

INSPECTION REPORT

ST MARY'S PRIMARY SCHOOL

Bridport

LEA area: Dorset

Unique reference number: 113757

Headteacher: Ms Pauline Price

Reporting inspector: Brian McCutcheon
2420

Dates of inspection: 17 – 20 March 2003

Inspection number: 247402

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior
School category: Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils: 4 - 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Skilling Hill Road
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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Rev T Stubbs

Date of previous inspection: November 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2420	Brian McCutcheon	Registered inspector	Mathematics Geography Foundation Stage Equal opportunities	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		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
2414	David Westall	Team inspector	Science Art and design Music	How well does the school care for its pupils?
3856	Sandy Wellsted	Team inspector	English Special educational needs English as an additional language Religious education	
27055	Creighton Muirhead	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Design and technology	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
24019	Ken Parry	Team inspector	History Physical education	How good are curriculum and other opportunities?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

There are 290 pupils on roll, aged from four to 11 years. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average, while the proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs is a little above average. Five pupils have Statements of Special Educational Need, and there are three pupils who speak English as an additional language. On entry to the school, children's standards are mainly below, and in some year groups well below, average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an improving school, which is beginning to benefit from the good leadership and management skills of the headteacher, who took up her post in September 2001. The teaching enables pupils to make satisfactory progress, overall, in English, mathematics and science from their low starting points on entry to the school; and children in the reception class benefit from particularly effective teaching. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported, and good provision is made for pupils' personal development. There are weaknesses that include pupils' achievements in art and design and geography in Year 6, the roles of co-ordinators and some aspects of strategic planning. On balance, however, the school's strengths and sound achievements outweigh its weaknesses, and it provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The leadership and management skills of the headteacher are good and she provides the school with a clear sense of direction.
- The school provides well for pupils with special educational needs.
- Most pupils have positive attitudes to learning and relationships are good.
- Children in the reception class benefit from particularly effective teaching.
- The school makes good provision for pupils' moral, social and cultural development.
- The school is a caring community where pupils' welfare is a high priority.
- A very good range of extra-curricular activities enriches the curriculum.

What could be improved

- Standards are too low in art and design and in geography in Year 6.
- Most co-ordinators need a clearer view of the strengths and weaknesses in their subjects in order to target areas for improvement.
- The school development plan covers only one year and governors have a limited involvement in its formulation and evaluation.
- Statutory requirements regarding the information to be provided in the school brochure are not met.

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 broadly satisfactory progress since the last inspection during an unsettled period involving changes in leadership and management and a fall in the number of pupils on roll. Standards in English, mathematics and science are below those reported in 1997 but, following a low point in 2001, are now beginning to rise. Standards in Information and communication technology (ICT) and design and technology are now in line with those expected, where they were previously unsatisfactory. Improvements have also been made to schemes of work and to assessment and recording procedures. However, the progressive

development of pupils' key skills is not yet secure in art and design, music or geography, and higher attaining pupils are not always sufficiently challenged in some subjects. Arrangements for staff development are better than in 1997, and teachers' subject knowledge is at least satisfactory in all areas except art and design and music. The quality of the school development plan has been improved since the last inspection and it now has clearly defined and manageable priorities. However, in order for it to be an effective tool for improvement, the plan needs to cover a longer period and governors should be more actively involved in its formulation and evaluation.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			Similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	D	D	D	D
mathematics	D	D	D	D
science	B	E	E	D

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

The table shows that the results of the 2002 Year 6 statutory tests in English and mathematics were below the national average and the average results of similar schools. In science, the 2002 results were also below those of similar schools and were well below the national average. However, the percentages of pupils achieving the expected levels in these subjects increased in 2002 and there is evidence that this improvement has been sustained. Inspection findings show that current overall standards in Year 6 are below national expectations in English, mathematics and science, but represent satisfactory achievement given children's low standards on entry to the school. Standards are average in ICT, design and technology, history, physical education and religious education. However, pupils underachieve in art and design and geography in Year 6 and standards are too low in these subjects. In music, there was insufficient evidence to judge pupils' standards. Their performance in singing is satisfactory for their ages but variability in teachers' expertise and pupils' progress shows clear scope for improvement.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and most are keen to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils form constructive relationships with adults and with each other, and they work together amicably on shared tasks.
Attendance	Satisfactory.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

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 three of the lessons observed, and was good, and sometimes very good, in almost six out of every ten lessons. Teaching in the reception class is a strength of the school. Teachers have high expectations, plan well and quickly establish good work habits. As a result, children make a good start at the school and develop positive attitudes to learning. In English, most of the teaching observed was good or better, and in mathematics and science it was mainly satisfactory with some evidence of good teaching.

Across the school, lessons are characterised by good relationships between teachers and pupils. Overall, the teaching enables most pupils, including those with special educational needs, to make mainly sound progress in their learning in Years 1 to 6. However, in some lessons, higher attaining pupils are insufficiently challenged and they mark time as a result. In the lessons seen, the quality of teaching in physical education and history was good overall, while in ICT and religious education teaching is mainly satisfactory. Insufficient lessons were observed to make a secure judgement about the quality of teaching in other subjects. However, although evidence shows that the teaching enables pupils to make sound overall progress in design and technology, their progress is more variable in music and sometimes unsatisfactory in art and design and geography.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Children in the reception class benefit from a good range of well planned opportunities to develop their learning. The curriculum for pupils in Years 1 to 6 is satisfactory, overall, and meets statutory requirements. However, continuity in pupils' learning is not fully secured in art and design, music and geography. The school recognises the need to maintain a balanced curriculum following the recent emphasis given to English and mathematics.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The school provides well for these pupils.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Sound.
Provision for pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good provision is made for pupils' moral, social and cultural development. Provision for their spiritual development is sound.

How well the school cares for its pupils	The school is a caring community where pupils' welfare is a high priority.
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HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher, who is currently on maternity leave, has good leadership and management skills and has provided the school with a clear sense of direction since her appointment in 2001. The school has been very well led in her absence by an advisory headteacher. He has worked closely and effectively with the recently appointed deputy headteacher, who has made a sound start.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The school benefits from a committed governing body which provides sound support. Statutory requirements are met, apart from those relating to the information presented in the school brochure. Governors recognise that they now need to support strategic management by having a greater involvement in the formulation and evaluation of the school development plan. The plan itself is limited to the current school year and this restricts its effectiveness as a valuable planning tool.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The headteacher, governors and co-ordinators for English, mathematics and science analyse statutory test results carefully. The headteacher and deputy headteacher also observe lessons and provide teachers with valuable feedback which benefits their professional development. Most co-ordinators are new to the role and strategies for monitoring subjects are not well developed. Consequently, they are not in strong positions to identify strengths and weaknesses, or to target areas for improvement with sufficient accuracy.
The strategic use of resources	Overall, the school is making satisfactory use of its annual budget allocation. The governors have been monitoring the trend of falling rolls and, as well as actively investigating ways of reversing this, have appropriately planned to reduce expenditure accordingly. However, they are now having to consider even larger savings because evidence suggests that the extent of the current budget shortfall could not have been envisaged at an earlier stage.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
Most parents believe that: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• children are happy at school;• teaching is good and children make good progress;• the school has high expectations of its pupils;• the staff are easy to talk to.	Some parents would like: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• better information about their children's progress;• better communication from the school;• homework to be set more consistently.

Inspection findings are a little less favourable than parents' views about teaching and pupils' progress, and show that both are satisfactory overall. Otherwise, the inspection supports parents' positive views. Parents have the usual range of opportunities to discuss their children's progress throughout the year and annual reports give sound indications of attainment and progress. Communication with parents was found to be sound, particularly bearing in mind the recent lack of continuity in leadership and management. Homework is satisfactory but there is scope to ensure more consistent practice across the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. On entry to the school, children's overall standards are low. They make good progress in their learning in the reception class, as a result of effective teaching. By the end of the reception year, the majority achieve the expected standard in creative development, and their knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development are close to the levels expected. Children acquire a firm foundation of literacy and numeracy skills in the reception class but, overall, standards in these aspects of their learning are below average when they enter Year 1.
2. The results of the statutory assessment tests (SATs) for pupils in Year 2, in 2002, were in line with the national average in mathematics, below average in reading and well below the standard expected in writing. These results represent an improvement on those achieved in 2001, particularly in mathematics. The percentages of pupils reaching the expected level increased from 49 per cent to 78 per cent in reading, from 55 per cent to 74 per cent in writing and from 72 per cent to 84 per cent in mathematics.
3. In Year 6, in 2002, the SATs results were below the national average in English and mathematics and well below the standard expected in science. In relation to the average results of similar schools, the school's results were below average in all three subjects. Standards have fallen since the 1997 inspection. However, in terms of pupils' progress in relation to their prior attainment at the end of Year 2, the school's results were in line with those of similar schools for English and mathematics. These results also represent an improvement on those achieved in 2001, since the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in Year 6 rose from 61 per cent to 66 per cent in English, from 52 per cent to 62 per cent in mathematics, and from 65 per cent to 75 per cent in science.
4. In English and mathematics, inspection findings show that pupils make mainly satisfactory, and sometimes good, progress from their low starting points in Year 1, while, in science, progress is generally sound. Although overall standards are below average in Years 2 and 6 in all three subjects, they represent sound achievement and reflect the satisfactory or better teaching pupils generally receive in these subjects. Many pupils find it difficult to apply what they have been taught and to perform in tests. However, all available evidence suggests that the upward trend in standards, which was established last year, is continuing. Overall, there is no significant difference in the levels of attainment of boys and girls.
5. By the age of seven, higher attaining pupils have well-developed reading preferences, enjoy reading and talk confidently about both fiction and non-fiction. They read aloud fluently and expressively, have a secure grasp of phonics and can recall and talk about the plot in the stories they read. Their ability to use inference is developing well, and they also know how to use information books. These pupils then effectively apply the skills and the knowledge they have acquired through their reading to their own writing. They learn to match the structure, style and vocabulary of their writing to its intended purpose. Although pupils of average and lower ability have been well versed in phonics, and are able to apply other reading strategies, their general vocabulary is weak. These pupils read aloud accurately but rarely with fluency or expression, and

- many find inference difficult. Their powers of expression, evidenced in spoken and written language, are also weak.
6. By the age of 11, most higher attaining pupils are articulate, and read widely from a range of fiction. They can identify the characteristic features of many kinds of writing, and have a good understanding of ways in which writers create effects. Pupils construct well-structured sentences, spell accurately and achieve overall coherence in pieces of extended writing. Average and lower attaining pupils are able to read and understand the main points in different kinds of texts; and demonstrate a sound understanding of the structure and characteristic features of different kinds of writing. However, they struggle with the meaning of unfamiliar words and the hidden meanings in texts. In their writing, these pupils use some characteristic features of the type of writing they are aiming to produce. However, a significant number find it difficult to organise their thoughts and words logically and to construct simple sentences. Spelling and punctuation are common weaknesses and many pupils are confused about punctuation. Most speak up confidently when discussing their learning but are not always sure when to use spoken Standard English.
 7. From Year 2 onwards, the handwriting of many pupils is not as neat as it should be, and some older pupils do not use joined-up handwriting as a matter of course. In some classes, pupils take too little care with the presentation of their written work.
 8. In mathematics, pupils in Years 1 and 2 steadily develop key numeracy skills. They acquire a growing knowledge of place value and are learning to employ the correct number operations when making calculations. Most have a basic understanding of length, weight and capacity and know the names, and some of the properties, of a range of common two and three-dimensional shapes. Few pupils exceed the expected level for their age as they are not sufficiently skilled at using and applying their mathematical knowledge, and find it difficult to explain their thinking. By Year 6, most pupils have built steadily on their knowledge and understanding of the number system and of measures, shape and space. Progress in handling data is broadly satisfactory but slower and pupils need more opportunities to collect and process data. A significant number of older pupils, in common with those in Year 2, find it difficult to offer methods and solutions for discussion and this limits their progress and the acquisition of new vocabulary. Higher attaining pupils occasionally mark time in lessons and are not always sufficiently challenged in the introductory sessions.
 9. In science, pupils make generally sound progress across the school. However, inspection findings show that pupils' skills in presenting their work are variable, particularly in the older half of the school, and inconsistencies in the work of average, and particularly of the higher attaining, pupils need to be addressed. In addition, the work set for more able pupils sometimes fails to challenge them sufficiently, and they have few opportunities to devise and conduct their own simple experiments to test their hypotheses.
 10. In ICT, design and technology, history and physical education, standards in Years 2 and 6 are average, while in religious education the standards achieved by these pupils broadly meet the expectations set out in the locally agreed syllabus. Since the last inspection, standards have improved in ICT and design and technology and have been maintained in history. In 1997, standards in physical education in Year 2 were in line with those expected, while those in Year 6 were judged to be above average. In art and design, pupils make sound progress in Years 1 and 2 and standards are broadly average. A similar judgement was made in the last report. In Years 3 to 6, pupils' progress is more variable, ranging from good to unsatisfactory, and standards are below average in Year 6. In 1997, these were seen to be in line with those

expected. In geography, standards are also below average in Year 6 but meet expectations in Year 2. In both subjects, weaknesses in planning mean that the progressive development of key skills is not secure. Insufficient evidence was available to make an overall judgement about pupils' standards in music. When the school was last inspected, standards were below average in Years 2 and 6. Pupils' singing in assemblies and hymn practices shows that their performance is satisfactory for their ages, and that a strong feature of whole school singing is pupils' positive attitudes. There are, however, indications of variability in teachers' expertise and pupils' progress which show clear scope for improvement.

11. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in the reception class and generally sound progress over time throughout Years 1 to 6. Many pupils who have learning difficulties also have associated emotional and behavioural needs. In spite of the best efforts of staff, some of these pupils are not always able to sustain best progress or to build systematically upon previous learning. As a result, there are fluctuations in their attainment and progress both in regard to work related to the National Curriculum, and also to targets identified in their individual education plans. Several pupils with special educational needs associated with speech and language are supported well by staff in school and make generally satisfactory progress. However, both the pupils and the staff who work with them would clearly benefit from specialist help should this become available. Three pupils for whom English is an additional language are making mainly sound, and sometimes good, progress in their learning.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12. The vast majority of pupils are happy at school. They enjoy playing with their friends and many participate enthusiastically in extra-curricular activities. They settle to the tasks set them and many respond eagerly when asked questions. Pupils seldom have to be reminded of their classroom rules and nearly all have acquired the discipline of not calling out answers, but waiting to be asked. They work sensibly in small groups without direct adult supervision and are prepared to attempt new tasks, particularly practical activities, with confidence and perseverance. They are happy to support each other and they share resources fairly, for example, in the ICT suite, where carefully selected pairs are chosen so that the higher attaining pupils can help those with less ability. Pupils generally take pride in their work but standards of presentation vary according to the expectations promoted by teachers. In a small minority of lessons, usually involving older pupils and where the tasks set are not well matched to the range of abilities, some pupils find it difficult to sustain their concentration.
13. Behaviour around the school and in the vast majority of lessons is satisfactory. Most pupils are polite and move around the school in an orderly fashion. They readily welcome visitors and show respect to each other and to adults such as lunchtime supervisors. Pupils behave particularly well when walking to, and participating in, swimming lessons. They are helpful in classes, distributing books and making space for each other when sitting to listen to their teachers. Lunchtime is a social and pleasant occasion; and pupils enjoy using the variety of outdoor apparatus at playtimes. They form orderly queues to ensure that everyone has a fair turn. Pupils welcome the new behaviour programme, which is perceived to be fair, and believe that it is having a positive impact in the school. However, the number of fixed term exclusions resulting from implementation of the system has increased this term, and a minority of the oldest pupils show occasional signs of disaffection. Although no incidents of aggressive or oppressive behaviour were observed, older pupils suggest

that such incidents do occasionally happen and that the present culture is not to disclose this to staff. However, younger pupils, who have a separate playground do not share these views.

14. Relationships in the school are good. Pupils care about each other and one of the first suggestions from the School Council was to allow more mixing between playgrounds at lunchtimes so that siblings, and those who wished to play with younger pupils, could be together. In lessons, pupils are generous with their appreciation of others' efforts, sometimes spontaneously applauding presentations from pupils who have achieved particularly well for their ability. They are sensitive to, and accepting of, pupils who find consistent levels of good behaviour harder to sustain. When given the opportunity, pupils are always willing to undertake tasks such as putting out chairs or delivering registers, and undertake them conscientiously. However, the oldest pupils feel that there is scope to increase the range of responsibilities that they are asked to undertake, thus valuing their maturity and making them feel special. The introduction of the School Council is popular with pupils, and early indications show sensible and worthwhile suggestions for improving the school.
15. Levels of attendance at the school are in line with the national average and are satisfactory. However, there is a relatively high rate of unauthorised absence. Much of this is related to the late arrival of pupils travelling by bus, thereby missing registration. Otherwise, punctuality is reasonably good and is encouraged by the opportunity to come into school well before the register is taken. Registers are correctly completed and sessions start promptly throughout the day.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

16. The quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in all but three of the lessons observed during the inspection, and was good, and sometimes very good, in almost six out of every ten lessons. The most effective teaching is in the reception class where eight out of ten lessons were good. A similar overall judgement about the quality of teaching was made when the school was last inspected in 1997.
17. Teaching in the reception class is good, overall. The Early Years co-ordinator has a very good understanding of the needs of young children. She is well supported by a colleague who is new to this age group and they have quickly established an effective working relationship. Good planning is based on national guidance for children under five, and there are ample opportunities for children to take part in practical and purposeful activities. Teachers have high expectations of learning and behaviour and, as a result, good habits are quickly established. Regular opportunities are appropriately provided for the development of key literacy skills, and basic mathematical ideas are successfully promoted through well-focused direct teaching and the provision of a wide range of carefully planned practical activities. Teachers successfully foster children's curiosity and the confidence they need to explore, and all adults work skillfully alongside the children to help develop their language skills and imaginative ideas. As a result of the effective teaching they receive, children develop positive attitudes to school and make good progress in all aspects of their learning.
18. In English, most of the teaching observed was good or better. All teachers are conscientious and hard working, have a good understanding of subject requirements and plan their lessons carefully. They appropriately inform pupils, at the outset, what they are intended to learn, and activities build constructively on earlier work. Useful resources such as writing planners and word banks are used effectively, and pupils are routinely encouraged to use self-checking strategies. Very occasionally, teachers

need to spend a little time managing the behavior of a few pupils, but, overall, lessons are conducted at an appropriately challenging pace. Where there are weaknesses, these are associated with expectations which are in some respects too low. Priority is sometimes given wholly to the achievement of the specific learning objectives while other persistent weaknesses in pupils' performance, such as poor handwriting and presentation, are overlooked.

19. In mathematics, one very good lesson was observed in Year 2 but otherwise the teaching is mainly satisfactory, and sometimes good, across the school. Learning objectives are clearly defined, resources are well prepared and appropriate, and instructions and teaching points are clearly explained. Satisfactory use is made of assessment to inform teachers' planning and the work set is generally well matched to pupils' needs. Teaching assistants are carefully briefed and provide sound, or better, support particularly for pupils with special educational needs. The most effective teaching is characterised by good management of pupils, skilful questioning, a good pace and the interactive involvement of pupils throughout the lesson. In some lessons, the introductory session fails to challenge higher attaining pupils and they occasionally mark time during group work.
20. Overall, the quality of teaching in science is satisfactory and there is some evidence of good teaching. Teachers' subject knowledge is secure and they make sensible use of national guidance. Lessons are carefully planned and are organised efficiently. In the most effective practice, teachers ensure that appropriate scientific vocabulary is introduced and reinforced, use skilful questioning, and enable pupils to evaluate their achievements at the end of lessons. However, teachers sometimes need to encourage pupils to develop their answers more fully and to make more use of the scientific language which is introduced. They do not always have sufficiently high expectations of higher attaining pupils who would benefit from more opportunities to use their initiative in science lessons.
21. Since the last inspection, the school has made very good progress in updating its ICT resources and, overall, the teaching is now satisfactory across the school. Teachers demonstrate sound subject knowledge and are confident in the use of computers, and some good, and occasionally very good, teaching was observed. Teachers would now benefit from a greater knowledge of available software and online resources. In Year 6, some more able pupils underachieve in ICT because they are insufficiently challenged. In the lessons seen, the quality of teaching in history was good. Teachers have done well to maintain the standards which pupils' achieve; and some enthuse their pupils through their own interest and knowledge of history. Swimming is very well taught at the nearby leisure centre and the quality of teaching and learning in physical education is good overall. Most physical education lessons are well structured but there is scope to increase the opportunities which pupils are given to evaluate their own and others' performances. The teaching of religious education is mainly sound, although the lessons seen in one Year 1 class and in the Year 5/6 class were taught very well indeed.
22. Due to timetabling arrangements, insufficient lessons were observed in art and design, design and technology, geography and music to make an overall judgement about the quality of teaching in these subjects. However, evidence shows that the teaching enables pupils to make sound overall progress in design and technology across the school, and in art and design, and geography in Years 1 and 2. Progress in art and design, and geography is spasmodic in Years 3 to 6 and results in below average standards in Year 6. This is mainly the result of weaknesses in planning which mean that the progressive development of pupils' key skills is not secure. The

school responded to criticisms about music in the last report by employing visiting music specialists and this has helped to enhance the level of informed teaching for the pupils. However, little specific training has been provided for permanent school staff and teachers have not always been expected to observe the work of specialist musicians. Weaknesses in assessment in this subject, identified by the last inspection, have yet to be fully rectified and the absence of the co-ordinator, through illness, means that procedures for monitoring and developing the subject are not securely established.

23. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is most effective in literacy and numeracy sessions when teachers and pupils alike benefit from additional adult support within the classroom. In these lessons, tasks are tailored appropriately to pupils' needs, and staff are skilled at ensuring that pupils receive the support and encouragement they need to tackle new learning. Some pupils with special educational needs are withdrawn during part of the literacy hour to work in small groups with a support teacher or with trained teaching assistants, for example on special reading intervention programmes which have a significant impact on their attainment and progress. Pupils with emotional and behavioural needs benefit from useful sessions of individual support offered by the special educational needs co-ordinator. Evidence shows that pupils find these sessions particularly useful in learning to manage their behaviour.

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

24. At the time of the last inspection significant weaknesses were identified in ICT, design and technology, geography and music. These meant that the requirements of the National Curriculum were not being met. Since then, the curriculum has been considerably strengthened. Provision for ICT has been significantly improved with the creation of a well-resourced computer suite that enables whole class teaching of computer skills. As a consequence, standards have risen, as they have in design and technology, and pupils' achievements are now satisfactory in both subjects. However, weaknesses in music across the school, and in geography in Years 3 to 6, have yet to be fully resolved.
25. The school now provides a broad curriculum that is relevant to pupils' needs and meets all statutory requirements. In the reception class, national guidelines are being fully and successfully implemented. This ensures that these young children are provided with a wide range of learning experiences that enable them to make good progress in developing their basic and personal skills. In Years 1 to 6, the curriculum includes all the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. The new Dorset Agreed Syllabus for religious education has been adopted although it is not yet being followed consistently by all teachers.
26. The recent, very necessary, emphasis on English and mathematics has been based on the national strategies for literacy and numeracy. These are being used satisfactorily by all teachers, leading to an improvement in the quality of teaching and learning. As a result, standards are beginning to rise in these subjects. However, the school recognises the need to re-focus attention on the rest of the curriculum in order to ensure a more balanced approach. There are some particular concerns in art and design, music and geography where there is a need to improve the systematic development of key skills.

27. Subject policies have been reviewed and updated and planning frameworks are being put in place to provide teachers with clear advice on what is to be taught each year. Good examples of co-operative planning by teachers are to be seen in most subjects and this ensures that all pupils in the age group have similar learning experiences. This is supported well by the clear planning format that has been devised to provide a useful overview of each unit of study.
28. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum and to after-school activities but a few, who have additional support, are occasionally missing other subjects such as physical education. This arrangement should be carefully monitored to ensure that all pupils receive their full entitlement. The school welcomes pupils from the nearby special school and works closely with their teachers in providing a wider range of social interactions for them. This spirit of inclusion is to be commended and is mutually beneficial to all involved.
29. The arrangements for pupils' personal, social and health education are satisfactory. Currently, they include the use of classroom sessions such as circle time which provide opportunities for teachers and pupils to explore values, attitudes and beliefs and to resolve areas of conflict. The programme also covers drugs misuse and sex education. The recently appointed co-ordinator now intends to develop a more structured whole school approach and to extend it to include the promotion of healthy eating and exercise.
30. Teachers are to be commended for organising and running a very good range of extra-curricular activities to enhance and enrich the curriculum. These include a wide variety of music and sporting activities, dance, art and drama and others less frequently encountered such as sign language and recycling. An interesting programme of educational visits and visitors to the school is organised to support pupils' learning in all classes. Good advantage is taken of the school's location to enliven pupils' work in geography and history, for example, through an annual residential visit to France by older pupils.
31. Good links exist with the community and the school sees the local area as a valuable resource for learning. Throughout the school, pupils work alongside local artists in an annual 'Arts Week', and there are strong and supportive links with St Mary's Church. Each year group is also linked with other local churches. While all of these activities are carefully planned to support and extend pupils' classroom experiences, they are also significant factors in promoting their personal development. They provide clear evidence of the school's commitment to provide a broad and stimulating curriculum.
32. The school has beneficial links with partner institutions. These include pre-school groups and the local secondary school. They help to ensure smooth entry into reception and transfer at the end of Year 6. The local cluster group of primary schools is a useful forum for teachers to share and exchange ideas. It also provides opportunities for pupils to compete against others from neighbouring schools; and to take part in events such as the music festival.
33. Within the scope of its own resources, the school makes good provision for all pupils identified as having special educational needs. Indeed, the school has invested heavily from its own budget in order to ensure that staffing is adequate to support them appropriately. In addition, where relevant and available, help and advice are also sought from outside agencies and specialists. All pupils with special educational needs are valued members of the school community. Teachers and support staff work hard to ensure that they are able to participate in the full range of activities provided, and also that their many achievements are recognised. For example, pupils

with special educational needs are prompted to take part in discussions and to share their work with their peers. Pupils' many other accomplishments are also recognised, for example, when they receive commendations and certificates during 'achievement' assemblies. Where appropriate, pupils with special educational needs receive specific work and support matched to their individual learning needs, for example, in the form of reading intervention programmes or individual consultations designed to help some pupils manage their behaviour.

34. The school makes good provision for pupils' moral, social and cultural development and satisfactory provision for spiritual development. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection when all four areas were judged to be satisfactory.
35. The good relationships within the school provide a sound basis for pupils' spiritual development. The school is an effective community and the sense of belonging is apparent in assemblies, in lessons and in other activities. Assemblies provide a regular opportunity for pupils to reflect on spiritual matters and consider their place in the world. For example, they are invited to give thought to the plight of those in other countries that are less fortunate than themselves and how they can be helped. The importance of faith in their lives and that of others is also considered. Hymns are well chosen, particularly for the youngest pupils, and these are sung with enthusiasm led by staff who provide good role models for the pupils. During times of quiet reflection, which are an important part of collective worship, a candle is used effectively to create a focus and a sense of reverence. Local clergy regularly lead assemblies and, during the inspection, members of a local faith community led a very good assembly.
36. St Mary's Church supports much of the school's work and runs after-school clubs for the pupils. A symbolic cross and candle are in place in the school's entrance hall as well as a box for pupils' prayer requests. Religious education lessons provide an opportunity for pupils to consider and develop their sense of spirituality. For example, Year 6 pupils are able to reflect and comment on occasions when they have needed to show inner strength, following good teaching that considered personal examples from the teacher and events from the Old Testament. Sometimes, however, opportunities are missed, both in assemblies and in lessons, to develop pupils' understanding of the deeper meanings of life.
37. The provision for pupils' moral and social development is good. The school provides clear moral guidance through its behaviour policy and code of conduct, which is displayed in classrooms and shared areas. The recently introduced behaviour policy, which is implemented by all staff, has done much to raise the quality of pupils' behaviour at the school. There are 'well done' noticeboards in classrooms and the year group noticeboards display useful information including the most recent minutes of the School Council meetings. The School Council is valued by the pupils who feel that it is having a positive impact on the life of the school, and it provides good opportunities for pupils to take responsibility within the school community.
38. All staff present good role models for the pupils. In personal, social and health education, circle time, religious education lessons, assemblies and in their day-to-day relationships, teachers provide opportunities for pupils to reflect on their behaviour and its possible impact on others. They also use opportunities in lessons to remind pupils of the school's rules and expectations. As a consequence, pupils are welcoming to visitors and generally move around the building in an orderly and responsible way. Pupils are given a range of opportunities to work with each other, either in pairs or in small groups, in the course of lessons, and after-school activities and visits to places of educational interest, also provide opportunities for pupils to

learn how to work together and meet with others. The school also encourages pupils to develop their understanding of their responsibilities in the wider world. For example, they regularly work to raise funds for charities such as Barnado's, NSPCC, National Action for Children and the Joseph Weld Trust (a local hospice).

39. The school's provision for cultural development is good. Visits to the theatre lead to follow-up work on environmental, waste and inclusion issues, while involvement in a Woodland Trust campaign, to save a nearby beauty spot from development, encourage pupils to consider the importance of their own environment. In history, the role of local industry, with particular emphasis on the place of ropemaking in the development of Bridport, is studied. Skilful use is made of events such as 'World Book Day' and 'World Music Day' to focus pupils' attention and to stage events of high quality. Strong links with the local community enhance the school's own provision. For example, the annual 'Arts Week' brings local artists into school to share their expertise, and is greatly enjoyed by pupils. The wide variety of extra-curricular activities and visits, including residential opportunities for the older pupils, also makes a significant contribution to pupils' cultural development. Christian festivals are celebrated and other faiths are studied in religious education. However, there is scope to develop further opportunities for pupils to recognise and celebrate the richness of other cultures.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

40. St Mary's is a school where the provision of good pastoral support and the fostering of a caring community are given a high priority. All adults are good role models for the pupils and relationships are based on respect, encouragement and the nurturing of high self-esteem. The school has a strong commitment to inclusion. Each child is valued and the staff give appropriate and sensitive support to those with particular academic, medical or emotional needs to enable them to play their full part in all aspects of school life. Parents find the staff easy to talk to and this helps ensure that information about pupils' circumstances or concerns are readily shared and that staff can get to know the pupils well. Every effort is made to obtain specialist support, such as speech therapy for pupils, but sometimes local shortages of staff mean that appropriate expertise is not always available when necessary.
41. Arrangements for child protection are well established and all adults who might come into contact with pupils during the school day are appropriately vetted. Staff are aware of the procedures for recording any concerns, and effective links with the local area committee ensure that decisions about children's welfare are based on shared knowledge of needs and circumstances. Arrangements for the monitoring and promoting of good attendance are satisfactory, although there is scope to increase the frequency of checking registers in order to follow up absences for which no explanation has been given. No central records are kept to identify those pupils who do not arrive punctually in the mornings and 'follow up' systems for those who fail to arrive need to be improved.
42. There is a very well-planned programme of induction for new parents and children, with visits being made not only to a large number of pre-school settings but also to their homes. The children also have several opportunities to visit the school so that they are familiar with the environment and personnel before they start. This comprehensive approach not only ensures that the teachers and support staff know the children and their parents well but also establishes a good rapport with parents. This in turn builds a sense of trust and confidence in the school and, consequently, children quickly settle into the reception class.

43. The school has recently introduced an effective new scheme to promote good behaviour. This is based clearly on rewards and sanctions, with the emphasis on praise for pupils making the right choices. Pupils are involved in making classroom rules and this ensures that they have a clear understanding of what is expected in learning, relationships and respect for property and each other. Younger pupils particularly enjoy the chance to earn 'golden time' for good behaviour when they can choose activities. Although there has been an increase in the number of exclusions this year, this has been necessary to ensure that the behaviour scheme is consistently implemented across the school. Nevertheless, parents, staff and pupils all feel that this new approach has had a positive impact on behaviour. Appropriate records are kept of instances of poor behaviour and staff take appropriate action if pupils raise any concerns about bullying. However, evidence suggests that not all pupils have developed the confidence to seek adult help. Pupils who find it more difficult to conform to expectations are sensitively supported with appropriate behaviour plans.
44. Pupils benefit from a well-planned programme of personal, social and health education. Fruit snacks at break and the drinking of water through the day are encouraged and appropriate attention is given to drugs and sex education. Older pupils have regular reminders about the importance of road safety, for example, when walking to the nearby leisure centre for swimming lessons. Pupils have regular opportunities to express their views about school through the newly established School Council and this encourages them to suggest improvements to aspects of school life such as playtimes. There is, however, scope for increasing the opportunities for pupils to talk about their feelings as this could help some improve their self-esteem and have a beneficial impact on their standards of behaviour.
45. The health, safety and security of the staff and pupils have a high profile in the school. The site manager is assiduous in carrying out his responsibilities and takes a proactive role in identifying possible risks and hazards. The school has well-established procedures for accidents, emergencies and medicines, and maintains good supporting documentation. Pupils are reminded of safe practice in lessons and there are adequate numbers of staff to supervise the two playgrounds at break and lunchtimes. The school is clean, tidy and well maintained and provides a safe and pleasant environment for the pupils.
46. The information gained from valuable home visits before children are admitted to the reception class, together with careful assessments of children's standards when they start at the school, are used effectively to inform teachers' planning. Regular and well-focused assessments of children's significant achievements and needs are kept on a day-to-day basis, and these help to ensure that teaching is matched to their learning requirements. Overall, assessment procedures are good in reception and are used well to foster children's learning.
47. In Years 1 to 6, assessment procedures are satisfactory, overall, and are soundly used to guide teachers' work. In English and mathematics, assessment is good. Pupils' achievements are tracked carefully in these subjects, target setting is used effectively, and intervention strategies are introduced sensibly to meet the needs of those who require particular help. In addition, the statutory and non-statutory test results are studied thoroughly in English, mathematics and science, including through the meticulous analysis of individual responses by pupils to questions in the test papers in 2002. This helps teachers to identify strengths in pupils' performance in these subjects and to target areas for improvement. In subjects other than English and mathematics, assessment procedures are generally satisfactory. However,

weaknesses in assessment in music, identified in the last inspection, have yet to be fully rectified. In most subjects, teachers formally assess an example of each pupil's work in their class, and the work is kept in an assessment book for each pupil. This strategy helps teachers to gauge the progress made by individuals in their classes. However, this useful resource of evidence is not used sufficiently by most subject co-ordinators to inform their overview of pupils' progress and achievements as they move through the school. Although the examples of work are assessed by individual class teachers, against National Curriculum criteria, there is scope for more discussion between teachers to ensure they have common and accurate interpretations of pupils' achievements. This is particularly pertinent since teachers' own assessments of pupils' standards in Year 6, in 2002, were notably higher than in the actual standard test results in the same year. Teachers' marking is generally sound, and includes some particularly useful guidance for pupils in Years 2 and 6 in English.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

48. An effective partnership has been established with parents and the vast majority are generally complimentary about the standards of education their children receive at the school. However, recent changes in staffing are perceived by some to have lessened the continuity of communication that had previously been well established. The school has already identified this as an area for improvement. In general the school's documentation is clear and informative, and the governors' annual report to parents is attractive and comprehensive in its coverage. However, governors recognise that the school brochure needs updating and are addressing the deficiencies in the current brochure. This lacks statutory details about national test results, the school's attendance and absence rates and a statement on the ethos and values of the school.
49. From their earliest contact with the school, parents are encouraged to become involved in their children's learning. Reception class teachers provide helpful booklets on handwriting and very useful guidelines on how best to help their children learn to read. During the inspection, parents were asked to prepare a pizza at home to include toppings selected by their children at school as part of their topic on 'Royal Dinners', and to get them to describe the tastes. This practical exercise produced a good response from parents and highlighted the importance of encouraging the use of a wide vocabulary. Parents of older pupils are well informed about what is to be taught through termly curriculum summaries prepared by class teachers. They are invited to participate in some activities during special school weeks when there is a focus on a particular subject such as art.
50. Parents find the staff easy to talk to and value the opportunities to speak to them at the start or end of the school day. The vast majority feel that they are kept well informed of any incidents or problems that their children might have. There are appropriate opportunities, throughout the year, to discuss their children's progress and targets for improvement, and annual written reports provide a sound indication of attainment and progress. Inspection evidence does not support parents' views that they receive insufficient information about their children's progress. However, although parents are given the school's policy on homework, evidence suggests that the quantity and frequency of work set are variable across the school.
51. For their part, parents are generally supportive of the school. Some help in classes or with after-school activities, while others volunteer to help improve the school grounds, for example, by painting fences or helping with laying the path around the school

pond. The flourishing Parents' Association organises well-supported activities to raise significant funds to improve the school's resources, play equipment for pupils and the environment. However, a small minority of parents find it difficult to hear their children read regularly at home, or support them in homework tasks, and this can have a negative impact on their progress.

52. The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO), new to her role at the beginning of the academic year, is working hard and with increasing success to establish constructive working relationships with all parents of pupils with special educational needs. The majority of parents value the school's efforts on behalf of their children and do their best to help, for example, by supporting them with work at home and by sharing approaches to the management of behaviour. Responding to the expressed needs of a few parents, the SENCO has recently been instrumental in setting up a parenting course.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

53. There has been a significant amount of change in the leadership and management of the school in recent years, as was the case when the school was last inspected in 1997. The local education authority identified the school as a cause for concern in 2001, and when the current headteacher took up her post there was considerable scope for improvement. The SATs results were too low in Years 2 and 6, and evidence suggests that improvements were needed in pupils' behaviour. The headteacher has tackled these difficulties with determination and skill and, in 2002, the governors appointed a 'new' deputy headteacher to assist with the process of improvement. The headteacher is about to complete a period of maternity leave and the local authority has appropriately placed an advisory headteacher at the school during her absence. His leadership and management skills are excellent, and he has provided the experience necessary to ensure stability while guiding the school through another period of change. The advisory headteacher has worked closely and well with the deputy headteacher and improvements introduced last year have been maintained.
54. The headteacher and senior management team analyse the results of statutory and non-statutory testing carefully and help staff to target areas for improvement. Both the headteacher and deputy headteacher observe lessons, across the school, and provide teachers with valuable feedback which benefits their professional development. The advisory headteacher and deputy headteacher have appropriately continued the cycle of observations during the current term. The headteacher's good management skills are evident in the school development plan (SDP), which clearly identifies areas for improvement and is well organised. She has worked effectively with staff to formulate this plan which addresses the immediate priorities for the school. However, she recognises that if it is to be a valuable management tool the plan needs to be extended, in outline, beyond the current year. Procedures for the performance management of staff are well established, and statutory requirements for staff development are now met.
55. Since her appointment, the headteacher has made a number of key appointments in terms of subject leadership. As a result, most co-ordinators have been in post for a relatively short amount of time and have not yet fully developed strategies for monitoring their subjects. Consequently, they are not in a strong position to identify strengths and weaknesses, or to target areas for improvement with sufficient precision. The headteacher has made a good start in developing the role of co-ordinators by introducing a termly work scrutiny involving all staff, for example, to look

at consistency in marking across the school, and encouraging co-ordinators to check the examples of work in pupils' individual assessment books. The deputy headteacher, in her role as numeracy co-ordinator, has also observed the teaching of mathematics in all classes, and the co-ordinators for English, and science have analysed national test results. However, the headteacher is aware that, in order to raise standards, there is still work to be done in relation to the monitoring role of most co-ordinators.

56. The school benefits from a committed governing body which is aware of the school's strengths and areas for development. A range of appropriate committees is established and are functioning efficiently. The governors discuss the results of statutory testing carefully and have a sound awareness of the school's performance. Areas for improvement have been appropriately discussed with the senior management team and are included in the SDP. All governors are linked to a subject area and have met with co-ordinators to discuss the school's provision. Regular written reports are then provided to inform the full governing body, as part of a rolling programme. The governor with responsibility for special educational needs meets with the SENCO and is well informed about the school's provision, and other governors have helped with specific projects such as 'Arts Week.' Some governors help in the school on a regular basis and others have made focused visits to observe particular aspects of provision. However, there is scope to increase the number of observations that are undertaken, particularly to see national strategies being implemented.
57. The 1997 OFSTED report indicated that improvements were needed in the strategic management of the school. It has been difficult for the governing body to address this issue fully because the regular turnover in headteachers has led to a lack of consistency in leadership and management. However, evidence suggests that recent changes in the governing body and senior management of the school, and relevant local authority training, are helping to establish a more rigorous approach. The governors are fully aware of the school's priorities as stated in the SDP. However, following helpful local authority training, they recognise that they need to become more actively involved in the formulation and evaluation of the SDP and have appropriate strategies in place to achieve this. The governors have been carefully managing the budget implications that result from reductions in pupil numbers, while actively investigating ways of reversing the trend of falling rolls at the school. At the same time, the finance committee appropriately prepared contingency plans for a significant reduction in spending. However, evidence suggests that the governors are now having to make larger savings because the current financial position could not have been envisaged at an earlier stage. Overall, the governing body provides sound support for the leadership and management of the school and, with the exception of the range of information provided in the school brochure, statutory requirements are met.
58. New to her role at the beginning of the academic year, the SENCO is already providing good leadership for special educational needs work in the school. With the support of the headteacher, she has worked quickly and efficiently to put in place appropriate policies, procedures and practices, to gain an overview of provision and to advance her own knowledge and understanding of different aspects of special educational needs work. In particular, she has made a significant contribution to the management of behaviour, and inspection evidence shows that this is beginning to have a marked impact on pupils' conduct and on their learning, particularly amongst younger pupils. Individual education plans are in place for all pupils who need them. The SENCO recognises that there are currently variations in the degree to which these are maintained and updated by teachers, and also in the precision and

usefulness of identified targets. Funds made available to support pupils with Statements of Special Educational Need are used wisely. Teachers and support staff are well trained in the most relevant aspects of special educational needs work, and support staff are deployed effectively to maximise opportunities for pupils. All statutory requirements in regard to special educational needs are met. The school has sound policies in regard to equal opportunities and for racial equality and staff have received appropriate guidance on how these should be implemented.

59. There are sufficient teachers and, collectively, they have the experience and expertise to cover the age and ability range of the pupils. However, some teachers would benefit from well-focused in-service training to improve the teaching of music and of art and design across the school.
60. Resources for learning are satisfactory, overall. However, there are weaknesses in those for geography in Years 3 to 6, and the school is aware that library book provision is currently limited as are classroom collections of fiction. The accommodation provides sufficient space and is well used by the school. The environment is enhanced by colourful and interesting displays of pupils' work, and the school is kept in clean condition by the conscientious site manager and caretaking staff. The governors have fully addressed criticisms made in the last OFSTED report with regard to the 'open plan' nature of the building, and the construction of solid partition walls between classes has ensured quieter working conditions for both staff and pupils. In addition, two attractive library areas have been created to serve pupils across the school, and a new and well-resourced ICT suite has been constructed. There is a good outdoor environment for children in the reception class, adequate playground space and a large playing field. The school and grounds are accessible to those in wheelchairs and there are disabled toilet and shower facilities.
61. This is an improving school which is beginning to benefit from the good leadership and management skills of the headteacher. The rate of improvement has been sustained by the appointment of an experienced advisory headteacher who has very effectively led the school during the current term. The teaching enables pupils to make sound progress in English, mathematics and science from their low starting points on entry to the school. Pupils in the reception class benefit from particularly effective teaching, and those with special educational needs are well supported. There are weaknesses in pupils' achievements in two subjects, in some aspects of teaching and in the roles of co-ordinators. Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory, overall, but the school appropriately continues to monitor this and to employ effective strategies in order to make improvements. On balance, the school's strengths and sound achievements outweigh its weaknesses, and it provides satisfactory value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

62. In order to raise standards, develop the co-ordination of subjects, improve strategic planning and meet statutory requirements, the headteacher and governors should:

- (1) Raise standards in art and design and geography by ensuring that planning secures the sequential progression of pupils' key skills in these subjects.

(see paragraphs 10, 107, 109, 115, and 118)

- (2) Ensure that the monitoring roles of all subject co-ordinators enable them to identify the strengths and weaknesses in their subjects with sufficient precision to target areas for improvement.

(see paragraphs 55, 92, 100, 106, 110, 119, 125, 134 and 140)

- (3) Improve school development planning so that:

- a) arrangements for the formulation and evaluation of the plan are clearly identified and include the active involvement of the governing body;
- b) the plan includes clear priorities for how the school will improve over a longer period.

(see paragraph 57)

- (4) Ensure that the information provided in the school brochure meets statutory requirements.

(see paragraphs 48 and 57)

63. In addition to the key issues above, the governors should also consider the following, less important, issues for inclusion in the action plan.

- Ensure that higher attaining pupils are provided with sufficiently challenging work, particularly in mathematics, science and ICT.
- Improve book provision in the library areas, classroom collections of fiction and resources for geography.
- Ensure that well-focused in-service training is provided to increase teachers' confidence and skills in teaching music and art and design.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	77
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	17

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	12	32	30	3	0	0
Percentage	0	16	42	39	4	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 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	N/A	290
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A	32

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N/A	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	N/A	84

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	36
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	19

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.6
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.9
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	22	28	50

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17	16	18
	Girls	22	21	24
	Total	39	37	42
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	78 (49)	74 (55)	84 (72)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	19	17
	Girls	22	24	23
	Total	38	43	40
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	76 (55)	86 (62)	80 (96)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	24	34	58

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	17	18	20
	Girls	21	18	24
	Total	38	36	44
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	66 (61)	62 (52)	76 (65)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	18	18	20
	Girls	24	24	31
	Total	42	42	51
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	72 (N/A)	72 (N/A)	88 (N/A)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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	272	1	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	6	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	7	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	1	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 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	14
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21:1
Average class size	22

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	197

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	7
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	10

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
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	2001/02
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	£
Total income	679,981
Total expenditure	662,348
Expenditure per pupil	2,019
Balance brought forward from previous year	17,889
Balance carried forward to next year	17,633

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	290
Number of questionnaires returned	160

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	51	44	5	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	36	56	4	0	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	23	54	17	0	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	24	46	21	4	5
The teaching is good.	39	54	1	0	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	28	48	16	4	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	49	41	8	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	39	54	2	0	4
The school works closely with parents.	26	48	14	6	5
The school is well led and managed.	28	48	9	4	11
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	32	54	4	2	8
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	50	38	7	0	5

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

64. Provision for children in the reception class is good. It is underpinned by a secure curriculum which covers all the areas of learning recommended for children of this age. There are good procedures for assessing what children know, understand and can do, and for keeping track of their progress over time. This information is used effectively to inform planning for future work. The good teaching that they receive ensures that children gain a firm foundation of literacy and numeracy skills and that they make good progress in all the recommended areas of learning. There is also a good balance between teacher directed activities and those which are chosen by the children. Overall, children are well prepared for their work on the National Curriculum in Year 1.
65. Children are admitted to the reception class in the September of the year in which they become four; and there are very good induction arrangements. Every family receives a home visit and a number of pre-school settings are also visited so that children become familiar with reception staff. There are also well-planned opportunities for parents and children to visit the school. The children initially start on a part-time basis, and this gradual introduction helps them to feel safe and secure from an early stage. These good links are continued once children start at the school. Parents are able to meet with the teachers on a formal basis every term, and value the informal day-by-day contact with them as a regular means of communication.
66. The reception class is housed in a purpose built classroom, with sufficient space for children to learn in practical ways. The indoor teaching area is well organised and there is plenty of outdoor space to accommodate all of the activities that young children need for their learning and development. Reception staff effectively use this outdoor area to organise a good range of opportunities for children to develop their movements and to explore direction, distance and speed on a larger scale.

Personal, social and emotional development

67. The personal, social and emotional development of most children as they enter school is below the level expected for their age. Most make good progress in their social and emotional development and gain in confidence because of the support and care that is provided. Many achieve the standards expected of them by the end of the reception year as a result of the good teaching they receive. Children are helped to settle into well-established routines and, as a result, they quickly understand what is expected of them. They have a developing awareness of their own needs and learn to express them because they know they will be listened to. The caring ethos in the reception class and the good role models set by all adults who work in the area help children to develop their understanding of how others feel. As a result, children become sensitive to each other's needs and feelings. During the inspection, for example, staff were appropriately emphasising the qualities needed to become a good listener. Children learn how to get along with their classmates because they are encouraged to work and play together in a range of situations. Most successfully take part in activities which require them to work together, and learn to understand the importance of turn taking and sharing by the end of the reception year. 'Snack' time is an enjoyable and good social occasion each day when groups of children sit together around a table and one is responsible for counting and then collecting the refreshments for the group. During the inspection, a 'Royal Dinner', based on a big

book story, was greatly enjoyed by the children. Children develop positive attitudes to their learning and gain confidence in their own ability to do things for themselves because of the good range of experiences which make learning enjoyable and which they can control. For example, some resources are organised in such a way that the children can access them for themselves, as they need them, when they want to develop their own imaginative ideas.

68. The high expectations of learning and behaviour that the teachers have of the children are consistently reinforced and, as a result, good habits are established from an early stage. By the end of the reception year, most children are keen to do their best, respond well to their teachers' instructions and enjoy taking part in all the activities provided for them. There is good support for children with special educational needs. This helps these children to develop the confidence that they need to take part in lessons and ensures they make good progress.

Communication, language and literacy

69. The communication, language and literacy skills of most children entering the reception class are below average, and those of a significant minority are well below average. Children of all abilities make good progress in relation to their starting points in response to teaching which is mainly good and never less than sound. They gain confidence and begin to develop control in speaking and listening with adults, and they take significant steps towards the early stages of reading and writing. Nevertheless, overall standards are below average when pupils enter Year 1.
70. From this very early stage in their schooling, children are already being made aware of what is involved in being a 'good listener'. They know, for example, that 'listening' involves looking at the speaker, staying composed and trying to remember what the speaker has said. They learn to use their 'inside voice' rather than interrupt the speaker, and they wait for a suitable opportunity to respond. During discussions led by their teachers, relatively few children are confident enough to speak up when part of a larger group. Within smaller groups, higher attaining children already speak confidently and clearly, while others tend to speak only briefly, and often very softly and tentatively, for example when sharing their 'news'. Few children have a well-developed general vocabulary for their age. When songs and action rhymes are sung or recited, most children are able to join in with the actions, but many find it difficult to remember the words and to join in by matching them appropriately to the rhythm. Some children also find it difficult to recall the names of the days of the week in sequential order, and they experience similar difficulties, though not for lack of effort, when they try to organise words in a 'best' order to express their thoughts and ideas.
71. Teachers make every effort to ensure that children's experience of reading is not simply skills based but also highly enjoyable. For example, the children are delighted when they can engage in role play, dressed in finery during a 'Royal Dinner' that they have learned about in a story the teacher has shared with them, and also when they prepare the food. Such activities at this early stage convince them that reading is to be enjoyed, and they learn to listen to stories with a sense of expectation, gradually developing their ability to concentrate and to join in, for example to use a familiar, repetitive phrase. When working independently, children listen to taped stories, responding as events unfold with a smile or a laugh, or, sometimes, with a furrowed brow that suggests they are puzzled by the language or the events. They know that books are 'read' from front to back, and higher attaining children are aware of the direction of print on the page and of the links between words and pictures. When working with their teachers, a few children can already match some letters to their

sounds or 'phonemes', for example when retrieving items beginning with 'tr' from a 'feely bag', or when placing letter cards in the appropriate spaces on a 'Bingo' card. Other children are able to match picture cards accurately to identical printed images and are developing important skills in visual discrimination in preparation for reading.

72. Children of all abilities are learning to form letters accurately and to recognise that there are spaces between words in writing. They know that writing communicates meaning, and most enjoy writing as an activity. For example, they enter into the spirit of using the 'office' created for them in a corner of the classroom, and they 'write' letters, notes and stories using the skills they have acquired. Understandably, the writing produced is mainly 'emergent', but most children form at least some recognisable letters, and a few already write their names accurately. At the end of a busy day getting ready for their 'Royal Dinner', many children were proud to wear crowns on which they had written their respective title or role. Their efforts showed that many are already able to represent, plausibly if not accurately spelled, words such as 'pinses' (princess) and 'quin' (queen).

Mathematical development

73. When children enter the school at the age of four, their mathematical development is below, and sometimes well below, the level expected for their age. They make good progress in the reception class as a result of good teaching. However, because of their low starting points, overall standards are below average at the end of the reception year. Children gain a growing understanding of basic mathematical ideas as a result of well-focused direct teaching and the provision of a wide range of carefully planned practical activities. For example, during registration, they are encouraged to count how many children are present and teachers record this for the class, skilfully drawing attention to the numerals and promoting simple ideas about place value. Children have regular opportunities to sort, match, count and order objects, and most can talk about, recognise and recreate simple patterns. Good use is made of activities such as singing and counting rhymes to help children to develop their counting skills. The majority can recite number names in order, forwards from a given number, and are beginning to record numbers by making marks or writing numerals. During outdoor play, for example, a group of children made simple recordings of their scores during a game of skittles. Teachers also effectively promote children's mathematical development through a range of linked activities. For example, children have painted ten different colours in a line, numbered these in ascending order, and have then taken their 'tracks' home to enable parents to support the development of their number work.
74. A good range of activities ensures that most children can identify and describe simple flat shapes such as squares, rectangles, circles and triangles by the time they leave the reception class. Play activities that involve the use of balances, sand and water are used well to help develop children's learning about shape, space and measure. For example, they explore what happens when objects of different sizes and weight, such as fir cones and shells, are put on each side of a balance; they fill and empty containers with water, and they draw shapes in sand. Few make use of mathematical terms for themselves but do begin to understand the meaning of terms such as 'more' and 'less', 'full', 'half full' and 'empty', 'heavier' and 'lighter', because of emphasis put on language in the course of teaching, and the practical demonstrations of what the terms mean. Similarly, the use of terms such as 'tall', 'short', 'small' and 'large' are introduced and consolidated, usually through practical activities.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

75. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world are a little below the levels expected for their age by the end of the reception year. This represents at least sound, and mainly good, achievement in relation to their starting points on entry to the school, and is a result of the good teaching they receive. They show curiosity and interest in their surroundings and in the activities that are provided for them.
76. Children make good progress when looking carefully at beans, and watch for signs of growth in those they have planted. In a session observed during the inspection, they marvelled at the tiny shoots emerging from their beans, and skilful questioning from the teacher enabled them to develop their understanding of the conditions necessary for plant growth. As a result, many used their own initiative to add water to the blotting paper which surrounded their beans. During the inspection, children also achieved well when learning about the absorbency of materials when they experimented with washing clothes and used a mangle to squeeze out some of the water. All were confident that the sun would dry the clothes as they hung these on an improvised washing line. Teachers were quick to encourage children to begin to notice differences in the way their wheeled toys travelled over different surfaces, or up and down small ramps. Children enjoy exploring the school grounds, searching for small creatures, and look carefully at the tadpoles the teachers bring to the classroom.
77. Children in the reception class are given many opportunities to explore the local area and are beginning to develop an understanding of the wider world in which they live. They make simple observations about the types of buildings which are to be found in the town, and learn about people who work in the school and wider community. For example, they visit Joe's Café in Bridport and a local garden centre and receive visitors from the local Fire Service. These valuable first hand experiences are often consolidated by well-organised role play in which children develop their understanding and make sense of their experiences. Knowledge and understanding of other places and cultures are also well promoted, for example, through finding out about Chinese New Year and life in a Chinese restaurant. Children also learn about the passage of time and change in relation to their own lives and familiar people. They observe the changing dates and seasons and learn to use everyday terms that distinguish between past and present. In one of the sessions seen they were provided with an interesting collection of washday artefacts from the past. These included a scrubbing brush, washboard and wringer. While they thoroughly enjoyed playing with the water and experiencing how washing was done in the past, teachers made the most of the opportunity to encourage them to make comparisons between then and now.
78. Teachers have, thus far, been unable to take advantage of their allocated slot in the computer suite because of timetabling difficulties. However, children make good use of the one computer in the reception class, for example, working in pairs to use literacy programs. They are able to manage these effectively and demonstrate competence with the computer mouse. The children have also been introduced to the 'My World' programme Goldilocks' and teachers have used this effectively to promote the development of computer skills and to encourage children to re-tell the story.

Physical development

79. Children's physical development is close to the levels expected for their ages by the end of the reception year. They benefit from a good range of opportunities to develop their physical control and co-ordination through various aspects of the curriculum. They use a variety of hand tools as well as pencils, crayons, paintbrushes and a range of malleable materials, ensuring good progress in the development of their manual dexterity. The well-organised outside play area, combined with a good variety of play equipment for use on both hard and grassy surfaces, makes a good contribution to children's physical co-ordination. They have easy access to a range of small and large equipment, such as balls, skittles, scooters and wheeled vehicles, that provide a stimulating set of opportunities for creative play. These are carefully planned to link closely with other areas of the curriculum.
80. Children also have regular access to indoor physical education activities in the hall. In one of the lessons observed, they learned about the importance of a warm-up and could feel their hearts beating faster. They moved vigorously in different directions, travelling forwards, backwards and sideways on the floor and on the large apparatus. Their awareness of space and the need to negotiate and avoid other children is not so well developed. A significant minority finds it difficult to remain within the defined area and, particularly when moving backwards, have limited regard for others. In another lesson, while interpreting the story of Jack and the Beanstalk, they ran, tiptoed, crawled and stretched as they responded to the rhythm of a well-chosen piece of music.

Creative development

81. Good teaching helps children to enjoy music and to develop confidence when singing, clapping or using percussion instruments. They have learned a good range of songs, and benefit from the lively and well-informed teaching of the Early Years co-ordinator who is able to accompany their singing with her guitar. Children are beginning to interpret simple signals to know when to play their instruments loudly or more quietly, and can recognise and repeat very simple rhythms. Children's creative development is promoted effectively by the worthwhile play opportunities provided in reception. They experiment with sand and water, and are able to learn through 'small world' play. During the inspection, groups of children were deeply involved in role play in the Giant's Castle, which had been created as part of their focus on Jack and the Beanstalk. Some made their own crowns for their chosen roles as kings or queens in the castle, and all were beginning to understand the need to work co-operatively with their peers. Children have ample opportunities to draw, paint and create collage pictures. Overall, they are making good progress in their creative development, and the majority achieve the expected standard in this element of their learning by the end of the reception period.
82. Children have investigated different ways of joining paper and have experimented with the effectiveness of staples, paper clips, tape, velcro and elastic bands. They have produced good quality puppets after looking at the story of Goldilocks and the Three Bears. As part of the 'World Book Day' project they produced bookmarks featuring the Three Little Pigs. Children have access to some construction kits but this is an area that needs development.

ENGLISH

83. On entry to Year 1, pupils' skills in communication, language and literacy are below average overall, and a significant minority attain standards which are well below average.
84. The school's results in the national tests for reading for pupils aged seven in 2002 were below the national average, and those for writing were well below the national average. In both reading and writing, the results were below the average results of similar schools. Nevertheless, these most recent results mark an improvement on those for 2001. In the English tests for pupils aged 11, the school's results in 2002 were below both the national average and the average results of similar schools. As in the case of younger pupils, the overall results were higher than those achieved in 2001.
85. The full range of inspection evidence shows that, while there are significant variations in the overall attainment of pupils in different classes and year groups throughout the school, the proportions of higher attaining pupils remain small. There are many pupils in each year group whose attainment is below and sometimes well below average, and there are also significant numbers of pupils with special educational needs. In most lessons seen, the teaching of English is good or better, and most pupils work hard to improve their performance. However, there are many pupils who find it difficult to apply what they have been taught, for example, when they are required to work independently or to perform in tests. It is partly, though not entirely for this reason, that such pupils do not attain the same standards in tests that they occasionally demonstrate when assisted in class by supportive questioning and structured tasks. Indeed, while pupils are often judged to make good progress during lessons, their progress over time is mainly satisfactory but sometimes good.
86. Overall, following a national trend, pupils of all ages perform better in reading than in writing. Given the high proportions of lower attaining pupils, attainment in reading is below average overall, both at the ages of seven and 11. Nevertheless, the most able pupils at each of these stages attain standards which are above average for their age. By the age of seven, higher attaining pupils have well-developed reading preferences, derive great enjoyment from reading and talk confidently about both fiction and non-fiction. They read aloud fluently and expressively, respond to the punctuation, and make effective use of the rest of the text to work out what is meant. They have a secure grasp of phonics, and this enables them to decode unfamiliar words. They have learned to recall and to talk about the plot in the stories they read, and they can discuss the interaction between various characters. Their ability to use inference is developing well, and they also know how to find things out, for example, by using the index and the glossary in information books. By the age of 11, higher attaining pupils in Year 6 read enthusiastically and widely from a suitable range of fiction written for pupils of their age. They are also able to identify the characteristic features of many other kinds of writing, and they have a good understanding of ways in which writers achieve their various effects. Pupils of average and lower attainment in Year 2 read less confidently than their more able peers. Although they have been well versed in phonics and are also able to apply other suitable reading strategies, their general vocabulary is often weak, and they sometimes struggle with the meanings of words and phrases, including figures of speech. While many such pupils read aloud accurately, they rarely read fluently or with expression, and many find inference difficult. By the age of 11, most average and lower attaining pupils are able to read and understand the main points in different kinds of text related to their studies in English and other subjects. During lessons, they demonstrate sound knowledge and

understanding of the structure and characteristic features of different kinds of writing, for example, of letters written to persuade readers of a particular point of view. However, they continue to struggle with hidden meanings in texts and with the meaning of unfamiliar words.

87. Higher attaining pupils of all ages readily transfer to their own writing the skills and knowledge they learn implicitly through their own reading and explicitly through the analysis of texts during literacy lessons. Progressively, year-on-year, they learn to match the structure, style and vocabulary of their writing to its intended purpose. By the age of 11, the highest attaining pupils also achieve an appropriately high standard in spelling, use a limited range of punctuation marks accurately, construct well-structured sentences and achieve overall coherence in pieces of extended writing. The written work of average and lower attaining pupils has some characteristic features of the type of writing they are aiming to produce. For example, stories have appropriate openings, challenges which face the main characters and 'resolutions' in which issues are resolved. Instructions are set out accurately and pupils use accepted conventions such as the use of bullet points or numbers for each command. However, a significant number of pupils find it difficult to organise their thoughts and words logically, to construct complex sentences and to achieve overall coherence in their pieces of writing. Spelling and punctuation are common weaknesses in much of the work seen, and many pupils are confused about when to use commas or full stops. From Year 2 onwards, the handwriting of many pupils is not as neat or well formed as it should be, and some older pupils do not use joined-up handwriting as a matter of course. In some classes, pupils take too little care with the presentation of their written work.
88. Pupils' skills as listeners develop well throughout their time in the school, and even pupils in Year 1 are capable of sustained concentration during discussion, as was very effectively demonstrated in a religious education lesson. At this early stage, not all pupils have the confidence to speak up and answer questions within the whole class group. By the time they are 11, however, most pupils speak up confidently when discussing their learning in English and some other subjects. While the most able pupils are very articulate, lower attaining pupils are not always sure when to use spoken Standard English. Sometimes, their spoken language is too colloquial for a particular context, and sometimes the grammar used is not that of Standard English. Understandably, the written work of some pupils is also adversely affected when language close to speech is used at times when the purpose and audience call for more formal language or for the use of Standard English.
89. In the lessons observed, most of the teaching was good or better. All teachers are conscientious and hard-working, and they are ably assisted by well-trained support staff. Teachers plan their lessons carefully, and most have a good level of understanding of the requirements of the Programmes of Study and of the National Literacy Strategy. Pupils are informed at the outset about what they are intended to learn, and the various activities are designed to achieve the declared objectives and to build constructively on earlier work. In the majority of lessons, pupils working independently are given useful resources to guide their writing which are matched to their capabilities, and they are routinely encouraged to use self-checking strategies which give them further insights into what is being learned. In an extension of this provision, teachers give each pupil personal targets for literacy and monitor their progress towards them. Good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs and for lower attaining pupils through specific intervention programmes and through individual help and small group work.

90. Very occasionally, teachers need to spend a little time managing the behaviour of a few pupils, but, overall, lessons are conducted at an appropriately challenging pace. Where there are weaknesses, these are associated with expectations which are in some respects too low. For example, priority is sometimes given wholly to the achievement of the specific learning objectives of the lesson while other, persistent weaknesses in pupils' performance are overlooked. Sometimes, in English and in other subjects, pupils are allowed to neglect the quality of their handwriting and the presentation of their work. Where this becomes a regular habit, pupils also tend to take less care than they should with all aspects of their work.
91. The literacy co-ordinator joined the school at the beginning of the current academic year. She has quickly identified appropriate areas for development and has drawn up a suitable action plan to address weaknesses in teaching and learning. She has already begun to work well with staff, for example, by providing training sessions on guided reading, extended writing and drama. The co-ordinator has also helped some teachers plan work at various levels to cater for the very wide ability spans represented amongst pupils in their classes. She has also analysed pupils' performance in tests in order to identify common areas of weakness, and is currently planning further training to ensure consistency in practice and expectations across the school, for example, in regard to the teaching of spelling. She has been instrumental in updating resources for the teaching of literacy, although inspection findings show that there are still some significant shortages. For example, there are not yet enough books to support guided reading, and classroom collections of fiction for home-reading badly need updating and extending. Inviting new library areas have been developed, but the book-stock in them is inadequate to meet the needs of the pupils and to underpin the curriculum.
92. To date, the co-ordinator has not had the opportunity to monitor teaching and learning directly, although these functions have been carried out effectively by the headteacher and by the area literacy consultant whose findings have already influenced practice. Assessment procedures and practice are thorough, and there are examples of very effective marking, for example, in Years 1, 2, 5 and 6. All available evidence shows that staff, many of whom are new to the school, are already beginning to work together well as a team and are well placed to raise standards further. In order to do so, attention needs to focus on achieving consistency in teachers' practice, for example, in regard to the teaching of spelling and handwriting. All teachers need to help pupils understand the differences between their own spoken language and both spoken and written forms of Standard English, and ongoing attention needs to be paid to persistent weaknesses such as sentence structure, punctuation, grammatical errors, verbal expression and overall coherence. The co-ordinator's action plan is highly relevant and is being implemented. Additional and complementary issues identified in this report also need to be addressed.

MATHEMATICS

93. On entry to Year 1, the mathematical knowledge and understanding of most pupils are below average. The overall results of 2002 national tests for Year 2 pupils were in line with the national average and above the average results of similar schools. The percentage of pupils demonstrating above average standards for their ages was also close to the national average. These results represent a significant improvement on those for 2001 which were well below the national average. The 1997 OFSTED report also judged standards in Year 2 to be similar to the national average.

94. Inspection findings show that most of the current Year 2 pupils achieve average standards. However, a relatively small percentage of pupils exceeds the level expected, and a significant minority of pupils, who have special educational needs, demonstrate below average standards. As a consequence, overall standards are below average. Nevertheless, in relation to pupils' starting points this represents sound achievement. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, make mainly satisfactory, and sometimes good, progress in their work with shape, length, weight and capacity, and in acquiring key numeracy skills. In an effective Year 1 lesson, for example, pupils extended their understanding of odd and even numbers to 20 as a result of skilful teaching which ensured that their interest was captured at the outset and sustained throughout the lesson. As they progress through Years 1 and 2, pupils gradually develop a better understanding of place value, can describe and extend simple number sequences and are learning to employ the correct number operations when making calculations. For example, in a Year 2 lesson, following very good input by the class teacher, pupils used their knowledge of number bonds and of addition and subtraction to find the answer to calculations such as $14 - 8$ or $72 - 5$ and, in the case of more able pupils, $69 - 14$.
95. At the time of the last inspection, standards in Year 6 were judged to be better than the national average. The school's 2002 Year 6 statutory test results were below the national average and the average results of similar schools. However, the proportion of pupils achieving the national standard, or above, was greater than in 2001. In addition, when compared with pupils' prior attainment, at seven, the results were in line with those of similar schools. Inspection evidence indicates that this recent improvement has continued in 2003. Most of the current Year 6 pupils achieve standards that are in line with those expected nationally and a minority do better. However, because of their low starting points, a significant proportion do not reach this level. As a consequence, overall standards are below average.
96. Inspection evidence shows that most pupils in Years 3 to 6, including those with special educational needs, make mainly sound, and sometimes good, progress in mathematics. They steadily build on their knowledge and understanding of the number system and of measures, shape and space. Progress in handling data is broadly satisfactory but is slower, and evidence suggests that pupils need more opportunities to collect and process data. In a good Year 4 lesson, pupils explored the properties of numbers during a well-led introduction to the session, and then honed their numeracy skills as they improved their recognition of the multiples of two, three, four, five and ten. Older pupils in a Year 5/6 class were able to draw accurate line graphs from given data about tides at the local village of West Bay; while those in Year 6 also made good progress when calculating the perimeter of compound shapes. During the introduction to this lesson, most pupils demonstrated secure numeracy skills when responding to their teacher's challenge to add and subtract numbers with one decimal place quickly and then explain their methods and reasoning.
97. Across the school the quality of teaching is mainly satisfactory, and sometimes good. Teachers' planning appropriately takes account of National Numeracy Strategy guidance, and the recommended three-part numeracy lesson is well established. The learning objectives for each lesson are clearly defined and are appropriately shared with pupils, usually at the beginning of each session. Resources are well prepared and appropriate, and instructions and teaching points are clearly explained. Teaching assistants are carefully briefed and provide sound, or better, support particularly for pupils with special educational needs. Teachers know their pupils well and make satisfactory use of day-to-day assessments of pupils' progress to inform

their planning. National tests are also used annually in each year group, in addition to end of unit assessments, to check on pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. Examples of pupils' work are levelled by individual teachers on a half termly basis and are kept for reference in an assessment book for each pupil. The school is appropriately beginning to use the evidence collected in these ways to set and review targets for individual pupils.

98. In the most effective lessons, teachers have high expectations and manage pupils well. There is a good pace to these lessons, particularly in the introductory session, and teachers use effective strategies to ensure that pupils are interactively involved throughout the lesson. Skilful questioning, which probes pupils' understanding and extends their thinking, is also a feature of the most successful lessons. However, throughout the school, a significant number of pupils find it difficult to offer methods and solutions for discussion because of their limited speaking skills and this constrains their progress and the acquisition of new vocabulary or mathematical terms. In some lessons, the content of the introductory activities fails to challenge more able pupils or is too difficult to capture the interest of lower attaining pupils who then find it difficult to sustain their concentration. Higher attaining pupils also occasionally mark time when they do not benefit from sufficient interaction with their teacher during group work, or when the absence of a clear time limit for completing the task means that they work too slowly. All teachers ensure that sufficient time is left at the end of numeracy lessons to summarise key ideas and vocabulary and, in general, these provide a satisfactory conclusion.
99. A well-equipped computer suite has been established in the last 12 months and some use is made of ICT to extend pupils' mathematical knowledge, skills and understanding. However, the school recognises the need to make more regular and effective use of ICT to support and enhance the teaching of mathematics across the school, particularly in relation to data handling.
100. The subject is conscientiously co-ordinated by the deputy headteacher who has been in post for a little over 12 months. She is enthusiastic about mathematics and has attended relevant local authority training in order to develop her own knowledge and understanding. The co-ordinator has observed lessons in all classes and has provided valuable feedback to teachers. Following a careful analysis of the results of national and other testing, she has identified strengths and areas for development in the school's provision for mathematics and this information has usefully informed future planning for the subject. Some scrutiny of pupils' work has been undertaken in order to check on the consistency of marking across the school, but there is considerable scope to develop this as a useful monitoring tool. The co-ordinator provides helpful advice and support for colleagues and, in collaboration with another member of staff, is preparing whole school medium term planning to guide their teaching. An annual action plan for numeracy has been formulated and this clearly defines the school's goals for the year and how these will be achieved, monitored and evaluated. Resources for the subject have been audited by the co-ordinator and are adequate.

SCIENCE

101. On entry to Year 1, the scientific knowledge and understanding of most pupils are below average, and some demonstrate very low standards. In 2002, the results of the statutory teacher assessments in Year 2, and of the standard tests in Year 6, were well below the national average and were also below the results of similar schools. Standards have fallen since the last inspection, when they were found to be average

in Years 2 and 6. Nevertheless, the 2002 results were an improvement on those achieved in 2001, and inspection findings show that this upward trend is continuing. From their mainly low starting points in Year 1, pupils are now making mainly sound and sometimes good progress in science, across the school. Consequently, most achieve the nationally expected standards in Years 2 and 6. However, a significant minority of pupils do not reach these standards, due to their special educational needs, and only a relatively small proportion exceed the expected levels. As a result, overall standards in Years 2 and 6 are below average. Pupils with special educational needs make mainly sound and sometimes good progress. Higher attaining pupils make adequate progress, overall, but could sometimes do better if their work was more challenging and if teachers' expectations were always sufficiently high.

102. In Year 1, pupils make sound progress when sorting a range of papers into different groups: for example into those which are shiny or dull; rough or smooth; or thick or thin. Although most can readily identify shiny papers, many find it difficult to classify materials accurately in relation to other characteristics and to put forward coherent explanations for their decisions. Year 1 pupils also make sound progress from their mainly low starting points when observing the growth of plants, and know that plants need water to remain healthy. However, their skills in recording their observations in writing, and through simple drawings, are generally below average. In Year 2, pupils recognise that different plants and animals live in the local environment, and can name some of them. Most pupils can create simple electrical circuits and show these in drawings which demonstrate satisfactory understanding. They make good progress when consolidating their learning about circuits by following their teachers' instructions to create simple model lighthouses. Most Year 2 pupils can describe the movement of familiar objects using pushes and pulls, but many find it difficult to decide whether their tests are fair when they compare the distances travelled by toy cars over different surfaces.
103. In Year 3, pupils can identify a range of common materials which are used to make everyday objects, but are often unsure about why some are particularly suitable for specific purposes. Year 3 pupils make sound progress when testing the strengths of different kinds of paper to decide which would be best for making a strong paper bag, and learn that some materials are magnetic. In Year 4, pupils understand that some materials can exist as both a solid and a liquid, and make sound progress when using stop-watches to compare the different times taken to change ice, butter and candle wax into liquids. In general, Year 4 pupils make satisfactory progress when following the teachers' instructions to conduct experiments to discover which materials have the most efficient thermal insulation properties. However, some pupils, including higher attaining pupils, demonstrate limited understanding in their predictions of likely results. In Year 5, pupils know that the sun, earth and moon are spherical, and make sound progress when learning how the path of the sun changes the length of shadows during the day. Most have a sound awareness of the conditions which affect the germination of seeds, although some still believe that light is necessary. In Year 6, pupils understand that feeding relationships exist between plants and animals in a habitat, and can describe these using appropriate terms including food chains, predator and prey. Most demonstrate broadly satisfactory standards when learning that changes occur when some materials are mixed together, and know that some changes are reversible but others are not. They conduct experiments to separate simple mixtures through evaporation or filtration but the written accounts of their investigations are not always sufficiently clear and precise. In a lesson observed during the inspection, pupils made good progress when learning that light travels from a source and that, when the angle at which a light hits a mirror is changed, the path of

the reflected light also alters. Some pupils, however, do not understand that the distance between a light source and an object affects the shadow which is cast.

104. Pupils' skills in presenting their work are variable, particularly in the older half of the school. While there is clear evidence of work which is carefully presented, too much is poorly set out and lacks appropriate coherence and precision. While there are credible reasons why there may be deficiencies in recording by lower attaining pupils, inconsistencies in the work of average, and particularly of the more advanced learners, need to be addressed.
105. Overall, the quality of teaching in science is satisfactory, across the school, and there is some evidence of good teaching. As a result, pupils' progress in the subject is generally sound. All teachers plan their lessons carefully and are making sensible use of the guidance provided by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. The learning intentions of lessons are clearly identified, and teachers appropriately share these with pupils at the beginning of sessions. In the most effective practice, teachers refer back to these intentions during discussions with pupils at the end of lessons, enabling pupils to evaluate their achievements. While teachers' planning is sound, overall, opportunities are sometimes missed to set more challenging work for higher attaining pupils, and they occasionally mark time when undertaking the same tasks as their peers. These pupils would benefit from more chances to use their initiative in science lessons, so that they can devise and conduct their own simple experiments to test their hypotheses. In addition, when teachers do not maintain sufficiently high expectations for the potential achievement of these pupils, this is reflected in careless presentation in pupils' science books. Teachers' subject knowledge is secure, and lessons are organised efficiently. In the best lessons, teachers ensure that appropriate scientific vocabulary is introduced and reinforced, and they use skilful questions to probe pupils' understanding. On occasions, teachers need to encourage pupils to develop their answers more fully during class discussions and to make more use of the scientific language which is introduced. Their questions need to focus more often on pupils who choose to make no contributions during class discussions, in order to assess and develop these pupils' learning.
106. The science co-ordinator took up her role in September 2002, and found that procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in the subject were underdeveloped. She has made a good start by analysing pupils' responses in the national tests in Year 6 in 2002 with considerable rigour. This has enabled her to identify strengths and areas for improvement in pupils' work, and she has communicated these clearly to her colleagues. The co-ordinator's commitment and enthusiasm for the subject are strong, and she has good scientific knowledge. These qualities are having a beneficial effect, including through the useful advice she readily provides for her colleagues, through the popular after-school science club she runs for pupils in Years 3 to 6, and through her thorough audit and efficient organisation of science resources. However, there is still work to be done to improve monitoring in science. Although the co-ordinator has begun to examine some examples of teachers' planning for the subject, this is not fully established, and she recognises the need for a more systematic and rigorous analysis of examples of pupils' work, from across the school, to judge pupils' standards and progress. Although, each term, teachers usefully assess examples of every pupil's science work in their class, and this work is kept in individual record books, little use is made of this valuable resource to judge the progress of pupils as they move through the school. The co-ordinator has had no opportunity to observe teaching in science lessons, and this also limits her awareness of good practice as well as elements which require improvement.

The co-ordinator is keen to improve monitoring procedures in science, and would benefit from well-focused in-service training to help her to develop this aspect of her role. Resources for science are satisfactory, and are well organised.

ART AND DESIGN

107. Due to timetabling arrangements, it was only possible to observe part of one lesson in art and design during the inspection, so no overall judgement can be made about the quality of teaching in the subject. However, a careful analysis of pupils' completed work provides secure evidence to judge pupils' progress and standards in art and design. In Years 1 and 2, pupils' achievements are generally satisfactory and represent sound progress. Standards in Year 2 are broadly average. In Years 3 to 6, pupils' progress is variable, ranging from good to unsatisfactory. Their progress is generally adequate in Years 3 and 4, and pupils in the Year 5 class, taught by the art and design co-ordinator, achieve well. However, the progress made by pupils in the oldest class is unsatisfactory and results in overall standards being below average in Year 6. Pupils' spasmodic progress stems from variations in teachers' knowledge and confidence, and in weaknesses in planning which mean the progressive development of pupils' key skills is not secure.
108. In Year 1, pupils have created sketches of the local church during a recent visit, and have painted self portraits. These demonstrate standards that are broadly adequate for their ages but there is very little evidence of higher achievement. In Year 2, pupils have made satisfactory progress when using simple viewfinders to inform their drawings of the school environment, and show reasonable skills when drawing pictures which expand the image provided by a magazine picture. Year 2 pupils have experimented with methods to create designs on fabrics, including by painting with dyes and by using felt-tipped pens, and develop their awareness by learning about Malaysian batik pictures. In Year 3, pupils achieve satisfactory standards when creating simple prints, from polystyrene, to reflect symbols and patterns discovered during their work on the Ancient Egyptians. Some Year 3 pupils have achieved well when making colourful abstract paintings which reflect their responses to music as well as their discussions about the work of Kandinsky. Year 4 pupils have created repeating patterns, using a computer program, and these demonstrate satisfactory standards. However, pupils' drawing skills are often below average. In Year 5, pupils have progressed well when learning about the work of Giacometti, and have made their own sculptures from wire and aluminium foil. In addition, they have painted interesting elongated figures which also reflect the artist's work. During the inspection, Year 5 pupils used their knowledge about the work of William Morris to inform their own vibrant designs, and achieved well. In the Year 6 class, the limited evidence of pupils' completed work reflects the low priority given to the subject. The evidence which is available shows clearly that pupils' drawing skills are below average, and that expectations for pupils' potential achievements in art and design are too low. When the school was last inspected, standards were average in Years 2 and 6.
109. In the Year 5 class, where the brief observation of teaching was observed, it was evident that the well-informed art co-ordinator was providing pupils with good support. Pupils were fully involved in their tasks and were justifiably proud of their designs, which reflected elements of the work of William Morris. However, pupils' completed work, from across the school, suggests that some teachers would benefit from in-service training to increase their knowledge and to raise their expectations of pupils' potential achievement in the subject, especially in relation to the progressive development of pupils' drawing skills. In particular, expectations are too low in the Year 6 class, where art and design also needs a higher profile in the curriculum.

110. The co-ordinator is very enthusiastic and has good subject knowledge. She willingly provides advice to her colleagues, when it is requested, and sets a good example through the work achieved by her class. In addition, she runs a popular art club and organised a very successful Art Week in 2002. Some of the impressive products of the Art Week are displayed around the school, reflecting the good involvement of a range of visiting artists. At present, however, systematic procedures for monitoring and developing the subject are not securely established. The co-ordinator does not analyse teachers' planning, and her awareness of pupils' standards is not informed by a sufficiently rigorous scrutiny of pupils' work from across the school. She appropriately recognises that more emphasis should be given to the progressive development of key skills in the subject, as pupils move through the school, and that some teachers would benefit from in-service training in art and design. Resources for the subject are satisfactory.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

111. During the inspection only two design and technology lessons were taught. Judgements are therefore based on the lessons observed, a scrutiny of teachers' planning and pupils' work, and discussions with staff. The school provided a useful portfolio of evidence and design and technology featured strongly in the work on display around the school. Pupils make sound progress in design and technology across the school and, in Years 2 and 6, their achievements are in line with national expectations. This represents an improvement since the last inspection when standards were judged to be unsatisfactory.
112. Some of the work undertaken by pupils has been part of whole school projects. These provide a good impetus for design and technology activities, and enable pupils to make sound progress in the subject. For example, pupils in Year 1 consider shoe designs with a particular focus on fastenings, while Year 2 pupils successfully investigate how to join pieces of fabric together. In Year 3, pupils create interesting designs, based on their own ideas, and then use pneumatics to make models with moving parts. In Year 4, pupils design a watch for a special occasion, with particular attention as to how it was attached to the wrist, while in Year 6, pupils create adornments for clothing as part of their Ancient Greece study. 'World Book Day' is also used effectively by teachers to provide another opportunity for design and technology activities. The theme of 'books' provides a stimulating starting point for practical work throughout the school, and pupils' efforts show clear evidence of the design process being followed and of detailed evaluations being undertaken. Pupils demonstrate sound skills, for example, when designing a house for a fairy tale character in Year 1, making Treasure Islands with volcanoes in Year 2, fairy tale confectionery houses in Year 3 and puppets of favourite characters in Years 5 and 6. The school now needs to extend the range of work to include greater use of resistant materials and components.
113. Insufficient lessons were observed to make a secure judgement about the quality of teaching. In the two lessons observed during the inspection, in Years 3 and 4, the quality of teaching was good. This was the result of good planning, the provision of a range of appropriate resources and a good introduction in which learning objectives and expectations were made clear. In both lessons, teachers also effectively summarised learning at the end of the session, skilfully extending pupils' knowledge with focused questions and using appropriate technical vocabulary. The pupils obviously enjoyed the lessons, demonstrated positive attitudes to the subject and

behaved well. Their learning was enhanced because they were able to work co-operatively in groups whilst investigating possible answers to the task.

114. The design and technology co-ordinator, although new to the post, has made a good start by ensuring that an appropriate curriculum is in place. Teachers' planning is monitored, and finished work reviewed, but as yet there has been no opportunity to observe any teaching of the subject. A good range of tools has been purchased and, overall, resources are satisfactory. However, they would be improved by a range of construction kits for pupils to use when modelling ideas for designs.

GEOGRAPHY

115. As a result of timetabling arrangements, only two geography lessons were observed during the inspection. Judgements are made on the evidence of the lessons that were seen, a scrutiny of teachers' planning and pupils' work, and discussions with staff and pupils. In Years 1 and 2, pupils make mainly satisfactory progress in extending their knowledge and understanding of places, patterns and processes, and the standards which they achieve are broadly in line with national expectations. This represents an improvement since the last inspection when the standards of younger pupils were judged to be below those expected. The very little limited amount of completed work available for scrutiny in Years 3 to 6 indicates that older pupils make spasmodic and, consequently, unsatisfactory progress in acquiring geographical skills, knowledge and understanding. Standards are below average by the end of Year 6 in contrast to the last inspection when they were judged to be in line with those expected nationally.
116. Pupils in Year 1 benefit from visits around the school and into the local area aimed at providing opportunities for them to make observations and to ask important questions about the place in which they live. They build effectively on the knowledge and understanding gained from valuable 'fieldwork' undertaken in the reception class. Pupils can identify features in the immediate locality of the school and create simple maps, for example, of their journey to school. In Year 2, pupils appropriately compare their own locality with the remote island of Struay by following the stories of 'Katie Morag'. These capture their imagination and help them to gain an understanding of the similarities and differences of a contrasting locality. Year 2 pupils also deepen their understanding of the notion of travel, and their awareness of places further afield, by following 'Barnaby Bear's' journeys around the world and through a study of life in Malaysia.
117. In Years 3 to 6, some valuable work is undertaken in this subject but the progressive development of key geographical skills is unsatisfactory. This is mainly because of the fragmented nature of the school's long term plan which results in little or no focus on geography for significant amounts of the year, particularly in some year groups. No completed work was available for Years 3 and 5/6, while the Year 4 study of 'Village Settlers' contains few examples of work with a specific geographical focus.
118. It is not possible to make a secure judgement about the quality of teaching. Helpful guidance, published by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, is being used to inform the school's planning and this is having a positive impact on classroom practice. For example, in a Year 4 lesson, good teaching and well-organised practical activities enabled pupils to recognise the environmental impact of rubbish, and to begin to appreciate the need for recycling. Work planned for later in the school year appropriately includes further work on the local area in Year 3, the study of a village in India in Year 4 and the investigation of rivers and coasts in Years 5/6. However, the

school's long term planning should be reviewed to ensure the progressive development of key skills in the subject and the regular use of fieldwork activities.

119. The co-ordinator is well qualified to lead the subject and is enthusiastic about its development. She is in her second year as co-ordinator and has formulated a helpful subject policy, although this has yet to be discussed and agreed by staff and governors. The co-ordinator has looked at examples of work in pupils' assessment books but a more comprehensive survey is now required to identify strengths and areas for development across the school. Resources for Years 1 and 2 have been audited and improved and consideration is now being given to ensuring that the units of work for older pupils are better resourced. Overall, resources are barely adequate. Those for the study of contrasting localities overseas should be updated and improved as well as the school's provision of globes, maps, photographs, ICT resources and reference books.

HISTORY

120. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, standards in history are average. During a period when priority has necessarily been given to English and mathematics, teachers have done well to maintain these standards since the last inspection. They have been supported in this by the adoption of national guidelines to address the shortcomings in planning that were identified at that time.
121. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, achieve satisfactorily. They make sound progress in developing their knowledge, skills and understanding in all areas of history. They are introduced to a good range of sources of information. These include historical artefacts, books, videos, pictures and photographs, and teachers make good use of the Internet to download information for use in the classroom. However, there is little evidence of pupils using ICT to support and extend their learning.
122. Teachers successfully promote younger pupils' interest in the past by focusing their attention on toys and other familiar objects. As a result, pupils can look for similarities and differences between then and now, and then acquire knowledge about people and events in the more distant past by the end of Year 2. By listening to stories, they begin to appreciate the difference between fact and fiction. This is evident in their current study of Mary Seacole which is enlivened by the effective use of video. Their knowledge and understanding of the passing of time is effectively promoted through the regular use of timelines and the sequencing of episodes in the lives of people such as Guy Fawkes. Their learning is successfully extended when they consider how and why he is commemorated today and the impact he still has on our lives.
123. In Years 3 and 4, pupils begin to consider dates by plotting the arrival of the Romans and the later invaders and settlers. They are encouraged to think about the impact of these people on Britain and investigate Celtic, Roman, Anglo-Saxon and Viking place names. The majority of older pupils develop good attitudes to their work, although a small minority, mainly boys, is difficult to motivate and presents teachers with a significant challenge. Most pupils complete a good volume of work in their study of Ancient Greece and acquire a good bank of knowledge about Victorian Bridport and the development of the local area.
124. In the lessons seen, the quality of teaching was mainly good. In the best practice, teachers were able to enthuse pupils through their own interest and knowledge of history, and to ask carefully worded questions to help pupils to think and draw upon

their own knowledge and understanding. This was evident in Year 3, where the teacher's expressive reading was interspersed skilfully with well-timed questions about the Ancient Egyptians' burial customs. Most teachers plan their lessons thoroughly so that pupils are motivated by the tasks set. Frequently this involves well-chosen resources to support pupils' learning. For example, older pupils were being introduced to the 1881 census materials. In the most successful of these lessons, pupils analysed data relating to the Bridport workhouse. The teacher's sensitive handling of the text, which contained phrases and terms that are considered to be inappropriate today, had a strong influence on pupils' historical understanding. It helped to develop and extend their ability to empathise with people and events from the past. Teaching is less effective when teachers' intentions lack clarity. This leads to a slower pace of learning and makes it more difficult to manage the restless behaviour that sometimes ensues.

125. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and enthusiastic and has clear ideas about future developments in the subject. Assessment procedures to check on pupils' progress are being introduced but she is aware that if they are going to be fully effective they need to focus more closely on the development of skills as well as on knowledge and understanding. The subject is in a strong position now to move forward by using these procedures to identify precisely what pupils need to do in order to improve. However, history has not been seen as a priority in recent years so there have been few opportunities for her to develop her leadership role. For example, she has not been able to observe teaching and learning directly in order to share best practice with colleagues.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

126. In the last inspection, the school's provision for ICT and pupils' attainment in the subject were judged to be unsatisfactory. Since then the school has made very good progress in updating its resources and has developed the curriculum to ensure that it meets current expectations. As a consequence, most pupils now make sound progress in ICT. By the end of Year 2, the majority achieve the standard expected and some pupils do better. This good start provides a secure foundation for future work in Years 3 to 6 and, consequently, standards in Year 6 are broadly in line with those expected nationally.
127. Year 1 pupils use the mouse with confidence to 'drag and drop'. For example, in one lesson that was observed, they made very good progress in their learning as they used this skill to sort two-dimensional shapes. Clearly stated objectives for the session, careful preparation and well-targeted questioning by the teacher ensured that all pupils focused on the criteria for classifying shapes and worked at a good pace. Year 2 pupils demonstrate the ability to 'log on' and follow instructions to load a program, some being able to achieve this independently. They can enter text and then change the style and size of the font. They understand how to write capital letters and are familiar with the space bar. In Year 4, pupils can locate 'saved' files and use pre-loaded data to create pie charts showing various groupings. They are then able to print out their work. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are beginning to create 'PowerPoint' presentations. They can combine text and pictures from a number of sources to form slides and can insert links between pages. The oldest pupils use computers enthusiastically, are very willing to try out new programs and functions and work confidently with the skills being taught in lessons. However, they do not yet have the opportunity to utilise wider knowledge and experience to enhance their work. In particular, higher attaining pupils are not always fully challenged and this contributes to some underachievement by this group. Pupils with special educational needs

make satisfactory progress because of good support in lessons from teachers and support staff. However, in some lessons, provision would be improved by work that is more closely matched to their needs.

128. The quality of teaching ranges from very good to unsatisfactory but, overall, is satisfactory. Teachers demonstrate sound subject knowledge, are confident in the use of the computers and are comfortable when using the recently established computer suite. They demonstrate expertise with the 'interactive' white board that is being used as a powerful teaching tool and is therefore contributing to the quality of pupils' learning. In the most effective lessons, the teacher is well prepared, communicates clear learning objectives to the pupils and ensures that the work set challenges all pupils. This good teaching is often enhanced by very good support from the classroom assistants. In an occasional less effective lesson, the planning is weaker and pupils mark time because the tasks set are not well matched to their needs.
129. Following the recent creation of a new computer suite, the school is beginning to make more use of ICT to support pupils' learning across the curriculum. The suite is also being well used out of school hours, for example, for an ICT Breakfast Club that is aimed at Year 2 and Year 6 pupils. This is well run by a classroom assistant and the pupils who attend demonstrate a skill level higher than national expectations.
130. The subject is well led by a knowledgeable and enthusiastic co-ordinator who has ensured that an appropriate curriculum framework has been established. He has also drawn up a comprehensive strategic development plan for ICT, and new wireless technology is already being introduced into some classrooms. Training has been undertaken by staff but there is a need for a continuing programme, and most teachers would now benefit from a greater knowledge of available software and online resources. A start has been made on assessing pupils' progress and achievements and this should help in raising standards further. Resources are now good.

MUSIC

131. Due to timetabling arrangements, it was only possible to observe three music lessons during the inspection. As a result, insufficient evidence was available to make secure overall judgements about pupils' standards and achievements in the subject, or about the quality of teaching. When the school was last inspected, standards were below average in Years 2 and 6.
132. Evidence from pupils' singing in assemblies and during hymn practice shows their performance is satisfactory for their ages. The vast majority sing with clear diction, and their control of pitch and dynamics is reasonable. A strong feature of whole school singing is pupils' positive attitudes, they clearly enjoy singing, and staff provide good role models through their active participation. In hymn practice, three teachers worked together effectively to lead the session, motivating pupils well and providing a sense of community in the shared performance.
133. In the lesson observed in Year 1, which was taught by a visiting teacher, pupils' progress was barely adequate. This was largely because some tasks were not well matched to their learning needs. In general, however, pupils' skills in recognising and repeating simple rhythm patterns were broadly satisfactory for their ages. In a Year 2 class, satisfactory teaching enabled pupils to make adequate progress, and to demonstrate reasonable standards when learning to play percussion instruments, including when to play loudly or more quietly. In a lesson seen in the older half of the

school, pupils' composition skills were poor, and they made very limited progress due to weaknesses in the teaching. Although too few lessons were seen to judge the overall quality of teaching, there are indications of variability in teachers' expertise and pupils' progress which show clear scope for improvement.

134. The school responded to criticisms about music in the last report by employing visiting music specialists to teach each class for a term during the year. This has helped to enhance the level of informed teaching for the pupils. However, little specific training has been provided for permanent school staff to increase their confidence and skills in teaching the subject, and teachers have not always been expected to observe the teaching of their classes by the specialist musicians. The recently appointed music co-ordinator is currently absent, through illness, and procedures for monitoring and developing the subject are not securely established. Weaknesses in assessment in music, identified by the last inspection, have yet to be fully rectified. Resources for music are satisfactory but require reorganising.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

135. Overall standards in physical education are average. However, as a result of very good teaching, standards in swimming are above average with almost all pupils meeting, and many exceeding, expected levels before they leave the school. In addition, and again as a result of very good teaching, above average standards were seen in a dance lesson in Year 2. Most pupils achieve satisfactorily and there is no difference in standards attained by boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated into lessons and make similar progress to their peers. Teams representing the school achieve considerable success in local competitions.
136. The physical education curriculum includes all the essential elements of the National Curriculum. Dance, games, gymnastics and swimming are taught throughout the school with the addition of athletics and outdoor and adventurous activities for older pupils. National guidelines have been adopted as a basis for teachers' planning and these are supplemented by commercial and local authority guidance. These are used well by teachers but they would benefit further from being brought together in a more structured scheme of work.
137. In Year 1, pupils demonstrate sound levels of control when throwing and catching bean bags and balls over short distances. Many begin to develop these basic skills in a game situation. Their awareness of space and their ability to talk about their performance is less well developed. In dance lessons, pupils in Year 2 work well together. They collaborate successfully to compose their own versions of the 'Circassian Circle'. Each group is encouraged to work independently to produce original movements and this also contributes to their personal development.
138. In Year 3, pupils sustain high levels of activity and make good gains in their understanding of the need for rules when devising their own games involving attacking and defending. However, their awareness of space and other pupils when moving around the hall is still not as good as it should be in pupils of this age. In Year 4, pupils work hard and persevere well to improve their technique in the swimming pool. Despite their enthusiasm, a small number of boys make slower progress. They do not listen closely to instructions and often are not clear about what is expected of them. Although pupils in Years 5 and 6 work hard and attain high standards in swimming, they do not always demonstrate these responsible attitudes in dance and games lessons. This contributes to the below average standards seen in a dance lesson in Year 5. In Year 6, they show appropriate levels of control and co-ordination

when executing a range of basic fitness related exercises including skipping and sit-ups.

139. In the lessons seen, the quality of teaching and learning was good overall, although it ranged from very good to unsatisfactory. Most lessons were well structured, with a warm-up and a balance of individual practices building into small group or whole class activities. They ended with a cool-down and calming phase before returning to the classroom. On one occasion the cool-down was usefully combined with a review of gains made during the lesson. In the most successful lesson, a dance lesson in Year 2, the teacher conveyed her high expectations to the pupils by sharing ambitious and challenging objectives. After each group performed their dance an evaluation sheet was completed. This was particularly effective as a means of involving pupils in checking their own progress and making judgements about their own and others' performances. This successful strategy of encouraging pupils to comment on their movements is missing from many lessons. Occasionally, teachers' strategies for managing the challenging behaviour, of a few older pupils in particular, are not effective and this affects the pace and continuity of learning by all pupils.
140. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and enthusiastic about her subject. With the support of her colleagues she is heavily involved in a very good range of after-school clubs and activities where pupils practise and extend their skills in informal situations. These sessions also contribute to pupils' personal development by encouraging them to pursue their own interests and to work with pupils from other classes. However, there have been few opportunities in recent years for her to develop her leadership role. As a result, there has been no whole school agreement about the systematic development of pupils' skills across the age-range, not only in performing but also in planning and evaluating their work. It is often difficult, therefore, for teachers without specialist knowledge to identify what pupils need to do next in order to improve.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

141. Evidence from lessons observed and from the scrutiny of pupils' work shows that pupils' make mainly sound, and occasionally good, progress in religious education. The standards attained in Years 2 and 6 broadly meet the expectations set out in the locally agreed syllabus for pupils aged seven and 11. However, some staff are still familiarising themselves with the requirements of this new syllabus, and, as a consequence, it is not yet being implemented consistently in every year group.
142. Throughout their time in the school, pupils develop a secure knowledge of the Christian traditions, stories and festivals that form part of their Christian cultural heritage. Through assemblies, through visits to local churches and through contact with several local members of the clergy who are regular visitors to the school, pupils learn that Christianity is a religious faith which holds very special significance for those who follow the teachings of Jesus Christ. For example, having visited the local church of St Mary's, pupils in Year 1 know that the christening ceremony marks the time when a person - usually, though not always, a baby - is welcomed into the Christian 'family' that is wider than their own. They know that christening candles symbolise coming from darkness into God's light, and they recognise the cross as a sign used to remind Christians of Jesus' sacrifice for mankind. In answer to their teacher's questions during a very good lesson seen, pupils in Year 1 also demonstrate the ability to draw parallels between Christian values and events in their own lives and in the lives of others. For example, they understand that some things are special not in themselves but because of what they represent. It is clear from their expressions and from their rapt attention that they understand what their teacher

means when she talks about the value she attaches to her wedding ring, not for its financial value but rather as a token of her husband's love and of his caring attitude. Later, they talk with great sensitivity about things that, in a similar way, are 'special' for them. Work produced by pupils in Year 2 shows that they have understood the main events in Jesus' life leading up to Easter. They are aware of objects such as palm crosses and hot-cross buns which carry the sign of the cross in remembrance of Jesus' death, and they know that Easter eggs symbolise the 'new life' implicit in the resurrection. By the time pupils reach Year 3, they know the Christmas story well. Recalling the gifts brought to the infant Jesus by the three wise men and by the shepherds, they are able to consider the relevance of the story for their own times when they suggest 'gifts' such as 'peace' and 'freedom from hunger' that they would wish to bring to the world.

143. In the Year 5/6 class, pupils are aware of the main messages of Christianity as communicated through the teachings of Jesus in the New Testament. In a particularly good lesson in this class, pupils also reveal an unusual depth of knowledge and understanding of religion. For example, they are able to make meaningful comparisons between the rules for living known in the Judaeo-Christian tradition as the 'Ten Commandments', and those encapsulated in the ten 'Great Observances' or 'Yama' of Hinduism.
144. From their early years in school, pupils are aware that religious traditions in the United Kingdom are mainly Christian. However, their studies also develop some awareness of other major world faiths. Overall, by the time they are 11, they have a satisfactory level of knowledge and understanding of Judaism, Hinduism and Islam. However, the range and depth of their studies of each of these faiths vary substantially. While the work produced by pupils in the Year 5/6 class is extensive and reflective, evidence shows that, in some classes, coverage of faiths other than Christianity is rather superficial. As a consequence, pupils are not always given sufficient opportunity to explore what believers learn from their religion, or to draw parallels between different religions.
145. The full range of evidence available shows that the teaching of religious education is mainly sound, although the lessons seen in one Year 1 class and in the Year 5/6 class were taught very well indeed. In these lessons, teachers challenged pupils to reflect deeply on their own experience and to explore the principles and values which underpin religious faith. Discussions were handled sensitively, and the trust between teachers and pupils was such that pupils were willing to talk about their feelings as well as about facts. The teachers concerned have a very good understanding of the agreed syllabus and of religious education as a subject, and their teaching is confident. They respond thoughtfully to pupils' comments and questions, and they are able to draw on their own experiences and on their extensive knowledge of the subject to provide meaningful illustrations or to deepen pupils' understanding. Available evidence shows that not all staff teach from such a secure basis of knowledge and understanding. In some classes, teachers have not yet had time to assimilate and implement the requirements of the new agreed syllabus, while some teachers seem unclear as to whether the syllabi for religious education and PSHE should be integrated or separate. Occasionally, as in a Year 4 lesson about Easter, planned opportunities for pupils to consider the impact of religious belief on human emotions are not given sufficient weight, the main focus remaining on facts and events, and, sometimes, as in a Year 5 lesson, contemporary events such as raising funds for charity which reflect the 'Christian ethos' are not linked explicitly enough to the example set by Jesus in his work.

146. There have been frequent changes in responsibility for the co-ordination of religious education in recent years. The current post-holder has as yet had no opportunity to undertake formal monitoring and evaluation of teaching or learning. A very good teacher of religious education herself, she has helped other staff with planning, and is currently endeavouring to ensure that the new agreed syllabus is embedded in practice. In so doing, it will be important to ensure that there is an agreed policy about the teaching of religious education in relation to the teaching of PSHE. In order to secure progression in pupils' learning, it will also be important to ensure that all staff give due weight not only to teaching about religion, but also to helping pupils understand, with increasing depth and complexity, what has been, and what still can be, learned from religion.
147. Resources for religious education are broadly satisfactory, although provision would be further improved by the acquisition of artefacts, in particular to support the teaching of Hinduism and Islam, and also by updating library resources. Effective use is made of visits to local churches to support work on Christianity, for example in the work produced by pupils in Year 4, and members of the local clergy make a significant contribution to pupils' knowledge and understanding. There are currently no opportunities for pupils to visit places of worship in relation to their study of other major world faiths.