. A very good example of this was when children were asked to write exact descriptions of where they might find the Rainbow Fish. One higher attaining child wrote, '*the sea is as heavy and cold as an ice mountain*'. By the end of the reception year they are keen to answer questions, ask questions of their own, pass comments and use persuasive arguments in discussions. This is most evident in philosophy sessions, when they express their ideas clearly and well. The teachers sensitively ensure that the more reticent children are fully involved, engaging with them individually when they say little and encouraging children to talk not only with their close friends but with other children who they know less well.
63. All children enjoy sharing stories and poems with their teacher. They follow the events in stories closely when they listen to stories being read aloud. They look closely at the illustrations and can use them to find out more about the characters and their feelings. As a result of these experiences, children learn that pictures and words are ways of preserving meaning. All children are very aware of how books work and turn readily to them. They recognise some key words on sight, know about the

sounds that letters make and know something about the way punctuation, such as speech marks, gives meaning to the text. This, together with their satisfactory awareness of the sounds that letters make, enables most pupils to accurately read words in simple texts by the end of the reception year. Some make good attempts at reading stories for themselves and sounding out new words. They are not deterred by more complex text and enjoy making up their own stories in response to the pictures that they see in books.

64. When children start school, many find pencil control difficult. They make good progress in letter formation and handwriting, and, by the end of the reception year, most can form their letters accurately and write their own name neatly. Children are encouraged to make their own independent attempts at writing from an early stage and, as a result, most have the confidence that they need to develop their writing in more formal ways. Many are able to compose, and write down short simple statements and sequences of ideas by the end of the reception year. Good use is made of published stories to support this work. For example, they have worked together to write recounts of the 'Lighthouse Keeper's Lunch' and have written their own individual letters to the 'Rainbow Fish'. Average and higher attaining children use their knowledge of letter sounds to build simple three-letter words, and make very plausible attempts at spelling the words they need to convey their own ideas. Independence in writing is encouraged by the provision of word banks which children can refer to in the course of their work.

Mathematical development

65. When children enter the school at the age of four, their mathematical development is generally below the level expected for their age. As a result of good teaching they learn well and make good progress. By the end of the reception year, the majority attain levels that are a little below average. They confidently count to at least 20: some can count well beyond that and are quite secure in combining numbers of objects and counting them accurately. Most children can recognise numerals from one to 20 and write them correctly as a result of the good strategies that teachers use to help them remember numbers. For example, counting activities encourage them to make a 'smiley' sign when they see a 'teen' number and mime 'drinking a cup of tea' for numbers such as 20 and 30.
66. Many children have a limited mathematical vocabulary when they start school. Opportunities to join in number songs and to combine and partition numbers in a range of ways result in most pupils being able to answer number problems such as 'one more' or 'one less' than a given number accurately. Higher attaining pupils calculate by counting the number of objects that are left when a given number is taken away or added to a set. They know the names of simple two-dimensional shapes such as triangles, squares and rectangles, and recognise the language of position. They develop an early understanding of the language of measure through a range of practical activities, for example, when weighing pets in the 'Animal Hospital' in order to find out which one has eaten all the food, when filling and emptying containers with water and sand and when making milkshakes with their teacher.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

67. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is mainly in line with the levels expected for their age by the end of the reception year. Children learn well as a result of good teaching involving formal input, practical play experiences and visits to places within the locality and further afield. A particular strength of provision is the

encouragement that is given for children to ask and answer their own questions. They talk about their questions and also write them down. This feeds children's natural curiosity and helps them develop a sense of wonder of the world around them. A good example of this was when they watched the teacher add colouring to a vase of water and then place a white chrysanthemum into it. They expressed amazement as the flower changed colour. They were then motivated to ask questions as to how this might happen. In philosophy sessions they realise that there are some questions to which no one knows the answer.

68. The children make good progress when developing their understanding of place. For example, they have visited the pond on the school site and also made a visit to the beach at Shell Bay and can talk about the different features of each environment. They have an early understanding of the passing of time as a result of regular opportunities to share the pattern of the school day. They have also reflected on changes in themselves since they have been born and, when a baby was brought into school for them to see, compared their own needs to those of a baby.
69. There are ample opportunities to investigate how a range of construction materials work, and learn how they can be fitted together to make objects of their own choosing. Well-focused construction activities, such as designing an object to get a fish out of a tank, help children to begin to develop their ideas with a purpose in mind. Teaching also ensures that children develop the skills that they need to use simple tools such as scissors and glue sticks properly, and that they learn techniques such as folding and joining materials. When using computers, they follow instructions carefully and demonstrate good hand and eye control when controlling images on screen using a mouse, for example, using 'textease' to make drawings of the beach on the computer screen. They are also able to control programmable toys by giving the correct instructions for the direction and distance they want them to travel.
70. Good opportunities for children to explore the natural world have helped children to notice the different features, patterns and colours in living things. For example, they have looked very carefully at a trout, felt its scales, and noticed its gills, fins and tail and made careful observational drawings of them. They have examined bedding plants and planted them carefully, taking care to water and look after them. In the course of their visit to the beach, they collected shells and observed the living creatures, such as a jellyfish, that were stranded on the sand. Back at school, they have looked carefully at these shells and also used them to make their school garden attractive. They thoroughly enjoy digging the garden and the opportunities that they have to work with water and wet and dry sand. As a result, they explore some of the properties of these natural materials.

Physical development

71. The physical development of children is about average on entry to the school. They make good progress whilst they are in the reception classes as a result of the good teaching they receive and the regular opportunities that they have to develop their co-ordination and physical skills. As a result, standards are a little above average by the end of the reception year.
72. They benefit from suitable opportunities to develop their manipulative skills when using construction toys, and when painting, drawing and cutting. Appropriate use is made of the hall and playground for physical education, which involves the children in more formal activities in preparation for the curriculum in Year 1. They show a good awareness of their own space in relation to others, control the speed of their

movements well and develop confidence when balancing. This was demonstrated in a dance lesson when the children controlled the very slow and heavy movements that they needed to depict the movement of an elephant. They develop good control for their ages when working with small games apparatus such as bats and balls.

73. There are regular opportunities to work and play in the outdoor area where children develop the co-ordination of their larger movements by playing on tricycles and other large toys. They enjoy carrying large boxes from one place to another and crawling through tunnels. However, the lack of a suitable play surface in the outdoor area limits opportunities to use climbing apparatus.

Creative development

74. Teaching for children's creative development is good and, as a result, children learn well and make good progress to achieve standards above those expected by the end of the reception year. They respond well to opportunities to express their ideas when singing, painting, role-playing and moving and dancing to music.
75. For example, they enjoy listening to the music from 'The Carnival of the Animals' and respond by moving in different ways to depict the animals represented by the music. They learn a good range of songs by heart, and sing them enthusiastically at an early stage. They know the names of different percussion instruments and know how to play them correctly. They control them well when responding to simple rhythmic patterns.
76. The skills of mixing paint and brush control are taught well and, as a result, the children use these skills competently when creating imaginative representations of what they see, hear and feel. For example, they have painted their own representations of a pond, not only in response to their visit to a pond, but also as a result of looking carefully at Monet's painting of water lilies. There are ample opportunities for children to explore a range of different media and to use them for mark making and to compose their own pictures and patterns.

ENGLISH

77. On entry to Year 1, the communication skills of children are generally a little below average for their age.
78. The school's results in the national tests of reading for pupils aged seven in 2002 were below the national average and also below the average results of similar schools. In writing, the results were in line with the national average and above the average results of similar schools. Evidence from the school's own tracking systems shows that these results represent good progress achievement by pupils in this year group. At present, there are no national averages available for comparisons with the school's SATs results in 2003, which are broadly similar, overall, to those achieved in 2002 in reading and writing.
79. Inspection findings show that pupils' overall attainment is broadly average in speaking and listening, in reading and in writing, both in Year 2 and in Year 3. There are, however, variations in the profiles of attainment in different year groups throughout the school. These variations can be seen in the assessment data collected and analysed by the school, and they account for the differences, year on year, in the results of national tests. In relation to their various starting-points, pupils of average and lower attainment, pupils with special educational needs and the few pupils for whom English

is an additional language all make good progress. The most able pupils do not always do as well as they might. Too often, they mark time in lessons when work is insufficiently challenging, when there is a general lack of pace, or when they are required to work through too many stages of tightly structured activities, some of which they do not need.

80. From an early age, almost all pupils are good listeners. They look at the speaker - pupil or teacher and they show interest in what others have to say. They are polite and courteous and, during whole-class discussions, they wait for a signal for their turn to speak. They learn appropriate skills and attitudes early on, and these remain good throughout their time in the school. All staff work hard to develop pupils' confidence as speakers. As a result, by the time they are seven, and in Year 3, almost all pupils are able to engage well with 'response partners' in order to develop ideas or share their work, although by no means all pupils volunteer to answer questions when working in larger groups. Most pupils acquire a knowledge of the specialist terms needed to discuss their work, both in English and in other subjects, and higher attaining pupils are often very articulate. However, in each age group there are also significant numbers of pupils who struggle to express themselves clearly and whose speech patterns are not always those of Standard English. The recent introduction of philosophy lessons designed specifically for children are beginning to have a beneficial impact on pupils' spoken language. The most able readers in Years 2 and 3 read accurately, fluently and expressively and have very good comprehension skills. They talk confidently about their preferred authors and about how they can use the library and information books to find things out. Pupils of average and lower attainment do not always read as fluently as they might, generally apply a narrower range of reading strategies to work out how to pronounce words and to make sense of what they read, and do not always pay due attention to punctuation. Sometimes their understanding of what they read is limited because there are words and phrases they do not understand, and often they find it difficult to work out 'hidden meanings' conveyed in figurative language or by the use of irony. However, work displayed in many classrooms testifies to the fact that pupils of all abilities have undertaken some independent research in order to make notes, for example in history, and there is evidence to show that the most able pupils in Year 3 can use ICT as well as printed materials to inform their research. Irrespective of ability, all pupils have confidence in themselves as readers, and, with very rare exceptions, pupils also value reading for its own sake.
81. By the end of Years 2 and 3, pupils are able to write for a suitable range of purposes in English and in other subjects. Within their individual capabilities, they plan what they are intending to write and adopt the structure of particular forms, taking what account they can of their intended audience. The best writing is of a high standard in all respects, and all pupils take care to present their writing as neatly as they can. However, not all pupils in Years 2 and 3 produce joined handwriting as a matter of course, while some pupils in Year 1 are already able to do so. Spelling is an area of general weakness for many pupils in all age groups. Nevertheless, there are also a few pupils who spell exceptionally well for their age and, by the age of seven, most pupils use spellings which, if not accurate, are at least phonetically plausible. Only a few higher attaining pupils in Years 2 and 3 combine ideas successfully within complex sentences, punctuate their work accurately and engage the interest of the reader. Most, however, produce coherent sequences of sentences in order to develop their ideas. In some of the best examples seen, pupils have been motivated by the dramatic events involved in the Great Fire of London. They are able to empathise with the experiences of those involved, and their writing often conveys lively descriptions of the drama as it unfolds. Common weaknesses in the written

work of average and lower attaining pupils include grammatical errors and, sometimes, the inappropriate use of colloquial language which reflects their everyday speech patterns rather than Standard English.

82. The teaching of English is mainly good, and often very good. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen during the inspection, and evidence shows that all teachers work hard to address identified weaknesses in pupils' performance. A significant and common strength of the teaching lies in the very good relationships established with pupils. Teachers and support staff all know the pupils well, and there is a trusting bond between them which means that pupils are willing to learn and to take risks. All teachers plan their lessons effectively, and all ensure that pupils build securely on previous learning. They make pupils aware of what they are intended to learn and to do, and they pursue their planned objectives rigorously. Activities and resources are prepared very well, and most teachers give due consideration to ways in which the needs of different abilities will be met. In almost all cases, very good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs and for lower attaining pupils, many of whom benefit from structured approaches which make each stage of learning clear and accessible. Frequent opportunities are provided for pupils to learn through talk and through visualisation processes such as learning maps, methods which prove particularly useful to pupils of average and lower attainment. Support staff are a strength of the provision. They interact very well with pupils and frequently enable lower attaining pupils to focus on their targets and to achieve standards they would not be capable of attaining when working independently. Class teachers are equally effective at ensuring that lower attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs, play a full part in lessons. For example, they all ensure that some lower attaining pupils are included in discussions and that, when necessary, these pupils have the time they need to formulate answers to questions. Provision for the most able pupils is not always effective. Sometimes, tasks are not intellectually challenging enough for these pupils, and sometimes the very structured approaches to learning which undoubtedly benefit other pupils simply take too long and deprive the most able of the opportunity to use their own initiative. At times, the structured approaches to learning lead to a lack of pace for the more able pupils. Sometimes, too, the emphasis placed by teachers on learning strategies diverts their attention from the quality of language produced by pupils, whether in speaking or in writing, and on these occasions feedback to pupils about their performance is seldom evaluative or helpful. In general, teachers give pupils too little feedback to help them improve the clarity of their expression, whether verbal or written, and do too little to help pupils appreciate the grammatical forms used in Standard English.
83. The headteacher assumed responsibility for the leadership and management of English last year and has recently been assisted in his endeavours by a teacher who is to take over as literacy subject leader at the beginning of the next academic year. Both have been involved in monitoring teaching and learning in English, and both now share well-informed views about strengths and weaknesses in relation to provision, progress, teaching and standards. The results of assessments and findings from other monitoring processes are used to good effect to inform priorities in the school improvement plan. Secure assessment procedures enable the subject leaders and teaching staff to monitor pupils' progress and to identify appropriate areas for development. Target setting helps pupils to appreciate the next steps in their learning. However, the systems used are complex and, in their current form, are not found manageable by all teachers. Overall, the literacy strategy is implemented effectively and resources are satisfactory. There remains scope for wider use to be made of ICT to support teaching and learning in English, and for pupils to practise their writing skills more frequently, when relevant, by recording what they have learned in other subjects.

MATHEMATICS

84. The results of national tests for 2002 were below average when compared to the national results but average when compared to similar schools. The results of this year's annual tests are not yet confirmed but there are early indications that the school has improved on its 2002 results. The findings of the inspection are that overall standards are in line with national expectations by the end of Year 2 and Year 3. This represents good achievement in relation to pupils' starting points at the beginning of Year 1, when standards are a little below average. Standards were above average when the school was last inspected. However, there is evidence to show that pupils are now starting at the school with lower standards.
85. Pupils achieve average standards in basic number. Higher attaining pupils in Year 2 have a good understanding of basic number facts up to 100 and beyond, and make accurate calculations using their knowledge of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. By the end of Year 3, higher attaining pupils have a sound knowledge of place value, partition numbers with three digits and competently use this knowledge when working units of measure such as litres, millimetres, kilograms and grams. Most pupils make good use of a range of mental strategies such as doubling, halving, approximation and estimation, to solve increasingly complex calculations, involving one or two operations. They are competent in recognising the patterns and relationships that exist between numbers up to 100 and in applying this knowledge in the course of their work. For example, younger pupils, including those with special educational needs, recognise number sequences when counting in multiples of two, five and ten. Year 3 pupils can put fractions in the correct order of size and count in quarters and halves and know when simple actions are equivalent to each other. They explain the strategies that they use to solve problems confidently and clearly, using an appropriate mathematical vocabulary. When pupils do not achieve at the higher levels it is because they do not fully understand how numbers work and they find it difficult to adopt a systematic approach to problem solving. Pupils' skills in recording their methods of working and in using ICT to support their work in mathematics are not as high as they should be.
86. Pupils' knowledge of shape, space and measures is satisfactory. They recognise the names and properties of simple two-dimensional shapes in Year 1. As they move through the school, they increase their understanding of the properties of more complex shapes, including those that are three-dimensional. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of measurement is developed well in Year 3 where pupils learn how to estimate and measure time, weight, length and capacity. They develop their skills of data handling by collection information, such as favourite flavour of ice creams, by questioning their classmates and then using this information to construct block graphs and Venn diagrams.
87. The school has good procedures to ensure that pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Good attention is given to their mathematical development in their individual education plans and they receive good support from teaching assistants. Teaching includes a wide range of methods, both practical and visual, which helps pupils who learn in different ways to have access to learning. Teaching is also effective in promoting pupils' self-esteem. However, a minority of pupils, mainly those who attain just below average, do not achieve as much as they should because they are over dependent on adults for support when tackling new and more difficult work. Pupils with English as an additional language are provided with the help they need and as a result make satisfactory progress. The progress of higher attaining and talented mathematicians varies between classes. They make

satisfactory rather than good progress overall because in some classes the pace of lessons is too slow for these pupils and there is insufficient use of learning objectives from more advanced levels of the National Numeracy Strategy.

88. Teaching is good overall. Most teachers have a good subject knowledge that is based on a thorough understanding of the mathematics Programme of Study and the numeracy guidance. There is thorough planning throughout the school and learning objectives are shared with pupils so that they have a good understanding of the purpose of the lesson. In the best lessons, teachers have high expectations of what pupils should achieve, there is a brisk pace to the work and an atmosphere in which all pupils are expected and encouraged to do their best. Explanations and demonstrations are clear and good open questioning techniques encourage pupils to think for themselves and apply their mathematical skills to a range of situations. Where teaching is satisfactory rather than good, the pace of lessons is too slow, instructions and demonstrations are dull and there is a lack of challenge for higher attaining pupils. Whilst pupils respond willingly to the tasks set in these lessons, they often mark time because they repeat work that they already know. In all classes, work is regularly and conscientiously marked, with good use of constructive, written feedback to help pupils know what they have to do to improve. Pupils are well managed and appropriate use is made of the time and resources that are available for learning. Appropriate use is made of homework to support the work that pupils do in school.
89. The school's assessment procedures are good overall and include optional national tests, which are used to give information about individual progress and achievement. There is systematic analysis and appropriate use of data to give the school the information that it needs to plan for improvements. Procedures are in place to allow pupils' progress to be tracked as they move through the school and for pupils to be involved in setting and reviewing their own targets. However, these procedures are over-complex and, at the same time, insufficient attention is given to the important elements of using and applying mathematics. It is, perhaps, for this reason that they are not yet fully embedded and their use to inform planning for the different needs of pupils varies. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The subject leader sets a very good example by the quality of her own teaching. She has worked conscientiously to implement the numeracy strategy and to ensure that all members of staff are trained. She has also arranged some good opportunities to inform parents about how the subject works and how they can help their children at home. She has monitored planning standards, teaching and learning and, as a result, formed some accurate views about the areas of mathematics that need to be improved.

SCIENCE

90. On entry to Year 1, the scientific knowledge and understanding of pupils are generally a little below the level expected. The results of the statutory teacher assessments in Year 2, in 2002, were well below the national average in relation to the percentage reaching the expected standard. These results were also well below the average results of similar schools. Inspection findings show that current standards in Year 2 are below national expectations, and represent underachievement. Pupils' unsatisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2 stems, in the main, from weaknesses in the implementation of the scheme of work which means that important elements are not covered adequately. In Year 3, the time allocated for the subject continues to be too short. However, teachers are making better use of the scheme of work so that the available time is used more productively. As a result, the overall progress of most pupils is satisfactory in Year 3, and they achieve standards which are in line with

those expected for their age. In common with their peers, pupils with special educational needs should do better in Years 1 and 2 but achieve soundly in Year 3. However, higher attaining pupils often mark time across the school because they need more challenging work. Standards have fallen since the last inspection, when they were above national expectations in Years 2 and 3.

91. In Year 1, pupils derive limited benefit from completing flawed worksheets which are a poor substitute for practical work to help them to understand that humans experience the world through their senses. They can label the main external parts of plants and have learned that cress and sunflower seeds grow into plants. However, pupils do not record their observations of the changes that happen as the plant develops, and opportunities are missed to encourage the higher attainers to begin to investigate the conditions required for growth. Year 1 pupils can name some different light sources but there is no recorded evidence of them beginning to compare these or deciding whether or not shiny things generate light. Similarly, pupils can decide whether objects are made from metal, wood or plastic but need more opportunities to describe the properties of materials and to sort them according to their characteristics.
92. In Year 2, pupils have not recorded enough evidence of science work across the year. The higher attaining Year 2 pupils, in particular, do not increase their knowledge when completing worksheets to identify whether objects are made from metal, wood or plastic; and teachers miss opportunities to challenge these pupils to identify why some materials are particularly suitable for specific purposes. There is no evidence of pupils conducting simple experiments to discover how materials change when they are heated or cooled. Year 2 pupils have identified some creatures that live in the school grounds but have not extended their learning by investigating whether different creatures are found in different places. In a lesson observed during the inspection, Year 2 pupils consolidated their earlier learning about the effect of pollution on plant growth. However, they have not systematically observed and noted the detailed changes which occurred when they added different proportions of water and vinegar to the plant's roots.
93. In Year 3, pupils have made sound progress when learning about light and the formation of shadows. They know that light travels in straight lines and that shadows are formed when light from a source is blocked. Pupils understand why opaque, translucent and transparent objects cast shadows of different intensity, and make sound progress when conducting simple experiments to test their ideas. However, the more able pupils would benefit from making careful measurements to show how the position of the sun changes the length of shadows during the course of a day, and from drawing conclusions from their results. Year 3 pupils recognise that a force operates in a particular direction, and demonstrate satisfactory understanding when describing the direction of forces between magnets or between a spring and someone compressing it. They also make sound progress when conducting simple experiments to discover the best method to use for mopping up water; and have a satisfactory understanding of the principle of fair testing.
94. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in lessons across the school. In Year 3, this results in pupils making sound progress in their learning. In Years 1 and 2, the unsatisfactory progress made by pupils is mainly due to deficiencies in the curriculum which is taught, rather than from significant weaknesses in the teaching in individual lessons. Indeed, all lessons observed in Years 1 and 2 were satisfactory during the inspection. All teachers have sound subject knowledge and organise their lessons efficiently. In the most effective teaching observed, in Year 3, pupils benefited from the teacher's good questioning skills which probed their understanding and from the

ample opportunities she provided for them to discuss their ideas. All teachers ensure that pupils with special educational needs are supported well in their lessons. However, the needs of the higher attaining pupils are often insufficiently considered so they tend to coast through their science lessons. There is a lack of appropriate depth in the curriculum provided for pupils in Years 1 and 2. Too often, teachers only focus on the tasks identified at the beginning of units of work in the scheme for science, so that pupils have insufficient opportunities to extend their learning through more challenging tasks, particularly to develop their investigation skills. Across the school, more time needs to be allocated for science.

95. The subject leader has started to introduce strategies for assessing pupils' attainment and progress, but these have yet to become established. While teachers sometimes discuss science work during meetings of their year group teams, strategies for monitoring the subject, across the school, are underdeveloped. At present, the subject leader does not analyse teachers' planning, examine samples of work systematically to judge pupils' achievements across the school, or have a programme for observing science lessons. She appropriately accepts the need for science to have a higher profile in the school, and for improved strategies for monitoring and developing the subject. The school has sensibly identified science as an area for increased attention in the next academic year. Resources for science are sound.

ART AND DESIGN

96. Pupils achieve well in art and design, across the school, and standards are above national expectations in Years 2 and 3. The last inspection also found that standards were above average in the subject.
97. In Year 1, pupils draw expressive portraits of their friends, and achieve well when painting abstract pictures using a range of colours. They also make good progress when texturing their paintings by combing or pressing different surfaces onto the wet paint. In Year 2, pupils have used pastels, paint and felt-tipped pens to create vibrant impressions of parts of the school environment. They have looked carefully at the work of William Morris and have used their sketches of natural forms to inform their designs for simple string prints. Their printing blocks are well made and their finished prints, on paper and cotton, represent good achievement.
98. In Year 3, pupils have created a large three-dimensional paper sculpture, made from different shapes with interesting designs in a wide range of colours. This unusual work stemmed from well-focussed discussions about the work of the artist Frank Stella. Year 3 pupils have also looked at work by Barbara Hepworth and have achieved well when using clay to create their own sculptures which reflect elements of her work. During the inspection, Year 3 pupils achieved good standards when bending and fixing willow stems to make interesting sculptures. They carefully applied tissue paper to some parts of their willow framework, again reflecting the strong impact of their discussions about the sculptures of Barbara Hepworth.
99. The quality of teaching is good in art and design, across the school, and results in pupils progressing well. Teachers are enthusiastic about the subject, and this enthusiasm has a beneficial effect on pupils' attitudes. Their subject knowledge is good overall, and they are not afraid to encourage pupils to attempt innovative work, for example, to use long stems of willow to create unusual sculptures. Teachers enhance pupils' learning about art by taking them to the local gallery, and Year 3 pupils have clearly benefited from discussing the sculptures of Tony Cragg that they

saw on a recent visit. All teachers in Year 3 have provided examples of sculptures for their pupils to handle in their classrooms, and one has brought in sculptures he has made.

100. The enthusiastic subject leader ensures that art and design has a high profile in the school. There is an annual 'art week' which benefits pupils' learning, and examples of pupils' work are prominently displayed across the school, including in picture frames. Resources are well organised and are good. The school sensibly interprets and augments the scheme of work provided by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority so that pupils benefit from a rich range of worthwhile activities in art and design. Areas for development include the need to establish procedures for assessing pupils' standards and progress, and for the subject leader to develop more systematic procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning across the school. These improvements would help to raise pupils' standards further.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

101. No design and technology lessons were taught during the inspection, so it is not possible to judge the quality of teaching in the subject. However, examples of pupils' completed work were available for examination, and these show that standards are above average in Years 2 and 3, representing good achievement. When the school was last inspected, standards were in line with national expectations in Year 2 but were above average in Year 3.
102. In Year 1, pupils have made good progress when making moving pictures which incorporate simple sliding mechanisms, and have used paper fasteners to facilitate the movement of the cardboard limbs of people or jaws of animals. They have also learned about the need for hygiene when preparing food, and have combined a range of fruits to make an appetising salad. In Year 2, pupils have achieved well when using simple winding mechanisms to enable their cardboard 'Incy Wincy Spiders' to travel up their model drainpipes, and have designed and made simple vehicles using construction kits and recycled materials. They have made paper patterns before cutting felt to create glove puppets, and have carefully stitched the pieces together. Their finished puppets, which are embellished with pieces of fabric and sometimes with sequins, represent good achievement.
103. In Year 3, pupils have designed and made their own sandwiches, after considering the ingredients carefully. They have achieved good standards when using simple pneumatic systems to create moving monsters, made from card, paper and recycled materials. Their models are creatively designed and well made.
104. Teachers are making sound use of the scheme of work provided by the Curriculum and Assessment Authority to guide planning for design and technology. The subject leader has only recently taken on her role and has plans to increase her own knowledge in design and technology. There are no common assessment procedures for the subject, and it is not systematically monitored. Improvements in these areas would help to raise standards even further.

GEOGRAPHY

105. No lessons were observed during the inspection as timetabling arrangements meant that geography was not being taught. However, scrutiny of work and discussions with pupils indicate that all elements of the subject are covered, and that standards are in line with national expectations by the end of Years 2 and 3. The achievement of all

- pupils is satisfactory. When the school was last inspected, standards were judged to be above average in Years 2 and 3.
106. By the end of Year 2, pupils are developing their mapping skills when they draw routes around the locality. They are beginning to appreciate what a 'bird's eye view' means. There are good links with history when they study the seaside, and look at how places have changed over time. Pupils are aware of how the action of the sea makes beaches, and of the different types of recreational activities that people engage in. They are beginning to appreciate similarities and differences between areas when they compare the Isle of Struay with the local area of Canford Heath. Pupils in Year 3 explore the locality in more depth and investigate the way the land is used.
 107. As no lessons were observed, no firm judgements can be made on the quality of teaching. However, examination of pupils' work shows that opportunities are planned to enable pupils to develop key geographical skills. Sound planning follows the scheme of work, which ensures that all areas of the subject are covered, and that skills are progressively developed. However, all pupils complete the same activities, and there is no evidence that extra challenge is set for the most able pupils, to develop their skills further.
 108. The subject leader has only been in post for a year and her strategies for monitoring and evaluating provision are at a fairly early stage of development. She has met with colleagues from the middle school to discuss the topics being taught, to ensure that there is a continuous progression of skill development after pupils transfer, and that topics are not repeated. There are no formal assessment procedures, although teachers do informally assess pupils at the end of units of work. The scheme of work, which has been adapted to meet the needs of the school well, gives teachers good guidance to help with their planning. However, assessment procedures need to be more systematic. Although pupils use a variety of sources of evidence, including books, photographs and pictures, there is insufficient use of ICT to support the subject.

HISTORY

109. As a consequence of time tabling arrangements it was only possible to see three history lessons - one in each of Years 1, 2 and 3. However, there is sufficient additional evidence from displays around the school, from pupils' written work and from teachers' planning to show that pupils make generally good progress. By the age of seven and in Year 3, most pupils attain standards which are broadly average for their age, while the written work of the highest attaining pupils shows clear evidence of above average attainment in regard to the organisation and communication of historical information.
110. Through the various topics and periods studied, pupils develop a sound understanding of chronology. For example, in Year 1 they learn to differentiate between the recent and more distant past in relation to their own families, and they use family trees and time-lines to place events in chronological order. In studies of toys and of homes in the past, they focus on changes over time, noting, for example, the changes in the materials used in the manufacture of teddy-bears 'then' and 'now', and the significance of electricity in transforming the methods used to cook, clean and illuminate homes. In a well-planned approach to the study of the Great Fire of London, pupils in Year 2 use different sources of evidence to find out about the causes and consequences of the fire. Their lively 'diary' entries show clearly the influence of Samuel Pepys, and pupils of all abilities demonstrate the ability to empathise with various people caught up in the dramatic events - from the baker who

forgot to clean out his oven to the king who commanded that houses must be demolished to stop the fire from spreading. In a study of seaside holidays in the past, pupils in Year 2 begin to appreciate why things were different in the past. For example, they know that some changes reflect not so much technological advances but changes in social attitudes. For example, in Victorian days it was viewed as unseemly to reveal bare flesh when at the seaside, whereas relaxed attitudes to such things nowadays account for often scanty designs of modern beach-wear. In Year 3, pupils distinguish between the Anglo-Saxon, Roman and Viking periods of British history. They frame relevant questions to inform their research into Viking longships, show some understanding of differences between the different 'ranks' amongst Viking warriors, and appreciate the different viewpoints on events of the Viking warriors who revelled in looting the monasteries while the monks, trained to live peacefully, put up little resistance. During a visit to the Ancient Technology Centre at Cranborne, they learn first hand about life in an Anglo-Saxon village and try their hand at the ancient skills of making tiles and weaving. In drama led by a visiting specialist, they adopt and practise a different set of skills as Roman citizens who trade, engage in debate and barter for goods in the market square. As they move up through the school, pupils develop increasing understanding of the passage of time and of the relationship between different periods of history through the use of increasingly sophisticated time-lines. Their understanding of historical terms and of the significance of dates and particular events grows as they assimilate the language and information taught within each unit of study. They learn to ask and to answer historical questions, and most pupils are increasingly able to use enquiry skills independently to find things out using different kinds of resources. By the end of Year 2 and in Year 3, the higher attaining pupils communicate their findings clearly and well, both verbally and in writing. Lower attaining pupils, including some pupils with special educational needs, remain dependent on the support of adults to help them organise, record and communicate written responses.

111. The teaching of history is mainly good. Lessons have a very clear structure, and teachers use questioning well to help pupils recall, and build on, earlier work. The use of learning-maps and of thinking skills is particularly successful in enabling pupils of all abilities to appreciate key points related to particular studies and to plan any written work. Evidence from the lessons seen, from displays and from pupils' work, shows that teachers give appropriate emphasis to teaching relevant historical dates and language. A strength of provision is the use of visitors and of visits which bring history to life, and there are also good examples of activities where effective links between history, English and drama have resulted in work of a high standard. Nevertheless, evidence from pupils' books shows that there are some significant variations in the depth of studies pursued in different classes. Some of the work seen is superficial, and this means that progression in the acquisition of key skills cannot presently be guaranteed for all pupils. Overall, however, history makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There is evidence to show that teachers are making some use of ICT to support pupils' work in history, for example through the use of CD-ROMs, videos and the Internet, although there remains scope for further development in this area.
112. The subject leader is also a senior leader in the school and is therefore in a position to draw on the perceptions of other year group leaders about developments and concerns expressed by staff about teaching and learning in history. Further opportunities for monitoring provision in the subject arise when staff meetings are held in different classrooms where the class teacher talks to colleagues about the work on display. Though useful, such methods fall short of systematic monitoring and evaluation of teaching, learning and standards. They do not, in themselves, allow

the subject leader to gain a secure overview of history across the school as a whole, or to disseminate best practice. Effective use is made of existing resources, although the school would benefit from further reading materials for history that match the different reading levels of the pupils in each year group. Through their skilled questioning of pupils, teachers clearly assess what pupils learn during lessons and what they recall of their previous learning experiences. However, there are no more formal assessment procedures in place, and assessment does not yet sufficiently inform teachers' planning. This is an area that the subject leader is keen to develop, and it rightly forms a key part of the action plan already drawn up for the next academic year.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

113. Evidence from lesson observations, pupils' work and discussion with pupils, show that overall standards are in line with national expectations in Years 2 and 3. At the time of the last inspection, standards were judged to be above the national expectations. These lower standards may be explained by changes to the overall curriculum, with subsequent loss of time allocations to ICT since the last inspection, which may have affected standards over time. There are also weaknesses in the scheme of work, especially in linking with other subjects. The school has concentrated on improving pupils' computer skills but has given insufficient emphasis to the use of ICT across the curriculum. As a result, pupils have too few opportunities to apply their developing knowledge effectively and gain greater ICT skills in a practical and meaningful context. Basic skills such as saving and printing work are good and overall pupils operate computers with confidence.
114. Year 3 pupils have developed the skills to produce folder covers using clip art and different fonts and effects. They are also learning how to send and receive e-mails between classes. There is some evidence of pupils using downloaded images to supplement their writing in a history topic on the Celts. In Year 2, pupils are able to produce booklets on tigers using word processing within frames to simulate professional information sheets. These pupils can produce a repeated pattern, drawing, filling with colour, and copying shapes. A few pupils show high achievement in developing their patterns by enlarging and flipping the shape to change the sequences. With help, Year 1 pupils can enter data on a database and produce a graph of results of a survey on eye and hair colour. They have used paint programs to good effect, have shown their skill in dragging and dropping shapes to make a picture and adding text to write the caption. A Computer Club gives pupils the opportunity to extend their knowledge and have fun working with partners, changing fonts and colour in their writing. In general, word-processing skills are underdeveloped in the school, and pupils need more opportunities to practise their skills on a regular basis.
115. Insufficient lessons were seen to make an overall judgement about the quality of teaching in ICT. In the few lessons which were seen, the quality of teaching was good with some very good features. In these lessons, teachers made very good use of the recently installed Smart Board to demonstrate new techniques themselves and involved pupils in showing what they can do. The school has upgraded the provision in the 'Hitech' computer and library facility and this is having a direct effect on the quality of teaching and learning. This room enables pupils to have access to high quality networked machines in an environment which encourages staff and pupils to make the most of their time in the room. Teachers are confident and have good subject knowledge and this means that expectations of pupils are high and lessons progress at a prompt pace. Teachers give clear explanations and make good use of

times of reflection for pupils to discuss what they need to do next or to review learning. Pupils enjoy ICT lessons and concentrate well. They work well together, are supportive and helpful to one another. This means they make rapid progress in these lessons. However, the time for each class in this room is limited and teachers need to make better use of the classroom-based computers to help pupils practise and apply their skills during other lessons. The best lessons make sure that the most able pupils are given open-ended tasks to extend them. Teachers, the IT technician and support staff spend time with individual pupils, talking them through problems as they arise and this enables all pupils to make gains in learning, including those with special educational needs.

116. Resources for the subject are very good and include digital cameras and software, which is continually being updated. The co-ordinator is currently matching software to the needs of the curriculum. All elements of the National Curriculum are in place, although there are some inconsistencies in the way it is planned in different year groups and there is scope to improve the scheme of work for the subject. The co-ordinator is developing her role but has few opportunities to monitor the subject in action or to gain an overview of standards. She is aware, however, that assessment in the subject is inadequate as teachers record progress of pupils in different ways and this hampers the continuous development of skills throughout the school. She has written a new assessment record but it has yet to be introduced and may prove to be over-complex.

MUSIC

117. Only two lessons were seen in music, and these were in musical appreciation linked to an art activity. This means it is not possible to make overall judgements on standards on the quality of teaching and learning in the subject. However, there were a number of occasions when pupils demonstrated their skills in singing. Standards are excellent, and pupils respond to the motivating leadership of the headteacher and deputy headteacher to sing with gusto during assemblies and singing practice. They know a good range of songs and hymns, and show how they can vary the pace and mood of their singing. These sessions contribute to the sense of community in the school and give pupils an opportunity to excel with joyous singing. Pupils also have opportunities to learn the guitar and violin as extra- curricular activities.
118. Resources are good for the subject and the music studio is a good space for making music. As a newly qualified teacher, the subject leader has yet to take over full responsibility for the subject. However, she is enthusiastic and has plans to improve music teaching. She is aware that some staff lack confidence in the subject and proposes to introduce a new scheme of work to support their planning and teaching.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

119. No lessons were seen in Year 2 during the inspection, so no judgements can be made about the standards that pupils attain at the end of that year. No gymnastics lessons were seen. However, in a single games lesson seen in Year 1, pupils demonstrated satisfactory standards for their ages. Pupils are developing their throwing and catching skills, and are beginning to aim accurately when throwing a beanbag through a hoop. By the end of Year 3, standards in dance and games skills are in line with national expectations. Overall, pupils' achievement is satisfactory, but when teaching is very good pupils make good progress. All pupils are included in all lessons and pupils with special educational needs are supported well. There is no significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls, but in one

unsatisfactory lesson, where pupils were not well managed, the boys were allowed to be very dominant.

120. Insufficient lessons were observed across Years 1 and 2 to make a secure overall judgement about the quality of teaching. In Year 3, the teaching ranged from unsatisfactory to very good, and was satisfactory overall. In the most successful lesson there was a very good balance between teacher talk, and opportunities for pupils to explore their own ideas and practise their movements. Creativity and independence were enhanced as pupils collaborated well to use their own imaginative movements to create a dance in a traditional style, and not a moment was wasted. Pupils were encouraged to look critically at the performance of their peers, and suggest how movements could be improved. In this lesson, Year 3 pupils attained good standards as a result of the pupils' excellent attitudes and behaviour, and the teacher's high expectations and continuous reinforcement of teaching points to enhance pupils' performance. In an unsatisfactory lesson, Year 3 pupils were not well managed, and too much time was spent in explaining tasks. The pupils demonstrated negative attitudes and could not work co-operatively. As a result, there was minimal learning.
121. The subject leader is enthusiastic and has good knowledge in physical education. She has no clear overview of standards as there are no coherent assessment procedures and she has had no opportunities to monitor teaching and learning. Resources are satisfactory, but the school has no grassed playing areas, which adversely affects opportunities to develop more advanced games skills. The field belonging to the neighbouring middle school is used for the annual sports day, when all pupils compete in teams, ensuring very good inclusion of all. The subject is enriched by extra-curricular opportunities, and these enhance the skills of pupils who attend.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

122. Standards in Years 2 and 3 are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus, and reflect the situation when the school was last inspected. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a sound understanding of Christianity and Judaism. They know that prayer is an important feature of religious practice, and that this is the time when Christians talk to God. They recognise the most important festivals, such as Easter and Christmas, and know the significance of them. They learn about Jewish festivals, such as Sukkot, and compare them with the Christian celebration of harvest. By Year 3, pupils begin to study Sikhism and know the importance of special symbols, such as the '5Ks'. They discuss Christian characteristics, such as honesty, courage, love and forgiveness. They appreciate that parables are stories that Jesus told to give us guidance on how to live our lives. Throughout the school, all pupils achieve well in relation to their starting points.
123. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers plan interesting activities that motivate pupils to want to learn. Good use is made of exciting resources, such as using a Jewish visitor who told pupils about a Jewish wedding, and using Superman to make pupils think about the characteristics they would expect of their super-hero. Relationships are good and lessons proceed at a brisk pace. This results in pupils having positive attitudes, concentrating well, and asking pertinent questions, which demonstrate that they are thinking clearly about their learning. In one particularly memorable lesson, when the pupils were learning about the importance of stillness and prayer, opportunities for spiritual development were very good. A spiritual atmosphere was created by the use of a candle and the teacher using a very hushed

voice. Pupils were very aware of the safety precautions needed for a lighted candle and kept very still, thus enhancing the atmosphere. Religious education lessons have a very positive impact on the personal development of pupils, as they learn to respect the beliefs and feelings of others. Speaking and listening skills are developed well through discussion and posing questions. For example, pupils in Year 2 use probing questions to find out more about a Jewish wedding, while Year 3 pupils discuss how the prodigal son and his family felt on his return. There are opportunities given for pupils to improve their writing skills through factual and descriptive writing. For example, in Year 1, pupils effectively write about their thoughts when composing prayers and, in Year 3, pupils use precise vocabulary when describing character traits. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported to ensure they complete the task, but there is no extra challenge given to higher attaining pupils to enhance their skills further.

124. The subject leader is very new and has had no time to have any impact on the subject. She has had no opportunities to monitor teaching or learning, so does not have a clear overview of standards in the subject. However, she has a sensible action plan for future development. There are no assessment procedures in place, so it is difficult for teachers to ascertain if pupils are working at an appropriate level. There is insufficient use of ICT to support the subject, although teachers do use a range of videos.