

INSPECTION REPORT

CERNE ABBAS CE VC FIRST SCHOOL

Cerne Abbas, Dorset

LEA area: Dorset

Unique reference number: 113759

Headteacher: Jean Riley

Reporting inspector: Mr Dennis Maxwell

8798

Dates of inspection: 16th – 18th June 2003

Inspection number: 247403

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First
School category:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 to 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Duck Street Cerne Abbas Dorchester
Postcode:	DT2 7LA
Telephone number:	01300 341319
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	David Forrester
Date of previous inspection:	April 2001

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
8798	D Maxwell	Registered inspector	Mathematics Science Design and technology Information and communication technology Physical education Provision for pupils with English as an additional language Educational inclusion	Information about the school The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well the school is led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
19567	M Malin	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
2229	D Hansen	Team inspector	Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage English Art and design Geography History Music Religious education Provision for pupils with special educational needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Cerne Abbas First is a church school for pupils aged 4 to 9 years. It is much smaller than other primary schools, with 67 pupils on roll from Reception to Year 4. Around one quarter of pupils come to this popular school from outside the immediate area. It is situated centrally in the village and has enjoyed strong connections with the nearby church for 160 years. It serves families in the local and wider community, whose socio-economic circumstances are more favourable overall than those found nationally. The children's attainment on entry to the school is broadly average. Fewer pupils than average are known to be eligible for free school meals but this may not represent the full picture. Very few pupils come from ethnic minority heritages and the proportion of pupils whose mother tongue is not English is low. The percentage of pupils identified as having learning difficulties, most of whom have moderate learning needs, is above average. The percentage of pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Need is average. In common with other schools in the area it has experienced difficulty in recruiting and maintaining a stable staff.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school provides a satisfactory standard of education. It is a happy and successful school in many ways and is a focus for much support and activity in the area. Standards overall by Years 2 and 4 are broadly average and there is good progress in some activities. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. The curriculum meets statutory requirements. There is good provision in Reception and the story sacks of hand-made items promote pupils' love of literature. The leadership and management by the headteacher and governing body are good, showing evidence of good recent improvement and giving the school a good sense of direction that has been effective in sorting out the under-achievement found at the time of the last inspection. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards in religious education are above average.
- Pupils' attitudes to their work and their behaviour are good. The school supports pupils' personal development well. Attendance is very good.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- Provision for pupils with learning difficulties is good. The curriculum is considerably enhanced by the contribution of the community, for example the regular support for information and communication technology (ICT) and by extra-curricular activities.
- Leadership by the headteacher and governing body are good and give good direction for developments.
- Procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare are very good. The school works hard to form good relationships with parents and, overall, there is an open, honest and very good partnership.

What could be improved

- The quality of pupils' learning experiences is sometimes narrow and tasks do not always challenge them.
- The school has not made sufficient creative and productive opportunities for working in depth in all subjects.
- The teachers do not apply a consistent approach to behaviour management for minor incidents.
- The accommodation is poor and is a restriction on pupils' learning.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in April 2001 when it was judged to be under-achieving. It has made good improvements since then by tackling the identified weaknesses rigorously. There are good procedures to monitor standards. The standard of teaching has improved. Standards in ICT now meet the expectation. The school has agreed a clear policy for behaviour and monitors pupils' more challenging behaviour closely. The focus on English and mathematics has led to improving standards. Standards overall have risen in line with national trends. The weaknesses in leadership and management have been resolved and the capacity for further improvement is very good.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
reading	B	C	A	C
writing	C	B	B	C
mathematics	B	B	E	E

Key

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

Standards in the work seen by inspectors in English, mathematics and science by the end of Years 2 and 4 are average, maintaining the position since the last inspection. Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are satisfactory and they make satisfactory progress. Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress towards their targets. The differences in standards between the work seen and the 2002 test results are due to the variations caused by small year groups. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 build successfully on earlier learning. They demonstrate a growing confidence with number and take an active interest in science experiments. Lesson observations across the subjects show that pupils achieve appropriately and reach the expected standards overall by Years 2 and 4. Some work is of good quality, for example the higher attaining pupils' writing of stories and factual accounts.

The table above shows that standards in the national tests in Year 2 in 2002 were well above the national average in reading, above average in writing and well below average in mathematics. In comparison with schools having a similar proportion of free school meals, standards were average in reading and writing and well below average in mathematics. The lower standards in mathematics relate to the larger proportion of pupils than usual not gaining the expected level 2 as well as the effects of small year groups. The three-year averages, which give a better interpretation to offset the effects of small year groups, are above the national averages for all tests. The trend in standards at Year 2 has been broadly in line with the national trend.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. The school is successful in encouraging pupils to have positive attitudes to learning and respect each other. Pupils are interested in their activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils understand and usually follow the expectations for good behaviour. A few pupils have silly behaviour which does not help their learning.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good. Pupils were seen to have a sensitive response to friends with special educational needs. Their initiative and personal responsibility are good.
Attendance	Very good. Pupils' enthusiasm for school is demonstrated by the high level of attendance. Pupils are punctual in getting to school and lessons begin on time.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is good overall and promotes good learning. The teaching of English and literacy skills and of mathematics and numeracy skills is satisfactory. The good choice of many worthwhile tasks promotes good learning. Teachers focus well on basic learning skills across all subjects although the recent focus on literacy and numeracy, while effective in leading to improving standards, has tended to reduce the emphasis on research and independent learning. Nevertheless, in the Reception class teaching is good and teachers ask children open-ended questions to develop their fluency and confidence in reasoning. In the infant class pupils had the excitement of looking at a fresh mackerel, which prompted a high level of interest and productive learning. Pupils with special educational needs participated fully in the lesson. Pupils in the junior class applied their ICT skills effectively to research Van Gogh, supported very well by dedicated members of the community. Teachers' daily assessment is good and the teachers use the information to ask further questions or in lesson planning. Teachers prepare carefully to provide for the learning needs of all pupils, although the work for the higher attaining pupils is not always challenging enough. Support for pupils with learning difficulties or a Statement of Special Educational Need is usually very good, with a high level of perceptive care that takes the individual nature of their needs into account. Attention to the specific needs of children learning English as an additional language is also good.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory and meets statutory requirements. The school correctly made the decision to focus on English and mathematics over the past two years. While other subjects were maintained satisfactorily the time allocations tended to limit the depth of work produced in other subjects. Members of staff are now well placed to review and improve the curriculum as a whole.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good overall. Provision is generally excellent for pupils with a Statement although the transition arrangements this year from Reception to Year 1 initially were not successful. Support for pupils with learning difficulties is planned carefully. The support assistants provide a high level of perceptive care.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Thorough teaching and individual support when needed enables pupils to take a full part in activities and enjoy learning.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good, particularly for moral and social development. The school encourages pupils to be considerate to others. Cultural development is satisfactory. Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory; it is fostered in a few lessons but is not built into lesson planning and opportunities are lost.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Procedures for child protection and pupils' welfare are very good. All adults provide a good level of personal care for the pupils. Assessment procedures are good; annual reports give a good picture of progress.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	The parents appreciate the good, open relationship with the school. The great majority of parents find it straightforward to discuss a problem and to reach agreement. Communication with parents is mostly very good although there are occasional misunderstandings.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher has achieved good improvement in management, procedures and quality of provision through personal effort, a team approach and harnessing the goodwill of the local community. She has tackled issues identified in the last inspection with honesty and a determination to improve.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors take on their responsibilities well with commitment, energy and loyalty. They work with the school productively and consider issues carefully. The governors have agreed an appropriate policy for anti-racism.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The headteacher has a reflective perception of strengths and weaknesses in the school. The good teamwork amongst the staff and governors promotes an honest evaluation of the quality of work, supported by developing procedures.
The strategic use of resources	The level of staffing and learning resources is satisfactory. Specific grants are used well for their intended purposes. Funding is spent for carefully planned improvements. The school applies the principles of obtaining best value very well and benefits from the excellent personality and skills of the secretary. The accommodation is poor and is a restriction on pupils' learning.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school, are expected to work hard, make good progress and the teaching is good. • Most parents think behaviour is good and the school helps their child to grow up. • Most feel comfortable about mentioning a problem and think the school is managed well. • Most parents think the school provides good opportunities for activities outside school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A few parents think their child does not get the right amount of work to do at home. • Several do not feel well-informed about their child's progress. • Several feel the school does not work closely with them.

The inspectors agree with the parents' positive opinions. Inspectors checked homework arrangements and judged that a suitable amount is usually given that increases appropriately as the children get older. There are good arrangements for parents to see the headteacher or class teacher after school or by appointment; and the annual reports are generally well written and convey clear information about progress over the year. While there have been occasional lapses in working relationships with parents, the headteacher and all staff are highly committed to the welfare and education of the children, which includes giving careful consideration to parents' concerns.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Standards in the work seen during the inspection in English, mathematics and science are average by Years 2 and 4. This maintains the standards seen at the time of the last inspection. Standards in the work seen during the inspection in the other subjects are also broadly average. Standards in ICT have improved since the last inspection, as have standards in religious education which exceed the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus by Years 2 and 4. The school has tackled the weaknesses identified at the last inspection with determined effort by all staff, and the success comes from a combination of good teaching, the good choice of tasks and thorough monitoring and support procedures.

2. Standards in the 2002 national tests at Year 2 were well above average in reading, above average in writing and well below average in mathematics. There was a particularly good performance in reading where a higher proportion than usual exceeded the expectation. This relates to the strong focus on hearing children read by members of both the staff and the local community. Taking the three-year averages, from 2000 - 2002, as a more balanced way of reporting results with such small year groups, pupils' performance in each of the tests was above the national average. The school made good arrangements to teach the pupils in Year 2 as a separate group during this year for some English and mathematics lessons in order to raise standards, recognising the difficulties of teaching the mixed-age class. This has been successful, particularly for English. The performance of boys and girls over the past three years taken together has been similar

3. In comparison with similar schools, having from 0 - 8 per cent of pupils identified as entitled to free school meals, standards in the 2002 national tests were average in reading and writing, and well below average in mathematics. Standards in science, gained from teachers' assessments, were well below the national average. Taking all the results together, pupils' performance in the national tests and assessments was above the national average. This indicates that the school is making generally good provision in teaching and the choice of challenging tasks. It also indicates, treating the results of the small cohort with caution, that the pupils achieved well overall and made good progress from the broadly average attainment on entry to the school.

4. The school has identified several pupils as having special educational needs. Most classes have around a quarter of the pupils on the special needs register. This has a lowering effect on standards, but pupils are keen to take part in lessons and work hard with support, which is helping to raise standards. The school now has a stable teaching staff, although there had been a high turnover of staff previously, and classes were adversely affected by changes of teacher. The school management is giving clear direction which is promoting good achievement by the pupils.

5. The school's initial assessments and inspection evidence indicate that pupils' attainment on entry to the school is broadly average. Most children have a range of skills broadly typical for their age though children's attainment on entry varies from year to year. Many children have attended locally provided pre-school groups and are developing linguistic and social skills. Most children make sound progress and achieve in line with national expectations by the time they enter Year 1. The school has given a high priority to pupils' personal development and this is helping to raise standards.

6. Pupils with special educational needs are identified early so that appropriate work can be devised for them. Targets in their individual education plans are clear and guide teachers and support staff well. When supported one-to-one pupils usually make good progress. There is a small minority of pupils who find it difficult to concentrate and behave well and this weakness needs addressing through the drawing up of a revised, and consistently applied behaviour management policy, linked to individual behaviour support plans. While the progress of these pupils is satisfactory overall, they achieve more where the teacher and support staff are able to manage the pupils' behaviour well. The school has well-managed arrangements for pupils with learning difficulties to receive additional support which enable them to make good progress. The good provision and the well-targeted support given by teaching assistants helps the pupils to make good gains in the skills identified in their education plans. The generally excellent provision and support for pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Need ensures good progress towards targets in the education plans. The transfer arrangements in September 2002 from Reception to Year 1 initially were not successful but they were adapted appropriately to take account of the clearly-identified learning and emotional needs.

7. There are no significant variations in standards among pupils of different ethnic groups or background, or in relation to gender. Pupils for whom English is an additional language make similar progress to their peers and attain similar standards. The teachers' generally good emphasis on speech and language helps all pupils to take part and contribute in lessons.

8. In English, inspection findings indicate that attainment in the current Year 2 is in line with the national average. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are typical of those expected for their age, and most pupils make sound progress in developing confidence when speaking. In reading, standards are typical for their age although some pupils may be capable of achieving higher standards. Most pupils make sound progress because they are taught effectively and have opportunities to read at school and at home. Standards in writing are broadly average. Teachers show pupils how to construct stories and write for a variety of purposes. Standards in handwriting are unsatisfactory and not enough attention is given to neatness and overall presentation. By Year 4, pupils make reasonable progress in their reading, as there is a structured programme and pupils take books home regularly. Standards in writing are typical for their age as pupils are encouraged to use a wide range of vocabulary to improve their written work. The standard of handwriting is unsatisfactory, however, as not all pupils use a joined-up script when writing and presentation is variable. Pupils, including the higher attaining, make satisfactory progress overall in English. The higher attaining pupils' writing demonstrates a good understanding of standard English and style.

9. By the end of Year 2 most pupils have an early understanding of how numbers are composed. They perform simple additions and subtractions correctly. The good teaching in Years 3 - 4 is promoting good learning of pupils' numeracy skills and understanding by the end of Year 4. Most pupils have a reasonable understanding of number and continue to develop their number and calculating skills up to 1000. Pupils' previous work indicates that they are making at least the expected progress and are reaching average standards. The high attaining pupils generally have good, quick skills in mental number, and enjoy the challenge of larger numbers. The recent focus on literacy and numeracy, while effective in leading to improving standards, has tended to reduce the emphasis and opportunities for research and independent learning.

10. In Years 1 and 2 in science the pupils have an early understanding about the human body and animals. They know several foods that are needed to provide a healthy diet and how it may be balanced. Pupils' previous work shows that they have carried out several investigations, although the results are not always set out clearly and explained. Most pupils

understand the need for testing under fair conditions. Pupils use appropriate mathematical skills, such as setting out a table of results or drawing a graph. By Years 3 and 4, pupils have the skills and understanding to experiment with simple electrical circuits and know several materials that are good conductors or that insulate. They demonstrate developing investigational skill, for example in measuring the force of friction. The higher attaining pupils particularly have a good understanding of the effects of heat on some solids and liquids and know that chocolate will solidify again.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. Inspection findings show that the standards of pupils' behaviour and attitudes identified in the previous inspection have improved and are now good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and the parents who returned the inspection questionnaire confirm this.

12. The school is successful in encouraging pupils to have positive attitudes to learning, to value and respect each other and to behave well within the school boundaries. Pupils are very proud of their achievements and are very keen to show adults their work and have it displayed. They talk enthusiastically about the school and the staff and they are enthusiastic and interested in all activities in class, which has a positive impact on their progress.

13. Behaviour in class is good and during break and lunchtime pupils behave well and they thoroughly enjoy and fully participate in the lunchtime extra curricular activities provided for them. Teachers apply differing behaviour strategies to pupils for minor incidents of inappropriate behaviour, which do not help to set consistent expectations for the pupils. No bullying or oppressive behaviour was witnessed during the inspection and the school has no exclusions. Pupils understand class and school rules and every pupil was involved in helping to produce class rules. The school is part of a pyramid system of schools, the Dorchester Area Schools' Partnership, which gives expert support if there is a behaviour problem. This system provides very good support so that pupils' progress is improved.

14. Pupils' understanding of the impact of their actions on others are very good. During personal and social education and also during class discussion times, pupils listened to others carefully but this was also transferred to the classroom situation when pupils still listened to others. Pupils were seen to have a sensitive response to special educational needs and they were prepared to listen to the needs of others. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good. Pupils approach staff with confidence and staff respond warmly and thoughtfully and are very good role models for pupils. There are very good relationships between girls and boys and between pupils of different ages and abilities. All of this contributes to the positive learning atmosphere of the school.

15. Initiative and personal responsibility are good and this is an improvement on the previous inspection. Pupils willingly take on any role that is asked of them. One pupil collects the class register every morning and two pupils take it back to the office after marking. Class helpers are nominated every week and they do a variety of jobs within the classroom such as giving out books and equipment. Every pupil takes responsibility for clearing up at the end of a lesson even in reception class. There is no formal monitoring or recording of personal development. However, pupils are encouraged to bring into school any certificates they receive outside and stars are put on a board in the hallway so that everyone can see what they have achieved. This provides clear encouragement for pupils to achieve well.

16. As a result of focussed and determined efforts, the attendance level is very good at 97 per cent. Pupils miss little work through absence so their learning is better.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

17. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall through the school. The weaknesses identified at the time of the last inspection, notably the management of behaviour and the organisation of learning to enable pupils to be more independent, have been addressed although there are areas that require continuing attention. Teaching has a positive impact on pupils' acquisition of knowledge and skills so that their learning is also good. This indicates an improvement since the last inspection, where the proportion of good or better teaching in Years 1-2 and Years 3-4 was low. Good teaching is now found more evenly across the school, although more so in the Reception and Years 3-4 classes. The improvements follow from the direct positive action by the governors and headteacher in establishing higher expectations, putting clear monitoring and support procedures in place and teaching to the expected standards. Teaching is satisfactory overall in the Year 1-2 class and good overall in the Year 3-4 class. Around a third of teaching observed was good. There are few unsatisfactory elements of teaching, although no unsatisfactory lessons were seen. Aspects to consider for improvement include ensuring that teachers apply consistent behaviour strategies for minor incidents and that planning allows for all subjects to be taught in sufficient depth. The teachers give good attention to pupils' personal development to help them be ready to learn.

18. Teaching is good in the reception class. The teacher and learning support assistants understand how young children learn and make learning enjoyable. The curriculum is well planned. Lessons have clear learning objectives that lead towards the expected learning goals for young children. This is in line with the findings of the previous inspection. The class teacher and other adults provide good role models and have good relationships with the children. They place a strong emphasis on developing social skills, help children to make choices and to take decisions by providing a range of activities at the end of many lessons. Their expectations for pupil performance are good and they consistently encourage the children in order to build their confidence and self esteem. They frequently assess children's skills and understanding, and provide tasks that are well matched to individual needs. Children with special educational needs receive very good support and guidance, and as a result these children make good progress overall.

19. The teaching of English and of mathematics is satisfactory in the infant class and good in the junior class. The teaching across the subjects in the lessons seen and taking account of pupils' previous work, indicated several good aspects and strengths across the curriculum. The teachers have devoted considerable time and effort towards implementing the national literacy and numeracy strategies and teachers are confident in teaching English and mathematics. They have good subject knowledge and have been successful in improving standards. The teaching of literacy and numeracy skills is satisfactory overall, supported by good planning, particularly in the junior class. The teachers ensure that pupils know what is expected of them by writing the learning objectives where everyone can see them. However, the objectives do not always make sufficiently clear how the higher-attaining pupils are to be challenged. The additional time given to literacy activities each day provides good opportunities for pupils to extend their writing horizons and to use literacy skills for different purposes. Pupils in Years 3 and 4, for instance, are challenged with limited-time work for particular tasks. This prepares pupils well for efficient note taking in the next stage of their education. Pupils are beginning to see a purpose in re-drafting work to improve their results. Role-play is improving pupils' speaking and listening skills and increasing their confidence when meeting visitors. Discussions with pupils reveal they enjoy oral work, listening to their teachers read, and writing and listening to poetry. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from good quality support. The application of ICT skills in other subjects is developing well, for example in art and design and history.

20. Teachers and learning support assistants monitor pupils' progress during written tasks and intervene helpfully to move learning on. Assessment of pupils' previous learning is used effectively when planning lessons or for ensuring that tasks are closely matched to the needs of pupils of different age and different ability within the mixed-age classes. While the learning support assistants give good support in class, a small group of pupils on occasion still demonstrate silly behaviour; this distracts the other pupils.

21. In a Years 3 and 4 art and design lesson, pupils engaged in a thoughtful discussion to identify and learn specific vocabulary related to the sea and a fish. By the end of the lesson, most had successfully increased their knowledge and vocabulary. Most pupils were able to explain the lesson objectives that had been set earlier, and could identify whether they had met them.

22. The teachers give careful attention to the teaching of basic skills, such as sounding words correctly and interpretation of texts. They have a good understanding of the skills required across the subjects. The teachers are confident in their explanations to the children, and the very good relationships encourage all children to take part, even if they are unsure of an answer. Teachers explain tasks clearly and ask searching questions that deepen pupils' understanding.

23. Teachers have many suitable teaching strategies, with some particularly effective discussion times, although the planning sheets do not give space for the teaching methods to be set out and thus focus on improving practice. The pace of lessons is usually matched well to the needs of the tasks, although the time allowed is not always sufficient for pupils to complete a task. There are good opportunities for pupils to work in differing pairs or groups, such as in physical education and science. A few pupils find collaboration difficult and teachers or support staff are alert to their needs. The plenary sessions are usually carefully structured to pull the ideas together although these are sometimes too brief to be really useful, for example by bringing out what teachers have noted of pupils' difficulties.

24. The teachers have good expectations of pupils' behaviour. Their usual good management of the pupils and relationships maintain a good working atmosphere, although teachers apply differing strategies for incidental misbehaviour. While on some occasions the incidental misbehaviour is ignored so as not to interrupt the flow of a lesson on other occasions the approach is more confrontational and does not encourage pupils' self discipline. In either case there is some adverse impact on learning. Resources are used well in most lessons. Learning support assistants and other specialist staff have a positive impact on pupils' learning and are usually very effective in helping pupils. Overall, the classroom assistants make a good, worthwhile contribution to pupils' progress supported by good teamwork.

25. The teachers are observant in checking on pupils' understanding. They often use questioning well to tease out pupils' knowledge. They mark pupils' written and other recorded work regularly and at times write helpful comments on how pupils may improve, but do not pose a question to challenge pupils to think further. Homework is provided appropriately for pupils to consolidate their learning, and this is usually followed up in class. Younger pupils usually take reading books home and this is valued by parents.

26. Pupils with special educational needs are identified early so that appropriate work can be devised for them. Targets in their individual education plans are clear and guide teachers and support staff well so that pupils make good progress. The classroom assistants give the focused help that is appropriate to their needs. The co-ordinator for special needs has a good insight into pupils' needs and has many good procedures to assist their learning.

27. The pupils learning English as an additional language benefit from classroom strategies such as focused discussion and questioning. The teacher thinks carefully about how to phrase questions to help the pupils think about the task, which encourages them to take a full part in the activities. The school makes good provision for pupils for whom English is an additional language by sensitive and focused interactions.

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

28. As at the previous inspection, the school provides a satisfactory curriculum with a broad and balanced range of learning opportunities for pupils. The appropriate statutory curriculum is in place and the school implements the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. Since the previous inspection, the school has adopted schemes of work for all subjects, some of which are in the process of being revised to ensure they are adapted and relevant for the needs of all children in the school. Most subjects have up to date policy documents, but the headteacher and governors have agreed a cycle of review, which will enable draft policies to be ratified by the governors in a manageable way. Medium term plans, however, are structured and provide a basis for weekly lesson planning. The governing body has good procedures to liaise with subject leaders, and thereby to develop and improve the curriculum and to raise standards.

29. The school has implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies in a satisfactory way. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects, for example in measuring force in science. Similarly, worthwhile tasks using ICT, such as researching information on the Internet, are sometimes provided, but this practice is inconsistent. The recent emphasis on English and mathematics has led to some other subjects not being studied to the same depth through lack of time. However, good use is made of cross-curricular links in several activities, for example, when researching Van Gogh paintings in art and design, or when designing a souvenir of the seaside. There is a programme of personal, social and health education and provision which meets the needs of the age range of pupils in the school. Questions relating to sex education are answered truthfully as they arise, as are questions relating to drugs and alcohol misuse. Aspects of citizenship are taught through 'circle time' and in lessons as the opportunities arise. Overall provision in these areas is satisfactory.

30. The school provides equality of access and opportunity to the curriculum in most respects. During lessons, teachers include all pupils fully through their planning and interactions. However, the practice of withdrawing pupils with learning difficulties from lessons other than for recommended periods of sustained concentration in a quiet atmosphere, leads to pupils missing opportunities to take part in lessons.

31. The community makes a very valued contribution to pupils' learning by supporting in a variety of ways, including visitors to the school, co-operation from parents over homework, and very generous fund raising for resources. The headteacher reported that "the whole village supports our summer fair". Pupils appreciate opportunities to visit places of interest to extend their subject knowledge and understanding. Pupils in Year 4 enjoy an annual residential visit that combines an emphasis on personal development with a good range of geographical, historical, and scientific studies with physical activity, all of which have a positive impact on their learning. Pupils are also involved in an annual dance festival within the 'pyramid' of local schools. The relationship with nearby schools is very good, including, for example, the expertise and assistance of the special educational outreach teacher from a neighbouring school specialising in the education of pupils with learning disabilities, teachers also share in-service training opportunities. There are helpful links with the area middle schools to help pupils in their transition at the end of Year 4.

32. There is a good selection of extra-curricular activities for such a small sized school. These make a very worthwhile contribution to pupils' learning and most are available for pupils from Year 1 onwards. Football, gardening, computer club, country dancing and recorder groups are provided in lunch hours or after school and French is provided on a fee-paying basis. The gardening club has improved the physical environmental situation of the school, and very successfully planted lots of daffodil bulbs which flowered spectacularly well in the spring term.

33. The provision for pupils' personal development, particularly their moral and social development, is good. Cultural development is satisfactory overall as it relates to learning in the history and geography curriculum. Opportunities for exploring this dimension in art and design, literature or music are less well developed. When opportunities arise and are explored (as in the religious education lesson where Indian artefacts were examined) this important area of helping to prepare pupils to live in a multicultural society is developed well. The school aims to ensure that all pupils have good opportunities for personal development, and these are promoted by the teaching and support staff. The school's assemblies, for example, encompass a strong Christian ethos, while the very caring relationships between teachers and pupils help to encourage values of care and respect for all. Through assemblies and class discussions, pupils are given a firm understanding of the place of moral values in decision making, and the difference between right and wrong.

34. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is broadly satisfactory but some aspects are not as well developed as others. The school provides some opportunities for spiritual awareness through assemblies, religious education, and occasionally in other lessons. Daily assemblies are used well to build up pupils' understanding of significant values such as friendship. Religious education lessons introduce pupils to the beliefs and practices of Judaism and Hinduism and there are a few opportunities to reflect on their meaning. Spiritual appreciation is fostered in a few other lessons, such as through stories or when creating works of art and design, but as yet it is not built into lesson planning and so opportunities are lost.

35. Provision for pupils' moral development is good. The school encourages pupils to understand the importance of helping others and to recognise the needs of people less fortunate than themselves. Within lessons and assemblies, moral issues are discussed. The Good Samaritan story, for instance, is considered in relation to friendships and being a good neighbour. Pupils are encouraged to think about and talk through their actions, and to consider their impact on others. Pupils take part in a number of fundraising events for charitable causes which are always generously supported by parents and carers.

36. Provision for pupils' social development is good. This is reflected in good classroom management, for example, and in the residential visit arranged for pupils in Year 4. The governors and staff have a good understanding of the need to promote good working relationships among pupils as a basis for co-operative learning. Older pupils are expected to care for younger ones, for example, at lunch times and when pupils are newly admitted to the school.

37. Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory, overall. In geography, history and religious education lessons, pupils are introduced to people and events that have shaped local history and world culture. They hear stories and learn of conditions in countries such as India, and see artefacts representative of religions and cultures from around the world. However, there is less evidence to show that the school teaches pupils about the rich ethnic mix of traditions and cultures within present day British society.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

38. This is a very caring school in which pupils' well being is of equal priority to their academic success. They feel valued and protected. The care demonstrated for pupils is very good and this is good improvement since the previous inspection. This is a strength of the school.

39. The schools arrangements and procedures for the protection and welfare of pupils are very good. Members of staff are well versed in the requirements of the local education authority's guidelines for child protection, and deal promptly and sensitively with any issues that arise. Procedures for promoting the health, safety and well being of pupils are very good. Pupils are helped to develop a good understanding of the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle through science, physical education and personal and social education. The headteacher and two sometimes three governors do a regular trawl of the school to ensure that health and safety and risk audits are undertaken. Good procedures are in place for recording accidents and incidents and all mid day supervisors are trained in emergency first aid procedures and the school secretary is a fully trained first aider. There is a comprehensive health and safety policy and governors ensure it is adhered to. Risk assessments are in place and logged in a file. The buildings are clean and well maintained. Pupils take pride in belonging to school and in keeping it graffiti and litter free.

40. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are very good. Prompt and efficient registration at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions complies with statutory requirements. The school is quick to follow up unexplained absences and there are good links with the education welfare officer.

41. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are very good overall, although in lessons strategies to correct minor incidents of inappropriate behaviour are not applied consistently by the different teachers. The behaviour policy is very clear and concise. It is applied consistently where serious breaches of the policy occur. The policy emphasises positive behaviour reinforcement as the preferred means of improving behaviour so that pupils acquire their own self-discipline and pupils clearly know what is expected of them. The policy is not applied fully consistently at present in all respects. Access to outside agencies is very good and very focussed. This contributes to pupils learning and the standards they achieve. No evidence was found during the inspection of any bullying, harassment, racism or oppressive behaviour. The school is alert to the need to ensure that any indication of these is responded to promptly and effectively, and this is confirmed by parents.

42. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are informal. Certificates are given out at a special assembly for any success that pupils achieve either in or out of school and stars with names and particular achievement are put on a board in the main hallway every week. Pupils are extremely proud of this.

43. All adults know the pupils well. Relationships throughout the school are very good and teachers and support staff demonstrate a genuine concern for pupils care, support and guidance. Members of staff treat pupils with respect and set very good examples of how to behave appropriately. For example, when talking to pupils, adults wait their turn to speak and are courteous and genuinely interested in what pupils have to say. The school works extremely hard to ensure that all pupils have equal access to the curriculum and equal opportunity to succeed in learning and is successful in this in most respects. The school's determination to meet the needs of all its pupils is usually reflected very clearly in its policies and practices. However, the practice of withdrawing pupils with learning difficulties from lessons leads to their missing opportunities to take part in a few activities. The school tries to minimise the effects of this by helping them on their return. Pupils' achievements

demonstrate the effectiveness of the school's procedures and the quality of care and the dedication of all staff. This is a good improvement on the previous inspection.

44. Improving the assessment of pupils' attainment and progress and the use of the data gathered was a key issue at the previous inspection. The school has made good progress in addressing this issue. Assessments are used effectively to plan work that is appropriate to the individual needs of pupils of different abilities and different ages in the mixed-age classes. Statutory assessment takes place in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 2, and the school also uses the optional tests at the end of Years 3 and 4. Results are analysed to identify strengths and weaknesses in these subjects and how well different groups of pupils achieve. There is a good new assessment policy in place and members of staff have an informed overview of how well pupils are achieving.

45. The school has collected together all its assessment information so it is now possible to check on the progress made by individual pupils from the time of entering the school to the end of Year 4. This information is being used to predict attainment at the end of each school year and to set more ambitious targets. Teachers have set appropriate literacy and numeracy targets for individual pupils and are using these when marking pupils' work. Teachers could use the results of assessments to set more demanding work for the higher-attaining pupils in order to raise their standards even higher. Frequent checks to identify pupils who are doing better, or not as well as expected, are in place. The school is accurately identifying where improvements in standards, or provision in areas of the curriculum need further attention.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

46. The school works very effectively to establish very good links with parents and carers and this has a positive impact on pupils' learning. The great majority of parents responding to the parents' questionnaire and attending the meeting prior to the inspection agreed that the school works closely with them, that staff are very approachable and helpful and they are very supportive of the school and staff. This is an improvement on the previous inspection where partnership was judged to have slipped. However, five per cent of parents responding to the questionnaire were concerned that the school did not work closely with them. Inspection findings show that the school works very closely with parents and they are given very good information about pupils' progress.

47. The quality of information provided to parents, especially about their child's progress is very good. Reports are very detailed and clearly state what pupils know understand and can do with some targets for the future. The provision of three consultation evenings each year enables parents to be very well informed about the work their children are doing, the progress they are making, and how parents can most effectively support their children's learning. The detailed prospectus and regular and informative newsletters are very helpful, and keep parents well-informed about school events. In addition every term an additional page is added to the newsletter stating what pupils will be studying that coming term. This helps parents support pupils' learning at home. Important information sent home includes the offer of courses for parents, for example there was a mathematics evening for parents. There are also home-school books for all pupils and these are used well by parents and staff. Parents' views and comments were asked for when the school updated the sanctions in the behaviour policy and parents received a copy of the complete behaviour policy

48. The school is extremely well supported by an active Friends of Cerne Abbas School (FOCAS) that raises funds that are used to provide activities and equipment for pupils. There are parents who help in school listening to pupils read and several who help on trips and residential visits including a policeman. Many parents take an active interest in helping their children with homework, for example helping with reading at home and ensuring it is

completed. Parents are encouraged to communicate with the school, and the school is very committed to a partnership with parents and works very hard at achieving this. The many forms of support have a direct impact on the quality of pupils' experiences and on their learning.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

49. The leadership and management by the headteacher and governing body are good, with a clear focus on making good provision and improving standards. The school was emerging from a period of strained relationships and ineffective management at the time of the last inspection, when it was judged to be under-achieving. The early signs of progress noted then have continued and been consolidated. The generally positive tone in the analysis of parent questionnaires for this inspection contrasts sharply with the many negative opinions held by parents two years ago. The school has made good improvements since then and has a very good capacity and determination to continue. In particular, there are good procedures to monitor the quality of teaching, which has since improved; standards in ICT have improved through a concerted effort involving the staff, governors and local community. The headteacher and staff have evaluated the curriculum and ensured that children receive their full entitlement. The staff and governors have agreed and apply a clear behaviour policy which is applied consistently for challenging behaviour but is still to be fully consistent in daily contact with pupils. There are also good assessment procedures to track pupils' progress.

50. This good progress derives from the headteacher's quietly determined and effective leadership. It is considerably strengthened by the commitment of all staff and by the governing body. The headteacher is using her perceptive understanding of strengths and weaknesses to identify priorities and give a clear sense of direction. There is a good sense of coherence in how the weaknesses have been tackled by the whole staff. There is a very good, purposeful team spirit amongst all the staff to work together in making improvements for the benefit of the children. The procedures for performance management are in place, which provide a clear expectation and accountability upon the staff. This, with the good monitoring and evaluation procedures of teaching, is having a positive impact on the quality of teaching and hence on learning and on standards.

51. The subject leaders for the different subjects provide good informal support through daily contact. There are appropriate procedures to monitor standards and provision, for example by work sampling and checking planning, although in this small school there are few opportunities to make formal lesson observations. Records of pupils' progress are kept carefully and are used well in planning. This ensures that pupils continue to make sound progress.

52. The governing body has a good understanding of its responsibilities and fulfils them well. Governors make good use of relevant training to develop their effectiveness. There are good procedures for governors to be actively involved in the work of the school and to fulfil their role. They make good arrangements to visit the school and are well informed about the school's strengths and weaknesses, and the related needs. They are committed to giving a good lead for the direction of the school and take an active part in making decisions. The governors have good procedures to monitor financial planning. For example, the decision to employ an additional part-time teacher for English and mathematics for a Year 2 group has been effective in helping to raise standards. Also the investment in new computer equipment was considered with the need to raise standards and ensure all pupils have positive experience in mind. Governors have a good understanding of school priorities through a combination of independent observations and discussions with the staff. Governors have good procedures, for example, to monitor the curriculum and meet subject leaders. They

recognise the need to develop further the effectiveness of subject leaders, within the time constraints, in order to improve standards and learning.

53. The school's provision for special educational needs is managed well by the co-ordinator, in conjunction with the headteacher, who has taken steps to ensure that provision is in line with the latest statutory requirements and associated guidance. She has established good procedures to identify and support pupils with learning difficulties. Individual education plans are updated regularly and class teachers and parents are included in the process of developing an appropriate curriculum. The nominated governor for special educational needs is gaining experience in this area and supports the school's work well. The classroom assistants and special needs support assistants are highly skilled and effective in their role. The provision for pupils with a Statement, in particular, is excellent so that progress towards the targets is good. Funding for special educational needs is used carefully for best effect. The governors ensure that provision for special educational needs is in place. The support for pupils for whom English is an additional language is good, and made available when required, so that pupils make good progress. The school is committed to providing equality of opportunity for all pupils and staff. This has occasionally been compromised in the past, for example when a pupil with special educational needs experienced difficulty in transferring from Reception to Year 1, but a full transition programme is now in place. In general, children are treated as individuals and this is celebrated actively in many ways.

54. The school runs smoothly despite its awkward buildings and layout. The school secretary provides excellent service, weekly letters home being prepared in a lively style and all routines are highly efficient. The school's financial planning is very good, having received a very positive auditor's report recently. There is very good oversight of the finances and budget. Funding from specific grants is used very effectively for the intended purpose. The headteacher and governors have prepared a good improvement plan which consolidates the work of the past year and builds upon recent decisions. The identified priorities have been costed carefully and the governors, with the active support of the school secretary, apply the principles of obtaining best value in their decisions very well. The larger than usual carry-forward figure is largely for earmarked buildings improvement and to maintain staffing levels next year. The governors' finance committee is prudent in its spending and sets a balanced budget based on priorities and as a result, learning is enhanced through careful provision.

55. There is a satisfactory level of teachers and support staff to provide for the pupils' learning. The caretaker ensures that the school is cleaned and maintained to a good standard. The accommodation is poor and has an adverse effect on pupils' learning although the staff compensate for this in many ways. While the building has been extended and improved over the years, the condition and facilities are inadequate to meet the expectations of the National Curriculum. The outside area for children in Reception is unsatisfactory and affects their learning. In addition, several ceilings are made from asbestos board. The school makes good use of the accommodation insofar as it is able. One room acts as a school hall, a computer suite, music room and small group room. Resources are satisfactory overall and good for English. The computer suite is sufficient for groups of up to ten pupils and is used increasingly as a valuable resource for all subjects. The school has purchased a variety of artefacts, some of which are from different cultures.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

56. In order to raise standards and improve the quality of learning the governors, headteacher and staff should give attention to the following:

- (1) Improve the quality of pupils' learning by:
 - Considering the nature of learning experiences intended for the pupils;
 - Ensuring tasks are matched closely to pupils' learning needs;
 - Reviewing the quality and use of resources;
 - Noting how the classroom assistants may make observations of pupils;
 - Extending opportunities for independent investigation.(Paragraphs: 9, 17, 20, 29, 30, 43, 55, 68, 89, 101, 110, 114)

- (2) Review the structure and organisation of the curriculum, by:
 - Arranging more time for the foundation subjects.
 - Being more creative in making links between subjects;
 - Broadening the interpretation of schemes of work;
 - Applying literacy, numeracy, ICT and other skills across the subjects.
 - Selecting challenging and stimulating activities.(Paragraphs: 9, 19, 28, 29, 83, 105)

- (3) Discuss, prepare and implement a new strategy for positive behaviour management, giving particular attention to the expectations at the early stages of applying them; and ensuring that pupils know and understand the sequential nature of sanctions that may be applied.
(Paragraphs: 6, 13, 17, 24, 41)

- (4) Continue to negotiate with the local education authority about the inadequacy of the school building.
(Paragraphs: 55, 57, 58, 113, 114)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	28
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	1	2	18	7	0	0	0
Percentage	4	7	64	25	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	67
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	28

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	4
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	2

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.2
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	5	9	14

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	13	14	11
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 (92)	100 (100)	79 (100)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	14	14	11
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (100)	100 (100)	79 (100)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

Where the number of boys or girls in the year group are ten or fewer the individual results are not published

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	66	6	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y4

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	4.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16.3
Average class size	22

Education support staff: YR – Y4

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	96

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2002/2003
	£
Total income	227 497
Total expenditure	213 688
Expenditure per pupil	3 189
Balance brought forward from previous year	27 546
Balance carried forward to next year	33 174

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0.8
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	67
Number of questionnaires returned	39

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	54	46	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	44	49	8	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	23	64	8	5	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	33	49	13	0	5
The teaching is good.	49	49	0	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	33	46	15	5	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	56	41	3	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	54	46	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	36	44	15	5	0
The school is well led and managed.	28	51	3	5	13
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	51	41	8	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	31	62	5	0	3

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

57. When children join the reception class their attainment is broadly in line with expectations for their age though some children have less developed speaking and listening skills. Children with special educational needs are identified early and effective strategies support their needs. The school has a smaller than average intake into Reception year and because of this one pupil represents a large percentage of the whole, this can have a big effect on overall standards. All children, including those who have special educational needs, make sound progress towards the expected goals. By the end of the reception year, most children are likely to achieve the expected levels for communication, language and literacy skills, mathematical understanding, creative development, and in personal and social development. The school premises are unsatisfactory for teaching the areas of learning for knowledge and understanding of the world, and physical development. There is no outside dedicated safe play area sheltered from the sun or rain, or adequate sheltered play space for activities using large building bricks, or mobile toys such as tricycles and pedal cars. In rain or hot sunlight, children needing the lavatory must cross an open courtyard. The school premises do not meet the expectations for delivery of the reception curriculum.

58. The school provides a good start to the children's education. The quality of teaching in the reception class is good and the curriculum is well planned. This is in line with the findings of the previous inspection. Together with interesting displays and good use of resources, with the exception of those areas of learning affected by the lack of suitable accommodation, children generally learn effectively during their first year at school.

59. Most children join the reception class at the beginning of the school year in which they become five and the current cohort attended mornings only during their first term. During the inspection there were 10 children on roll. Appropriate provision is made for children with learning difficulties or a Statement to join the Reception class group for some sessions. Most children have a range of skills broadly typical for their age though children's attainment on entry varies from year to year. Many children have attended locally provided pre-school groups and are developing linguistic and social skills. Most children make sound progress and achieve in line with national expectations with an exception in the areas of knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development.

60. The class teacher and the learning support assistants have a good understanding of how young children learn. They plan together, manage the children well, and provide a good range of interesting activities. As a result, children are happy and enthusiastic, most concentrate well for short periods and work with interest. They play happily together both indoors and in the outdoors courtyard area, they co-operate sensibly when sharing equipment, and most are motivated. Their attitudes to learning and their behaviour are good because the teacher's expectations are well matched to their individual abilities. Tasks are explained clearly and work is matched appropriately to the needs of individual children. The teacher regularly assesses children's understanding. The members of staff have good relationships with the children and provide them with good role models. Children with learning difficulties or a Statement are increasingly integrated into lessons with their own year group. The special needs assistants provide very good learning support. The children with special educational needs receive support from their class teacher and from the learning support assistants. As a result, they make sound progress. Several volunteers regularly provide helpful assistance in class, and parents help their children's learning effectively at home by reading with them, and by encouraging speaking and observational skills.

Personal, social and emotional development

61. The class teacher and learning support assistants develop children's social skills effectively. Children enter the classroom confidently in the mornings and put their personal effects in the correct place. They sit on the carpet and wait quietly for the session to begin and have learned to put their hands up to answer questions, and know how to take turns when sharing resources. Children are encouraged to make their own choices after they have finished the main activity. In one lesson, four children played happily together re-enacting the story of Handa's Surprise, while another three children co-operated sensibly assembling a word matching game linked to the names of fruits they had sampled in a literacy lesson. Children put their art and design aprons on sensibly, and at the end of the day most put their own coats on unaided. The teacher encourages children to look after each other. Consequently, children make sound progress in developing social skills and their level of personal, social and emotional development is typical for their age close to the end of the reception year.

Communication, language and literacy

62. Teaching of language and literacy is good. Most children have speech and language skills typical for their age when they join the school but a few have skills below the expected level. The teacher and the learning support assistants constantly talk with the children to widen their vocabulary. They ask open-ended questions to develop pupil's fluency and confidence. Children are encouraged to explain the activities they are doing, and to discuss the books they are reading. 'Story Sacks' which include books and related games and puzzles are available to be taken home. Children used a range of words to describe the features they can identify on the selection of fresh fruit the teacher provided to match those occurring in the story: Handa's Surprise.

63. Children look carefully at the pictures in storybooks, and most can recite some nursery rhymes unaided. The teacher sets up activities in the outdoor courtyard area to encourage role-play activities to stimulate children's language development but these are hindered by the constant through traffic of visitors and children going to and from the school and adjacent headteacher's office. Children make sound progress, and the language development of most children is typical for their age close to the end of the reception year.

64. Children listen to stories enthusiastically, and enjoy looking at books. In one lesson, children enjoyed listening to the story Handa's Surprise. They listened carefully, looked at the illustrations and the text well, and joined in with gusto reading frequently occurring words. Children take reading books home regularly to share reading activities with their parents and other adults. All children have a home-school reading record listing the books they have read and parents and teachers to exchange comments and encouragement about children's progress. Children enjoy looking at books and listening to recorded stories. They hold the books correctly and turn the pages carefully. They are taught the sounds and the names of letters, and most can identify the initial sounds of common words. Close to the end of the reception year, most children can recognise a range of words that occur frequently, and most read simple sentences accurately. A few higher-attaining children are beginning to read simple books confidently. Children make sound progress, and most can read as well as expected for their age.

65. Children are given good opportunities to develop their writing skills. At the beginning of the year, children make attempts at early writing. There is a scheme of handwriting in place but this does not reflect in the quality of the children's writing as yet. Children are systematically taught to write the letters of the alphabet and to recognise the sounds associated with each letter. During one lesson, for example, children sat in a circle and passed around a toy rabbit and individually spoke about items they had brought to school to

share. The pupils with learning difficulties enjoyed this lesson and spoke, for example, about a barbecue that was enjoyed, being questioned in turn with great sensitivity by the other children. Pupils learn to write by overwriting and copying letters and practise writing letters freehand. During the inspection, children were being taught to write short sentences. By the end of the reception year, most will be prepared to attempt short sentences unaided, using letters that are reasonably neat and generally correctly formed. Overall, children make sound progress, and standards of writing are in line with those expected nationally for children of their age although presentation is not as good as it should be.

Mathematical development

66. Teaching is good and children are given many opportunities to use numbers and to explore placement, shape and size. During the inspection, good use was made of teddy bears to explain placement *under, behind, above, below, beside*. Children had to listen to instructions, read them from a card and then set off to find the teddies! In a literacy lesson a good link to counting was made through the selection of fruit used as a resource, and the number of stones and pips found when the fruits were cut open. Children sing a range of counting songs, sort objects into those that are *long* or *short*, and use weighing scales to measure objects that are *lighter* and *heavier*. They use computer software to support their mathematical activities. By the end of the reception year most children are likely to be able to count to twenty accurately, add and subtract numbers within ten correctly and write numbers to 20. They recognise simple shapes such as circles, squares and rectangles, and use coins to add together two small sums of money. The teacher and learning support assistants help children with special educational needs effectively so they are fully involved and make sound progress. By the end of the reception year, most children are likely to have mathematical skills in line with those expected for their age.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

67. Good teaching ensures that there are many opportunities for children to learn about the world around them and beyond, during lessons and on visits in the local area. They carry out their own investigations to discover objects that float and those that sink and know that metal is heavier than plastic. They study a variety of creatures and their young, and identify the differences between living things and inanimate objects. Children explore the local area within the village. They say what they like best about the village, and how they might improve it, and make observational drawings of trees, buildings and things which they find on their walks which interest them. They visit the local GP's surgery and examine a range of medical equipment and watch it used. A mother brought her very new baby to school and described the care a new baby needs to the class. They learn to use a computer mouse to click onto the correct pictures. During the inspection, children learnt about a range of fruit which included fresh mango, avocado, pineapple and guava. They investigated the fruit in order to describe its appearance and smell, and under hygienic conditions tasted samples. Some of the children discovered fruit they had not tasted before, they decided the guava, though it was sweet and tasty and a pretty pink colour had so many tiny 'stones' it was a fruit best avoided! The teacher used a globe to show in which parts of the world some of the fruit was grown. Children make sound progress and their levels of knowledge and understanding are typical for their age towards the end of the reception year.

Physical development

68. When children join the school, their manipulative skills and co-ordination are usually typical for their age. The teacher ensures that there are opportunities for children to develop better control by using pencils, crayons and paintbrushes. They pour water and sand onto waterwheels and into moulds, play with small plastic animals, assemble construction toys and learn how to use scissors. Space for more energetic activities is inadequate.

Occasionally the school compensates for this by walking to the village hall where more space is available. They use the school playground which is small, not adjacent to their classroom and which slopes down towards the road making it unsuitable for playing with equipment such as balls. The school has a number of larger pedalled toys such as tricycles but the playground cannot be seen from the classroom so that children cannot use either the playground or these resources without direct supervision. When they do use them, children develop better co-ordination and take care not to collide with anyone else. They co-operate happily, taking turns and sharing equipment sensibly. The provision of a dedicated outdoor play area next to the reception classroom is much needed. The use of resources for outdoor play are limited by lack of easily accessed and inadequate unsheltered space, resulting in teaching for this area of learning which is no more than satisfactory. Overall, children make reasonable progress and their physical development is broadly in line with what is expected nationally towards the end of the reception year.

Creative development

69. Good teaching ensures that children make sound progress in developing their creative skills. Children use a variety of paints, paper, card, crayons, pencils, fabrics and construction materials. They discover how to create different shades by mixing paint colours together, and learn how to hold a brush correctly to create patterns. During one lesson children were able to make choices between the activities, many chose to make butterflies from thin card, or to draw and paint endangered animals. They can use glue to stick paper and card together. An exciting project for the 'Abbas bears' party had engaged the children in making and decorating a birthday cake, writing out shopping lists devised during discussion and then copied, and party invitations. The photographic record shows it was a happy and well attended party – enjoyed by children and their teddy bears! At Christmas time the children made and sold biscuits, and for Shrove Tuesday they made and ate pancakes. Children enjoy singing nursery rhymes and join in happily with the actions that often accompany the songs. As a result, children's artistic and musical skills are developing soundly and are broadly in line with those expected towards the end of the reception year.

ENGLISH

70. Standards are in line with national expectations at the end of Year 2 and Year 4. This is an improvement from the previous inspection. The school has successfully concentrated on improving pupils' literacy skills. Most pupils make good progress by the end of Year 2. However, the cohorts in the school are small so that comparisons in standards year-on-year must be treated with caution. Pupils' attainment is broadly average when they enter the school and most make satisfactory or better progress as they move through the school. The standard of teaching has improved since the previous inspection, and some pupils made good progress in the lessons observed. All the pupils with special educational needs make good progress because they receive effective targeted support.

71. By the end of Year 2, most pupils demonstrate satisfactory speaking and listening skills. Younger pupils in Years 1 and 2, for example, read the story 'The Gingerbread Man?' with their teacher, then discussed the plot, taking turns to answer questions and to recall new words. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 enjoyed a short crisply paced lesson where they researched word roots and derivations, and working in small groups listed other associated words: roy – king – royal – royalty. They were encouraged to use this approach in their writing to increase their use of interesting and relevant vocabulary to make their texts more interesting to the reader. By Year 4, pupils' speaking skills are further developed and most pupils can confidently discuss issues with more demanding content. In a Years 3 and 4 lesson, for example, pupils discussed what the role of a solicitor encompassed and teased out some specific legal terms. Provision for pupils with special educational needs concentrates on particular themes for discussion and on developing appropriate vocabulary,

and this fosters good working relationships with adults. By the end of Year 4 most pupils have made good progress since Year 2.

72. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are developing sound basic reading skills. Most pupils are beginning to read simple texts and most can work out new words for themselves. They base sensible guesses on picture clues, and use initial letter sounds and familiar clusters of letters to identify unknown words. The most able pupils read fluently and with meaning. They speak a character's line from a story with expression, and have effective strategies for reading unfamiliar words. Pupils are achieving overall satisfactory standards in writing. Some are already forming simple sentences for their own stories and other descriptive writing, and a few use capital letters and full stops consistently. Using extended writing skills they compile non-fiction books to share with others. Pupils spell simple words correctly and show a grasp of spelling conventions when guessing more difficult words. They make good use of dictionaries so far as they are able. In a Year 1 and Year 2 literacy lesson, for example, pupils were learning how to sequence a story and compose a plot with a beginning, a middle and an end. They benefit from learning rhymes and songs that they enjoy repeating from memory. Pupils practise handwriting skills, but not enough attention is given to neatness and overall presentation. As a result, what they have learned is not always transferred to work in other subjects, and presentation of written work is sometimes untidy. Pupils with learning difficulties or a Statement have sometimes missed parts of the teaching for Year 1 lessons when separate provision or the content of the -reception year literacy programme was deemed to be more appropriate. Pupils are now being sensitively prepared to take a fuller part in the Year 2 programme at the start of the next school year. In general, pupils with learning difficulties are well supported in class and in individual or small group withdrawal sessions.

73. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 build successfully on earlier learning and most achieve satisfactory reading skills by the end of Year 4. Several older pupils demonstrated higher levels of reading ability in a religious education lesson when they used a range of resources to inform a lesson about Hinduism and India – one girl using the 'Lonely Planet Guide to India' as her reference book. Support for pupils with special educational needs makes a positive impact on their self-esteem and on the confidence with which they read. In writing, most pupils of average ability reach the standard expected nationally, and the higher-attaining ones do better. They structure stories and factual accounts sequentially, mindful of using interesting and appropriate vocabulary, so that the reader enjoys an interesting reading experience. Sometimes, pupils improve their efforts through re-drafting their work. Spelling is mostly correct and pupils use their dictionary skills to good effect. Most pupils explain tasks precisely, but a number still find reaching their targets hard due to uncertainty about the meanings of words or because they experience difficulty in ordering their ideas. Some pupils in Year 4 still need support with writing tasks. By Year 4, handwriting is still very variable. Many pupils do not work neatly or form their letters well, and presentation is unsatisfactory. Not all pupils use a joined handwriting script and many are still using a pencil instead of a pen.

74. Teaching across the school is good, overall. Most teachers ensure that pupils know what is expected of them by writing the learning objectives where everyone can see them. Teachers and learning support assistants monitor pupils' progress during written tasks and intervene helpfully to move learning on. Assessment of pupils' previous learning is used effectively when planning lessons or for ensuring that tasks are closely matched to the needs of pupils of different age and different ability within the mixed-age classes. While the learning support assistants give good support in class, a small group of pupils on occasion still demonstrate silly behaviour, this distracts the other pupils.

75. Where teaching is good or very good, teachers' efforts are clearly focused on the lesson's main learning objectives ensuring pupils' attention and energy are channelled into achieving a successful outcome. In a Years 3 and 4 art and design lesson, for example, pupils engaged in a thoughtful discussion to identify and learn specific vocabulary related to the sea and a fish. By the end of the lesson, most had successfully increased their knowledge and vocabulary. Most pupils were able to explain the lesson objectives that had been set earlier, and could identify whether they had met them.

76. The additional time given to literacy activities each day provides good opportunities for pupils to extend their writing horizons and to use literacy skills for different purposes. Pupils in Years 3 and 4, for instance, are challenged with limited-time work for particular tasks. This prepares pupils well for efficient note taking in the next stage of their education. Pupils are beginning to see a purpose in re-drafting work to improve their results. Role-play is improving pupils' speaking and listening skills and increasing their confidence when meeting visitors. Discussions with pupils reveal they enjoy oral work, listening to their teachers read, and writing and listening to poetry. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from good quality support.

77. Homework is used sensibly to reinforce pupils' learning. Teachers stress the importance of reading regularly, and parents and carers are invited to support their children at home by listening to them reading and adding comments to the home-school reading record. Marking of pupils' work is consistently good. In the best examples, pupils are clearly advised on how well they are achieving and how they might improve further. Occasionally, pupils are provided with opportunities to use their word processing skills during lessons, but overall, the limitations of ICT provision is hindering older pupils, in particular, from acquiring more advanced word processing skills such as those required for desktop publishing. Computers are not always fully utilised during literacy lessons.

78. Management of the subject is good and has resulted in the improved standards. The co-ordinator is an experienced teacher with good knowledge and enthusiasm for the subject. Through checking teachers' planning, observing literacy lessons and scrutinising pupils' work, she has a sound overview of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject across the school. Analysis of statutory tests has resulted in the school focussing on the improvement of pupils' writing skills. Overall, resources are of a good quality and particularly the exciting 'Story Sacks' for loan to pupils to take home. Library provision is unsatisfactory, however, as the space allocated in the hall to the school library is too small to be used by more than a few pupils, and many books have to be kept in classrooms. The school is doing its best to maintain a reasonable level of non-fiction books to support pupils' independent research in other subjects of the curriculum.

MATHEMATICS

79. Standards in mathematics in the work seen are broadly average by Years 2 and 4. This maintains the position at the time of the last inspection but also indicates some further consolidation in provision, teaching and pupils' learning. Pupils' performance in the national tests in 2002 were well below average but these results should be treated with caution for the small year group. The 3-year average, which is a more reliable guide to continuing performance, is above the national average. Pupils' numeracy skills are average and they demonstrate growing confidence and facility with mental calculations as they get older. Pupils achieve as expected and there are no significant variations in attainment amongst pupils of differing background. Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress against their targets. Pupils who are learning English as an additional language achieve in line with their peers.

80. By the end of Year 2 most pupils count reliably to 100 and have an early understanding of how numbers are composed. They perform simple additions and subtractions correctly, using their knowledge of number facts to 10. They recognise early multiplication as repeating addition. Most pupils record their answers correctly, whether on the white boards which give them good motivation, or in their books. The high attaining pupils generally have good, quick skills in mental number, and enjoy the challenge of larger numbers. Pupils' previous work shows satisfactory progression in skills and understanding during the year. Pupils tackle work on simple measuring and shapes competently, and understand early ideas of symmetry. They demonstrate satisfactory skills in drawing graphs. There are several examples of number activities designed to present a new context, but there are very few where pupils' investigational skills are extended.

81. The good teaching in Years 3 - 4 is promoting good learning of pupils' numeracy skills and understanding by the end of Year 4. Most pupils have a reasonable understanding of number and continue to develop their number skills up to 1000. A good choice of task motivated the pupils to multiply two numbers in order to play a form of number 'bingo'. The teachers good questioning with a focus on understanding and consolidation helped pupils to recognise the properties of the numbers. The group work that followed gave the pupils a good challenge, particularly to the higher attaining pupils. Most pupils are familiar with simple equivalent fractions and recognise that decimals and fractions are connected. Pupils' previous work indicates that pupils are making at least the expected progress and are reaching average standards.

82. Pupils are keen to learn, eager to answer questions, and their behaviour is nearly always good with some examples of excellent concentration. The teachers' thoughtful approach encourages pupils to contribute their ideas and answers, and most pupils show good interest and behaviour. However, the approach to correcting minor distractions is not consistent between the teachers. There is insufficient attention to a system of progressively severe sanctions that pupils understand in order to maintain attention and the work ethic of a minority of pupils.

83. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in the infant class and good in the junior class, taking account of both lesson observations and pupils' previous work. The teaching has a positive effect on pupils' learning and promotes good attitudes to their work. Planning is carefully set out. It gives little direct indication of the teaching skills to be used so does not make helpful links with the school's teaching and learning policy. Teachers usually explain clearly what the lesson is about, so pupils are helped to see their own progress. The teachers are perceptive in their observations about how much pupils understand and often use good strategies to probe their understanding further. They sometimes use a good, focused questioning approach to encourage pupils to think and reason. The level of challenge is often but not always good, taking account of the varying needs of different pupils. The teachers apply good classroom management overall with good use of support staff when they are focused on particular children who need additional guidance. There are a few occasions when the assistants tend to be passive during the teachers' main sessions when they could usefully make notes of pupils' contributions.

84. The subject leader has a good understanding of the role. She provides good support to colleagues, much of which is on-going during informal discussions. She and the headteacher take careful account of the information gained from tests, making a good analysis that informs further planning. She has ensured that the school follows national guidance suitably and has a clear view of the preferred approach for pupils to learn mathematics. There are very few examples of worthwhile investigational work that challenge pupils to gain problem-solving and investigational skills. The school is now well placed to extend this aspect of mathematics. The quality and range of learning resources are satisfactory and are generally well used in lessons. Curriculum planning is good.

Assessment procedures are also good with a good target setting process so that pupils' progress is tracked effectively.

SCIENCE

85. Standards in science in the work seen are average by the end of Years 2 and 4, maintaining the position at the time of the last inspection. In the teacher assessment at Year 2 in the science tests, the proportion of pupils judged to be at the national expectation or above was well below average overall. There were contrasting standards in aspects of pupils' knowledge and skills, for example that their knowledge of Life Processes and Living Things was very high although their Experimental and Investigative skills were well below. The difference in performance between the 2002 national tests and pupils in the current Year 2 relates to the variations caused by small year groups. There is no significant difference in the attainments of boys or girls, or of those from differing backgrounds, and they achieve satisfactorily. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall, although there are elements where subject knowledge and progress are good. Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress against their learning targets. Pupils who are learning English as an additional language achieve in line with their peers.

86. In Years 1 and 2 the pupils have an appropriate early understanding about the human body and animals. They know several external parts of the body as well as some internal organs. The importance of the heart for pumping blood around which we need when running for oxygen is brought out well during physical education and the pupils understand this. They know several foods that are needed to provide a healthy diet and how it may be balanced. Pupils' previous work shows that they have carried out several investigations, although the results are not always set out clearly and explained. Most pupils understand the need for testing under fair conditions. Their understanding develops well, as a result of careful questioning by the teacher. Pupils use appropriate mathematical skills, such as setting out a table of results or drawing a graph.

87. By Years 3 and 4, pupils have the skills and understanding to experiment with simple electrical circuits. They know several materials that are good conductors or that insulate. They understand that plants need light, water and warmth and know several of the parts of plants and their function. They know more about the human body, for example the bones and some joints. They demonstrate developing investigational skill, for example in measuring the force of friction, and they demonstrate good interest, attitudes and behaviour towards the subject. They understand the effect of heat on some solids and liquids and know that chocolate will solidify again.

88. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, taking account of lesson observations as well as pupils' previous work. Teachers plan lessons carefully for interest and relevance as well as subject coverage. The school follows national guidance appropriately and ensures a suitable two-year cycle in each class with Year 1-2 pupils or Year 3 -4 pupils. There is a reasonably good emphasis on practical and investigational work, and there is evidence of continuing development of pupils' skills over the years, although there are also occasions when the emphasis is on subject content. The pupils' learning is promoted well by some good examples of teachers' questioning to help them look or explain their findings, based on generally good subject knowledge. The plenary sessions are used well as a good means of reinforcing pupils' learning. Pupils enjoy the hands on approach to the subject, which is promoted by the school as it continues to develop investigative science. Teachers' on-going assessment and evaluation of pupils' learning in lessons is good.

89. There are effective procedures for assessment. The subject leader monitors planning and carries out a work sample according to a school schedule. The results of internal assessments are used sensibly to direct further teaching. The subject curriculum is

appropriately balanced, although there are occasions when the emphasis is on covering subject content rather than ensuring investigational work takes place. The resources are just satisfactory overall, although being a small school, there are some gaps in provision. The subject is led well by a dedicated and hard-working leader. She has a good understanding of the role and provides good direction for the development of the subject.

ART AND DESIGN

90. From the evidence of lesson observations and analysis of pupils work, as well as discussions with pupils, it is clear that pupils have practised different artistic techniques and experienced a range of media to reach the expected standard by the end of Years 2 and 4. Photographs of pupils' work from earlier in the year in different subjects, together with their current work, indicate that pupils make broadly satisfactory progress in developing their artistic skills.

91. Teaching was good in the lessons observed. Teaching of art and design is integrated across the curriculum and sound use is made of the subject to develop work in other areas such as history, geography and science. This was seen in the Years 1 and 2 class where pupils had the excitement of looking at a fresh mackerel. They discussed the shape and purpose of scales and why the mackerel's tail looked and felt different to its body, and its streamlined design for propelling the fish through seawater. They were enchanted by the iridescence of the skin. Pupils drew their own fish on thin card, used scissors to cut it out, and reproduced scales using a range of papers. They evaluated their designs and part-completed task. The work of a small number of pupils showed that they have an appreciation of detail and proportion. One pupil suggested that the availability of some shiny papers would have made her fish more 'lifelike' (which was true) A very thoughtful pupil made the profound comment that she was 'very sorry the fish had to die in order to be able to be seen by us'. At the end of the lesson the fish had been looked at, touched, smelled, and passed around the class! The pupils with learning difficulties participated fully in this lesson and clearly found the proximity to the mackerel quite a fascinating experience. At the end of the lesson the teacher praised the children for their respect to the fish. After all the attention it had received from these younger children, it was still undamaged. To support learning in geography and history, pupils have used clay to make seaside creatures such as starfish, crabs and seashells.

92. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 used ICT to research Van Gogh on a Paris museum website. They used their knowledge and skills in ICT to locate and download examples of the work of this famous artist, and informative text about his life and times to use in a future lesson. They can discuss the style of Van Gogh and reproduce it in their sketch-books and on paper using a range of art materials. The lesson sparked a good level of interest and pupils could name some of the more notable pictures such as 'A starry night' and recognise the range of colours favoured by the artist.

93. In this class, experience of different examples of art and design is also starting to develop pupils' awareness of non-European cultures. This was seen in a religious education lesson when a pupil was permitted to bring to school several examples of fine Indian embroidery and beadwork on clothes gifted to her. Carved Indian elephants and a fine brass statue (also loaned by parents) added greatly to this very good cross-curricular learning experience for all pupils.

94. Attractively mounted displays include pupils' paintings and collages from across the school. Quality displays encourage pupils to take a pride in their work and also improve pupils' self esteem. An analysis of pupils' work and observations of displays indicate that a wide range of media are introduced, including clay, paints, crayons, pencils, paper, card, fabric and threads. Sound use is made of sketchbooks to record detailed firsthand

observations and pupils are encouraged to make drawings from real life. Management of the subject is satisfactory. The school has identified the need to extend the range of work and improve planning and co-ordination of pupils' experiences across the school to ensure that skills are developed consistently, and in a logical order. Informal records of pupils' work are kept using a camera, but the school is aware of the need to improve the assessment and recording of pupils' attainment in the subject.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

95. No lessons were observed in this subject but examples of pupils' previous work and subject planning were seen. Standards in design and technology meet the expectation at Year 2 and Year 4, maintaining the position at the time of the last inspection. A scrutiny of previous work showed that attainment is in line with national expectations for the age group, with some examples of work being above this level. Pupils achieve as expected over the year groups and demonstrate growing skills in construction and their understanding and use of movement mechanisms, which allow for application of knowledge about forces which they acquire in science lessons. Pupils who have learning difficulties or are learning English as an additional language achieve in line with their peers.

96. Pupils work with a good range of material including card, recycled materials, food and fabrics, learning to use appropriate tools correctly as they proceed. On leaving the Reception class, they start with simple mechanisms such as pivots made from brass-headed paper clips which provide for movement of the limbs of cardboard birds. These items are carefully finished and decorated, showing a suitable level of manipulation skills. Pupils also apply their skills and imagination to food technology in assignments such as making fruit kebabs. Pupils use a wide range of materials to construct toy vehicles of various types. Higher attaining pupils are taking increased responsibility for their designs by this stage and pupils make sensible evaluations. The overall quality of pupils' work indicates well-planned and effective teaching, with learning activities which promote good attitudes towards the subject, real concentration and effort by the pupils. Teachers now work from a revised scheme of work, making appropriate assessments, and a new policy for the subject is to be drawn up. The subject leader provides suitable support.

HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY

97. Standards broadly match those expected nationally at the end of Years 2 and 4. Only one Years 1 and 2 history lesson was observed during inspection week. The school sensibly links history and geography, so that as much differentiation and cross-curricular links can be explored in greater depth in the time available. These findings are similar to those reported at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils with special educational needs receive additional help from teachers and learning support assistants, they enjoy their learning and make sound progress.

98. Not enough lessons were observed to make an overall judgement on the standards of teaching throughout the school. Cross-curricular study topics are generally well planned. In the lesson observed, the teacher explained the aims clearly at the start of the lesson and made good use of questions to reinforce previous learning about what may be found at the seaside. Pupils were managed well and, consequently, had good attitudes to their work. They carefully examined a range of 'seaside souvenirs' (learning incidentally that 'souvenir' is a French word meaning 'remembrance'). Evidence in pupils' exercise books in Years 3 and 4 show that they can use the Internet effectively to research questions about people, places, and events.

99. Teachers make good use of a variety of resources including ICT, library books, maps and globes. Visits to museums and historical buildings within the local area are used effectively to provide first-hand learning experiences. Pupils in Year 4 enjoy a short residential visit to Carey Camp and other groups of pupils visit Leeson House outdoor education centre. The area has many important archaeological sites and historical buildings and some parents assist pupils' learning about these areas. Pupils learning about the Second World War had looked at records of evacuees moved from the south east to Dorset, and had tried to think what life must have been like for children removed from their parents and sent to live with strangers. They discussed refugees and the life of Anne Frank. The Years 3 and 4 class has considered what it might have been like to have lived in Athens and Sparta, from a child's point of view. This class have completed a very interesting cross curricular topic about ships: their design, role in exploration, in the resettlement of peoples, migration routes and the needs of immigrant communities such as proximity to water. Some work in the pupils' exercise books is of very good quality and at a standard in advance of that expected nationally for their age.

100. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 learn about their home location and why houses are built where they are. They enjoy comparing their own families with those in past historical times. They can compare modern toys with those used by their parents, and learn about historical sequence by placing pictures of babies, children and adults in the correct chronological sequence.

101. Management of the subject has been maintained at a satisfactory level since the previous inspection and is sound. The school has adopted a satisfactory scheme of work based on local guidance and this ensures that pupils develop historical and geographical skills in a logical order. There is sometimes a long gap of a term or more between history topics, however, and this does not help younger pupils to remember what they have learned previously. Resources are satisfactory and are supplemented by books and other items loaned by parents. Good use is made of CD-ROMs and the Internet to assist teaching and learning.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

102. Standards in ICT meet the expectation by Years 2 and 4, showing good improvement since the last inspection, although the subject is continuing to develop. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and there is a high level of committed support from the community. Overall, pupils in Years 1 - 2 and in Years 3 - 4 are gaining appropriate experience and skills and they are achieving satisfactorily. Pupils who have learning difficulties or are learning English as an additional language achieve in line with their peers. There are no significant differences in pupils' achievements in relation to their groups, gender or prior attainment.

103. By the end of Year 2 pupils demonstrate satisfactory mouse and keyboard skills, although pupils are slow at finding letters. They have a sound knowledge of how to use features of a program. This was shown, for example, during a session where pupils used a paint program to draw a house with a variety of characteristics. After a careful introduction with clear instructions on how to use the program, pupils used several features and icons to produce a house outline. They chose special effects such as a thatch roof or colour dots around windows for curtains. They were supported very well throughout with helpful comments that helped them to think about their work and to improve it. Pupils maintained good interest, attitudes and behaviour, taking some pride in producing an attractive finished piece of work.

104. By the end of Year 4 pupils demonstrate satisfactory progress from the work in Year 2 and they have gained additional skills, for example in searching for information. In a good link with an art and design lesson, pupils searched an Internet site for examples of paintings by Van Gogh. Pupils brought a picture onto the screen, scrolled it up and down confidently to view it, looking for evidence of brush-strokes as a focus. They then showed satisfactory skills in printing their chosen picture. Overall, pupils maintained good interest throughout the lesson, supported well to consider the paintings and improve their search skills. The higher attaining pupils have good skills and understanding.

105. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Pupils take a good interest in the activities which has a good impact on their learning. Their attitudes and behaviour towards the subject are good. Planning is effective and teachers have a developing subject knowledge that they use with growing confidence to explain how to use the ICT facilities effectively. Teachers manage pupils appropriately in the suite. The good choice of task provides good opportunities for pupils' learning. There is evidence of developing links with other subjects, such as using a mathematics program to help pupils understand number, but this is an area for further development. The school is successful in extending the skills of higher attaining pupils. Teachers keep a suitable record of assessment to track pupils' progress.

106. The decision to place a small suite of computers in the school hall is generally effective since groups of pupils use it for well-planned activities, sometimes related to other subjects such as art and design or history. The improvement since the last inspection is further enhanced by the headteacher's oversight of planning and her monitoring, as the subject leader. Groups of pupils are time-tabled into the suite for at least one supported session a week. Overall, the school provides the pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum that meets requirements and builds knowledge and skills systematically. Careful financial planning and investment has enabled the school to make satisfactory progress with provision although the arrangements for the suite in the school hall are not easy to manage.

MUSIC

107. From the evidence available, standards meet the expectation by the end of Year 2 and this continues to be satisfactory by the end of Year 4. Only two - lessons in Years 1 - 2 were observed, together with pupils' singing during assembly. Lessons in Years 3 - 4 - were not scheduled to be taught during the inspection. At the previous inspection standards were not judged as insufficient teaching in the subject was seen. The curriculum as planned for broadly meets national requirements. Music was not a priority subject area during the past two years because of the need to raise standards in literacy and numeracy.

108. In the lessons observed in Years 1 and 2, the teacher used singing games to help pupils to pitch their singing at the correct level and to sing tunefully. This was successfully achieved by almost all pupils. Pupils with learning difficulties or a Statement were supported and fully included in the games, which they thoroughly enjoyed playing. Pupils also devised a variety of body percussion sounds and tapped or clapped rhythms. They co-operated sensibly together and responded well when they used percussion instruments. There was guidance for using correct musical vocabulary during the lessons, and pupils were able to use terms such as *beat* and *rhythm* correctly. They started to learn a new song to complement their cross-curricular work on the theme of seaside and were excited to discover the song was all about a '*Pirate Ship*'. After several repetitions they had learned to sing the first verse and chorus with enthusiasm, using expressive menacing tones!

109. Planning includes time for older pupils to develop their musical appreciation by listening to a range of music from different times and places. A variety of music is played when pupils enter and leave school assemblies. Pupils sing a selection of hymns and

modern worship songs during collective worship. All pupils sing enthusiastically, and most sing very tunefully.

110. The co-ordinator provides satisfactory leadership of the subject. Since the previous inspection, the school has not been in a position to be able to devote much time to improving the subject. However, plans are now being drawn up to provide a richer programme of musical experience for all pupils starting in the new school year. The school has a satisfactory range of tuned and untuned percussion instruments and recorded music, but there are few keyboards and little use is made of CD-ROMs or the Internet to assist teaching and learning. Peripatetic teachers provide a range of instrumental tuition and this (fee paying) service is well supported. The headteacher provides tuition for a large group of recorder players as an extra-curricular activity. A group of pupils practice country dancing (also as an extra-curricular activity led by the headteacher) and they participate in the local schools' annual country dance festival. These activities make a good contribution to pupils' social and cultural development.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

111. Standards in physical education meet the expectation by Years 2 and 4, maintaining the position at the time of the last inspection. Pupils make satisfactory progress and achieve as expected. Pupils who have learning difficulties or are learning English as an additional language achieve in line with their peers. Within Years 1 - 2 the teacher provided a suitable warm-up activity that the children enjoyed: most followed the instructions to stop or start correctly. They also tried very hard, using simple skills, to swap markers over faster than the opposing team. Most pupils move freely with satisfactory co-ordination but a few lack the skills or confidence in their movements. Most pupils were quick and neat, and were suitably competitive. Most pupils run easily and fluently, showing a satisfactory level of fitness for the age and of physical skill.

112. Within Years 3 - 4 pupils also took part in a suitable warm-up session, with good behaviour in response to the teacher's firm discipline. Pupils demonstrated satisfactory skills in athletic activities. They walked with strong arm and leg movements to build up stamina and strength. Most pupils ran fluently, the higher attaining pupils demonstrating good style and quick action. They enjoyed the suitably competitive races on grass and showed the expected level of skill, style and strength overall. A few higher attaining pupils have good agility and control of their body. Pupils with special educational needs are making satisfactory progress in their physical development and skills.

113. Most pupils are particularly keen and participate with energy. They co-operate well with others. Pupils' attitudes overall towards physical education and their behaviour are good. The pupils pay good attention to the teachers so that they are ready to carry out the tasks. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, taking account of the limiting effect of the school's facilities. Lessons and activities are carefully planned, organised and structured with activities to promote skill development. The teachers have good relationships with the pupils that encourage good discipline as well as effort. As a result pupils take part well and try their best. The teacher's clear expectations and good evaluation methods encouraged pupils to try hard and improve. The pupils have good opportunities to improve the skills. Teachers make the learning intentions clear and choose tasks that usually offer a good level of challenge. The teachers have good subject knowledge and make effective interventions as the pupils are working to encourage and help them improve. They are suitably aware of health and safety issues. The teachers keep the pace moving so that pupils are active and they make appropriate assessments. They ensure that all pupils are fully included in the activities, including those with learning difficulties who are supported by a classroom assistant. They set clear expectations so that pupils tried hard and the quality of their learning is good in lessons.

114. Planning for the subject shows that the school offers a good range of experiences and the subject meets statutory requirements. The subject leader provides suitable direction. The assessment of pupils' skills is at an early stage. Resources are satisfactory overall. The school has suitable access to a grassed field opposite the building and also uses the village hall for gymnastics, but the conditions are not conducive to promoting high standards. The accommodation is unsatisfactory overall and restricts pupils' opportunities for learning in physical education. For example, teachers have to bring equipment to the village hall if they wish to use it.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

115. Standards meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus at the end of Years 2 and 4. This indicates that standards at the time of the previous inspection have been maintained although, as a subject, it did not appear in the last report. The time allocation is appropriate and the local education authority agreed syllabus has been fully implemented. As a result, teaching and learning are good and the curriculum is broad. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, show a good interest in lessons and make satisfactory progress through the school.

116. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are learning about the Parables. They benefit from thorough teaching based on good subject knowledge and use of a video resource which fully engages the pupils' interest. The teacher places emphasis on discussions to encourage pupils to express their ideas. This maintains their interest and promotes good learning. Work in exercise books shows consistent subject coverage including for aspects of Judaism where, as part of a study on 'special foods' pupils had learned about the Passover Seder meal. They know that some Christians eat hot cross buns at Easter time, and understand the symbolism of the cross. The importance of harvest-time in the country is marked by prayer writing in which pupils' give thanks for food. As befits a Church of England Voluntary Controlled primary school the Christian festivals are studied in appropriate depth, and celebrated.

117. In a well-planned lesson in Years 3 and 4, pupils were continuing their study of Hinduism. In this lesson an amazing collection of precious items loaned by parents had been brought in by pupils, presenting a rich source of interest directly related to the lesson content and by association geographical learning about India. This contribution by parents added great value to this lesson. Pupils are learning that Hindus pray to Brahman, Trimurti and Ganesh and Lakshmi. They know and understand that Divali is the Hindu celebration of the New Year, where candles are lit and water is poured onto Lakshmi to bless her. Overall, the teacher's very good relationships with the children and her clear explanations have a positive impact on their learning, so that progress in this lesson is good. Evidence in pupil's exercise books shows that a rich programme of religious education has been taught during the year.

118. Assemblies contribute well to pupils' spiritual understanding. Pupils visit the local church to take part in special services as well as to learn about the features and practices. The subject leader is trying to arrange for more visitors to the school to extend opportunities for discussion about Christian traditions and other faiths. Assessments of pupils' knowledge and understanding are generally made informally as part of on-going work. The subject co-ordinator ensures that pupils cover all aspects of the agreed syllabus. She monitors lesson planning and pupils' work and has good ideas for developing the subject further. The quality of resources is satisfactory and these, supplemented by contributions loaned by parents, ensure there is a good range of attractive and helpful artefacts to stimulate pupils' learning.