

## INSPECTION REPORT

### **WEST MOORS ST MARY'S CE FIRST SCHOOL**

West Moors, Ferndown

LEA area: Dorset

Unique reference number: 113780

Headteacher: Mrs Maryanne Pike

Reporting inspector: Mr Paul Nicholson  
25406

Dates of inspection: 6 - 8 May 2003

Inspection number: 247405

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First school
School category:	Voluntary controlled <sup>1</sup>
Age range of pupils:	4 to 9 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Station Road West Moors Ferndown Dorset
Postcode:	BH22 0JF
Telephone number:	01202 874838
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Roger Newbery
Date of previous inspection:	June 2001

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<sup>1</sup> Because West Moors St Mary's is a voluntary controlled Church Of England school, the inspection of collective worship is carried out under Section 23 of the Schools Inspections Act 1996 (Denominational Education) by the inspector approved by the Diocese and appointed by the governing body.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
25406 Paul Nicholson Registered inspector	English Information and communication technology Physical education Special educational needs	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9652 Colin Herbert Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
22518 Barbara Darley Team inspector	The Foundation Stage Science Art and design Design and technology Religious education	How high are standards? Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well are pupils taught?
21372 Ken Hobday Team inspector	Mathematics Geography History Music Equal opportunities	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**

St Mary's CE First School is situated in West Moors, a large village close to Bournemouth. It serves an area with a wide range of social and economic backgrounds where housing is mainly owner-occupied. Currently, there are 83 pupils on roll (43 boys and 40 girls) aged from four to nine years. Thirteen per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is similar to the national average. None of the pupils speaks English as an additional language and less than 2 per cent come from minority ethnic groups. The school has identified 23 per cent of pupils as having special educational needs, which is similar to the national average. Two pupils have Statements of Special Educational Needs. When children enter the reception year, their attainment varies, but overall it is similar to that expected for their age.

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

The school provides its pupils with a sound education and has some good features. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory, and often better. Pupils achieve average standards by the age of nine. Standards are improving, particularly in literacy and numeracy. The school is well led and managed. It provides satisfactory value for money.

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

- It helps pupils make good progress in English and mathematics.
- The headteacher provides good leadership and, together with the supportive governing body and hardworking staff, manages the school well.
- The school takes good care of its pupils and provides good social and moral development so pupils are well behaved and enjoy good relationships.
- The school provides good support for pupils with special educational needs.
- It fosters good links with parents, which support pupils learning and results in the parents having very positive views of the school.

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

- The standards achieved by Year 4 in information and communication technology and the use of computers to support pupils' learning in other subjects.
- Standards in history by the end of Year 4 and standards in geography by the ends of Years 2 and 4.
- The planning of activities in subjects other than literacy and numeracy, so that the skills pupils need to learn are clearly identified, taught and assessed.
- The provision for pupils' personal development, to give them more opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning and a better understanding of their progress.

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

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

The school has made good progress since its last inspection in June 2001. Following the appointment of a new headteacher in January 2002, the staff have worked hard to address the key issues of the last report. These indicated that the school was underachieving and standards were too low, particularly by the end of Year 2. Standards in writing and mathematics have improved because of higher expectations and more effective monitoring of pupils' progress. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is significantly better. The governing body has developed its role and is now more effective in carrying out its duties in monitoring and influencing the work of the school. Provision for information and communication technology and for assessing pupils' progress in subjects other than literacy and numeracy have improved but still remain important issues for the school to address.

## STANDARDS

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

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

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

Children in the reception class make sound progress overall. They reach the appropriate early learning goals for their age in their mathematical, physical and creative development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. Their progress in their personal, social and emotional development and in communication, language and literacy is good. Most children exceed the early learning goals in these two areas of learning.

Inspection evidence finds that standards in English and mathematics are above average by the end of Year 2 and pupils do particularly well in writing. This represents good levels of achievement. The improvements noted in national tests (2002) in reading and writing have been maintained and standards in mathematics have improved. By the age of seven, pupils achieve standards in line with national expectations in science, art and design, design and technology, history, information and communication technology, music and physical education. Standards in geography are below national expectations.

By Year 4, pupils' standards in English and mathematics are average, but this represents good progress as their standards were below average at the age of seven. Pupils make satisfactory progress and achieve standards in line with national expectations for their age in science, art and design, design and technology and physical education. Standards in geography, history and information and communication technology are below national expectations. It was not possible to make a judgement on the standards in music. Throughout the school, standards in religious education are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes are satisfactory overall. Their interest in lessons is good but their enthusiasm for school is more variable.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good and this has a positive impact on their learning.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils' personal development is satisfactory overall. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff are good.
Attendance	The attendance rate is below the national average, mostly because parents take their children on holiday during term time.

The school has correctly identified the need to further improve pupils' personal development. Several recent initiatives aimed at improving pupils' attitudes have not yet had time to take effect.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory and often better. Pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning and recent developments in the teaching of literacy and numeracy are resulting in good progress in these basic skills. During the inspection, just over half of the lessons observed were good including examples of very good teaching. Good teaching was seen in all year groups. One lesson was unsatisfactory, but teaching and learning were satisfactory in the remainder.

In the main, teachers meet the needs of all their pupils and they provide work at the correct level for each pupil. In some lessons, in subjects other than literacy and numeracy, the skills to be taught are not clearly enough identified to ensure the best progress, particularly for higher-attaining pupils. Teachers manage the pupils well and make very effective use of learning support staff, who have a positive impact on pupils' learning. Teachers have sound knowledge of the subjects they teach but do not make sufficient use of information and communication technology to support pupils' learning.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Overall, the school provides pupils with a satisfactory range of learning opportunities. In subjects other than English and mathematics, the skills to be taught and assessed are not always clearly identified.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The school makes good provision for these pupils. They receive good support in lessons, particularly when learning support staff work alongside them. They make good progress towards their individual targets in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy, and satisfactory progress in other subjects.
Provision for pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Overall provision is satisfactory. The school promotes pupils' social and moral development well. The provision for spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school takes good care of its pupils. There are good procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare. There are good procedures for monitoring pupils' progress in literacy and numeracy but the procedures in other subjects are not sufficiently developed.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	Links with parents are good and these have a positive impact on pupils' learning at home and at school.

The school has successfully implemented the national strategies for literacy and numeracy. It has recently introduced new guidelines to support teachers' planning in other subjects. The school has correctly identified the need to adapt these so as to identify the key skills that are to be taught and assessed.



## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides strong and committed leadership, with a clear vision for the school. She is well supported by the staff. Together they successfully monitor teaching and learning in literacy and numeracy are but their monitoring in other subjects is not fully developed.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities. Governors now monitor the work of the school well and have a positive role in shaping its direction.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school evaluates its own performance well and sets appropriate priorities for improvement.
The strategic use of resources	The school has ensured educational priorities are supported through its financial planning. This has resulted in governors setting a deficit budget because of a drop in its income due to a falling roll. The school satisfactorily applies the principles of best value.
The adequacy of staffing, accommodation and learning resources	The school has a good number of appropriately qualified teachers and a good number of support staff. There is sufficient accommodation and adequate resources for the number of pupils currently on roll.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Eleven parents attended a meeting with inspectors and 26 (33 per cent) completed questionnaires.

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children like school.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed and the staff are approachable.</li> <li>• The teaching is good and children make good progress.</li> <li>• The school has high expectations and it helps children to become mature and responsible.</li> <li>• The school works closely with parents and keeps them well informed about children's progress.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupils' behaviour.</li> <li>• The amount of homework.</li> <li>• The range of activities outside of lessons.</li> </ul>

The inspection findings broadly support the very positive views of the parents. Pupils' behaviour was found to be good though a very small number of pupils find it difficult to maintain this high standard. The school provides good levels of support for these pupils. The school has a clear homework policy that supports children's learning and, for a small school, provides a good range of extra-curricular activities.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. At the time of its last inspection, the school was found to be underachieving. Overall standards in Year 2 at that time were below average though they were average in Year 4. Since then the school has made good progress in raising standards. Currently, overall standards by Year 2 are average and the pupils who were underachieving at the age of seven are now achieving average standards in Year 4. These pupils have made up the lost ground that was apparent at the last inspection. Overall, pupils gain satisfactory levels of achievement for their age and have made good progress in their basic literacy and numeracy skills. The school's focus on developing the teaching and learning in these two subjects over the last two years has resulted in the significant improvements noted during the inspection. Standards in some of the other subjects require further development.
2. Children start full-time schooling at St Mary's in the September following their fourth birthday. Attainment on entry to reception varies between individual children but overall it is similar to that expected for their age. Children make sound progress in reception as a result of satisfactory and at times good teaching. They exceed the early learning goals<sup>2</sup> in their personal, social and emotional development and in communication, language and literacy because of good teaching in these areas. Children make satisfactory progress and most achieve the early learning goals in their mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development.
3. The school's results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2 in 2002 showed a significant improvement on previous years as a result of several new initiatives to address previous weaknesses in writing and number work. In 2002, test results were above average in reading, well above average in writing and average in mathematics. Most pupils achieved Level 2, the expected standard for a typical seven-year-old, in each test. Over a third of pupils went on to achieve the higher standard, Level 3. This was above average in reading and mathematics and well above average in writing. The results in writing compared very favourably with those of similar schools<sup>3</sup> but were below average in reading and mathematics.
4. Inspection findings show a similar pattern in the current Year 2, with further improvements in mathematics. Overall standards in English are above average. Pupils' make good progress in reading and writing and standards in these aspects of English are above average. They make satisfactory progress in speaking and listening and standards in these aspects are average. Standards in mathematics are above average and this represents good progress. Pupils benefit from well-planned lessons using the national strategies for literacy and numeracy, from good teaching in these lessons and small class sizes.
5. Pupils in Year 2 achieve the expected standard for their age in science, information and communication technology, art and design, design and technology, history, music and physical education. Pupils make satisfactory progress in all of these subjects. Standards in geography are lower than expected, as pupils have not sufficiently developed the skills required for this subject.

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<sup>2</sup> Early learning goals - these are expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage. They refer to achievements in the following six areas of learning: communication language and literacy; mathematical development; personal, social and emotional development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical development; and creative development. There are many goals for each area of learning, for example, in language and literacy pupils should be able to write their own name and other things such as labels and begin to write simple sentences.

<sup>3</sup> National benchmark information bands together 'similar' schools based on the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.

6. Evidence from the inspection indicates that pupils continue to make sound progress in Years 3 and 4. Pupils, who were underachieving when they were in Year 2, are currently achieving average standards in English. They have made good progress in this core subject, particularly in writing. Standards in reading are above average and in writing, speaking and listening they are average. Pupils have also made good progress in numeracy and standards in mathematics, which were below average at age seven, are now average. Standards in science, art and design, design and technology and physical education are in line with national expectations. Pupils make satisfactory progress in these subjects. Standards in history and geography are below national expectations, as pupils do not sufficiently develop the skills required in all aspects of these subjects. Standards in information and communication technology have improved since the last inspection but still remain below national expectations. Although access to computers has recently improved, pupils have had insufficient opportunities to fully develop their skills and understanding of all aspects of this subject.
7. In religious education, pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 4 achieve standards in line with those outlined in the locally agreed syllabus for the subject. They make satisfactory progress in learning about Christianity and other world faiths, including Judaism and Islam. Pupils are given appropriate opportunities to reflect on this knowledge when considering their own ideas and actions.
8. Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to their classmates. They make particularly good progress in literacy and numeracy because they receive good support from skilled learning support staff. These pupils, particularly those with behavioural difficulties, are given sufficient support to ensure they are included in all class activities. The school keeps detailed records of these pupils' progress, which help teachers set specific targets for their individual education plans. The provision the school makes for pupils with special educational needs and the progress they make is a good improvement on that seen at the last inspection. The school has improved its overall provision for its higher-attaining pupils and provides them with suitable challenge in literacy and numeracy. This is reflected, for example, in the improving standards in writing. However, it does not fully challenge these pupils across all subjects. The very small number of pupils from minority ethnic groups, including travellers' children, make similar progress to their classmates and are given appropriate support to ensure they make sound progress. The school works hard to ensure the inclusion of all its pupils.
9. Pupils develop and make satisfactory use of their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects. For example, in history pupils write a letter to their parents or grandparents about the toys they played with and measurements are made in science. Pupils are beginning to use their skills in information and communication technology to support their learning in other subjects. For example, older pupils successfully used the Internet to look for information on mini-beasts during a science lesson but the use of computers is limited overall.
10. The school has made good progress since the last inspection in addressing the underachievement of pupils. The focus of its work over the last two years has successfully raised standards in literacy and numeracy. It now more closely monitors pupils' progress in these subjects and as a result is able to set challenging targets for further improvement. It has correctly identified the need to develop teaching and learning in other subjects by more carefully identifying the skills as well as the knowledge that pupils need to develop.

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

11. Overall, pupils' attitudes to learning are satisfactory and their relationships and behaviour are good. They make satisfactory progress in their personal development. Their rate of attendance is below the national average because of the number of holidays taken in school time and absences by pupils temporarily on the register. These findings represent a slight decline in pupils' personal development since the previous inspection. The school has made a good start in improving pupils' attitudes through the development of its personal, health and social education programme. It recognises the need to provide a more consistent approach to its recent initiatives in this area and to provide more opportunities for pupils to take responsibility.
12. In the reception class children's personal and social development is promoted well. There are clear routines and a classroom organisation that promotes independence and responsibility. For example, children quietly and confidently pack away without adult assistance the equipment that they have used. They are independent and most of the reception children dress and undress themselves unaided when changing for a physical education session in the hall. They respond well to their teachers and are happy and confident in school. Their emotional and spiritual development is promoted through learning to value and respect all things. For example, children pass a set of bells round the circle handling them so carefully they do not make a sound and learn that this is how carefully they must handle living creatures. Children get a good introduction to life in the school community.
13. In Years 1 to 4, pupils have satisfactory attitudes and values and their personal development is sound overall. A larger percentage of parents than at the last inspection now state that their children like school and children show satisfactory levels of enthusiasm. While some are pleased to show visitors their work and discuss their views, many are more reticent. In lessons, most pupils, including those with special educational needs, have a positive attitude to their work. A very small minority of pupils find it difficult to maintain the good levels of concentration shown by many of their classmates but the school takes appropriate measures to help these pupils. Pupils are interested, enjoy their lessons and want to do well. Pupils' social development is good. They form good relationships with all staff, which motivates them to work hard and respond well. They answer questions sensibly and most listen carefully to their teachers. For example, in a very good drama session pupils listened well to the teacher's description of an old man and moved thoughtfully, as if they were that character.
14. Pupils' behaviour within the school is good and has a positive impact on their learning. Most pupils respond well to the staff's expectations of how they should behave in lessons and around the school. There are very occasional instances of inappropriate behaviour from some younger pupils with particular needs but these incidents are managed well by the staff. Most pupils have a good sense of what is expected of them and have an understanding of right and wrong. One pupil was excluded twice for a fixed term in the previous academic year but there have been no permanent exclusions. Playtimes and lunchtimes are relaxed and pupils play well together. No instances of bullying or any aggressive behaviour were observed during the inspection. Older pupils take their responsibility for collecting, sorting and storing the play equipment very seriously. Most pupils satisfactorily understand the impact their actions have on others and respect the feelings, values and beliefs of others. For example in a religious education lesson, the pupils gained a clear understanding of the general principle of respect through learning about how to handle a Jewish Torah. Their moral development is good and they express clear opinions about the effects of a building development on a nearby environmental area.

15. Relationships within the school are good and pupils' social skills develop well. The pupils show respect for teachers, adults and each other. The staff make good role models in the way that they respond to and value the pupils' participation in lessons. Pupils' spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. There is a strong Christian ethos in the school and pupils willingly offer prayers of their own in assemblies and at the end of the day. In the reception class, the line of children waiting for lunch becomes still and quiet while they say a prayer before lunch. Pupils display a sense of initiative when given responsibility in the school. They willingly accept the responsibility of routine tasks such as returning registers to the office, putting out and away chairs and equipment for assemblies. The school includes teaching about citizenship in its recently developed personal, health and social education programme. It recognises there are few opportunities for pupils to be involved in the way the school operates and is looking to promote pupils' understanding of citizenship further through the intended development of a school council.

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

16. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory although there is much that is good or occasionally very good. Consequently, pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning and the recent developments in the teaching of literacy and numeracy are resulting in good progress in these basic skills. During the inspection, just over half of the lessons observed were good, including examples of very good teaching. One lesson was unsatisfactory, but teaching and learning were satisfactory in the remainder. The proportion of good or better teaching is slightly lower than that observed at the last inspection. However, many of the weaknesses identified at that time have been successfully addressed, including the underachievement in pupils' learning by age seven and the teaching of pupils with special educational needs.
17. In the Foundation Stage, teaching is at least satisfactory and often good. Consequently, children make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development and in communication, language and literacy. Their progress is satisfactory in all other areas of learning. There is a good working partnership between the teacher and the classroom assistant, which promotes a well-organised and effective learning environment. Children are encouraged to be responsible and independent. There are clear expectations of what they are to do and how they are to behave. They respond well to the calm and orderly atmosphere, which aids their learning. Good use of assessment information helps staff meet children's varying needs.
18. In Years 1 to 4, teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Examples of good teaching were seen in all year groups and in a range of subjects. There were examples of very good teaching in Year 2 and Year 4. The very small amount of unsatisfactory teaching observed was due to work set at too low a level to challenge pupils' ability in mathematics and the pace of the lesson was too slow. In literacy and numeracy lessons learning is often good, representing strengths in the teaching of the basic skills in these subjects.
19. The strategies for teaching literacy are good. Teachers' planning is thorough and breaks learning into small progressive steps with suitable challenges for pupils of all abilities. There are some good examples of the use of pupils' literacy skills in science to explain what they do and in design and technology to write instructions on how to make an object as well as evaluating what works well and what could be improved. The National Numeracy Strategy is used well and has led to a recent improvement in standards.
20. Variations in the quality of teaching occur across and within the other subjects taught, though teachers have a sound understanding of most of the subjects they teach. For example, in religious education teachers' good understanding of the subject and good management ensure that pupils listen well and deepen their understanding of key ideas such as preciousness, respect, thankfulness and remembrance. Teachers plan interesting

activities and use a wide variety of resources to make lessons come to life. However, in several other subjects there is too little focus on how more able pupils can be challenged to achieve higher levels. This is because assessment systems for these subjects are too informal and do not give sufficiently clear information about what pupils can and can not do. Teachers are covering the curriculum but not always identifying the skills pupils need to learn or what they should be able to do to achieve the next level. Teachers do not plan sufficient use of information and communication technology to ensure that it is effective in supporting pupils' learning in other subjects.

21. The links between teachers' day-to-day assessment of pupils' learning and their planning is weakened by the inadequacies in the quality of marking. The quality of marking is inconsistent. Work is marked regularly and there are some good comments that challenge pupils' thinking further, for example, in Year 2 in literacy and in Years 3 and 4 in science. However this is not consistently the case and more often work is simply ticked, which does not help pupils to know how well they are learning or how to improve further.
22. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good. Activities in literacy and numeracy are well matched to their individual needs as highlighted in their good quality individual education plans. Teachers make good use of learning support assistants, who are well briefed, to ensure those pupils with additional learning needs and behavioural difficulties make sound progress towards their targets.
23. All teachers manage pupils well and promote good social behaviour. They plan a variety of interesting activities that capture pupils' imagination. Their clear expectations for behaviour ensure that pupils work well together, discuss their work and share activities. This enhances their progress. Teachers' demonstrations and directions lead to a willingness to try hard and improve skills through practice. In a Year 2 drama lesson the full involvement of the teacher and both support staff significantly aided pupils' learning and response to developing the characterisation of an old man. Teachers' enthusiasm for a subject ensures that pupils are interested in the activities so pupils enjoy their lessons and want to learn and do well. Homework appropriately supports pupils' learning, particularly in reading.

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

24. The school provides a satisfactory curriculum. It is sufficiently broad and includes appropriate provision for pupils' personal development. Time spent on individual subjects is closely in accordance with national guidance. The balance of the curriculum has improved since the previous inspection, when a disproportionate amount of time was taken up by swimming lessons. These have been discontinued and pupils now swim after their move to the middle school at age nine. As a result, more time is devoted to literacy and numeracy. However, there is an imbalance between the aspects within many subjects.
25. Pupils study religious education and all the subjects of the National Curriculum. Statutory requirements are fully met, including the requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship. In most subjects, work is planned using national guidance. The school has devised 'curriculum maps' to provide an overall view of what is taught in each age group. As Year 3 and Year 4 pupils are taught in a single class for much of the week, a two-year cycle of topics has been adopted to avoid repetition. However, this programme requires improvement to achieve a better balance over time. For instance, there are lengthy periods during which some subjects, such as history, are not taught, so that pupils' skills are not steadily developed.
26. The National Literacy Strategy is used to prepare well-structured lessons in English. As well as the daily literacy lesson, additional time is allocated for aspects such as reading

and phonics. This has been effective in raising standards in English. Planning for the subject also includes regular drama and extended writing. Opportunities for these aspects are often provided through other subjects. For example, work in geography on changes to the local environment provided the opportunity for pupils to practise the skills of persuasive writing. However, some opportunities to extend writing skills in other subjects or to introduce themes from other subjects into daily literacy lessons are missed.

27. In a similar way, the National Numeracy Strategy guidance has been used effectively to provide mathematics lessons that include mental or oral work and teaching of mathematical skills appropriate to the level of ability of individual pupils. In the Year 3/4 class, use is made of additional staffing to divide the class into smaller groups. Work is planned using local authority guidance for mixed-age classes. Because of the nature of the two cohorts involved, the division is along age-group lines. This has been effective in raising standards in the Year 4 pupils, but some Year 3 pupils work at too low a level. A group of more able mathematicians from Years 2, 3 and 4 are taught from time to time by the headteacher but other commitments prevent this becoming a regular feature. There is a reasonable balance between the different aspects of the subject, but investigational work, in which pupils learn to choose the mathematics they need, is under-represented in the school's programme.
28. The school is aware that its programme of study in several subjects concentrates excessively upon acquiring knowledge rather than developing skills. Notably in science, history and geography, the specific skills to be developed in each unit of work have not been identified, nor the way in which these skills build on from those pupils already have. One result is that teachers plan individual lessons with greater attention to the activities to be provided than to the subject skills to be taught. Because there is no clear focus on the skills to be learnt, teachers are unable to assess the precise levels pupils have reached. In consequence, they do not provide tasks that are closely matched to the needs of individual pupils.
29. There is a good system to ensure that governors have an appropriate oversight of the curriculum. Every subject has a designated governor who visits the school and keeps in regular contact with the co-ordinator concerned. This ensures that governors are well informed and that curriculum issues are at the forefront in meetings of the governing body. The local 'pyramid' of first, middle and upper schools also fulfils a valuable role in curriculum development, with regular meetings for subject co-ordinators and access to more extensive human and material resources than could be provided by a small school on its own.
30. There is satisfactory provision for personal, social and health education (PSHE), including citizenship. All classes receive weekly lessons in which whole-class discussion forms an important part. These discussions contribute well to pupils' speaking and listening skills and enable them to explore a range of moral and social issues and personal feelings. Teachers are amassing a good range of ideas and resources for lessons in this area. They often steer activities skilfully towards the more sensitive subjects they wish to explore. For example, in a very good lesson for Year 4 pupils, the teacher used a simple 'changing places' game, beginning by asking pupils to change places according to clothing worn, then moving on to criteria relating to bullying. This was followed by an opportunity for pupils to talk in more detail in a non-threatening and supportive atmosphere. Subject matter for such discussions is often related to the themes chosen for assemblies. However, the school has not developed a scheme of work for this area, so that progression is not yet assured from one class to the next.
31. The school's curriculum is enriched in a number of ways. The good programme of extra-curricular activities noted at the previous inspection has been maintained. Most clubs are run by teaching staff after school on Wednesdays. Activities vary from term to term, but

during the inspection they included gardening, games skills and information and communication technology. They are open to all pupils in Years 3 and 4 and most take part with enthusiasm. The school has productive links with other schools in the area, leading to joint ventures such as an Arts Week and a swimming gala. There are good links with the local nursery and careful arrangements are made over the transfer of pupils to their next school. Many visitors come to the school to share their expertise with the pupils and the school uses these visits well to enhance its curriculum. Satisfactory use is made of the local community as a resource, for instance as part of studies in geography, or as an audience for performance, such as when entertaining the elderly. However, the school makes insufficient use of visits to places beyond West Moors to extend pupils' experiences in subjects such as music, art and geography.

32. In most respects, pupils have equal opportunities to progress in all areas of the curriculum. The school takes care to ensure that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, are fully included by providing extra support through its generous number of skilled learning support assistants. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 have good opportunities to participate in extra-curricular activities, with popular clubs repeated for new groups of pupils. The school has given financial help when parents could not afford to buy recorders. However, there are some inequalities. Because pupils' skills in many subjects other than literacy and numeracy are inadequately assessed, those with higher levels of skill are less able to make the progress that might be expected. Lower attaining pupils are given additional help in literacy away from the classroom, but insufficient care is taken to ensure they do not miss the lessons in other subjects taking place at the same time.
33. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall and has been maintained at this level since the last inspection. However, there has been a specific improvement in the provision for both spiritual and moral development. The school has successfully addressed the lack of provision for spiritual development across the whole curriculum and teachers are now more aware of the need to allow pupils the opportunity to reflect on their feelings. For example, in a Year 2 PSHE personal social and health education lesson, the teacher used circle time<sup>4</sup> well to allow reflection on 'stranger danger' and 'secrets'. Additionally, pupils in Years 1 and 2 were fascinated by the development of frogspawn into tadpoles. Pupils' spiritual awareness is also heightened in assemblies and through displays in the school hall. The improved link with the local church also contributes to the spiritual dimension of the school.
34. There is a strong moral framework and pupils have a good understanding of right and wrong. The 'Golden Rules' are discussed and then displayed in classrooms and the hall. Pupils have a good understanding of the need for fairness and this was well illustrated in an assembly where, in a role-play game, the headteacher intentionally forgot to reward all the children in a group who had successfully completed a mental mathematics exercise. Additionally, pupils are given the opportunity to discuss their reactions to different scenarios in circle time. Members of staff are good role models, showing respect and concern for the individual needs of all pupils. This was particularly evident in the gardening club after school when teachers and pupils had mature discussions about the need to protect the individual environments in each garden pot.
35. The school provides good opportunities for the pupils to develop social skills and consequently good relationships are evident throughout. Pupils are encouraged to get involved in the community and they sing to residents in sheltered accommodation and entertain members of the community. Additionally, pupils play an important part in the life

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<sup>4</sup> Circle time provides a good opportunity for pupils to talk over issues that face them as part of everyday life. During circle time pupils discuss a wide range of personal and general issues. All pupils agree that no interruptions should occur and only one person at a time will speak. Respect for other pupils' views will occur at all times and therefore pupils feel confident that they can talk with ease and free from any form of interference or interruption from other children.



of the village church. Opportunities are also provided for older pupils to take on responsibilities that contribute to the smooth running of the school. For example, they work well together to set out the overhead projector and chairs for assembly. The school has correctly recognised the need to further develop these opportunities and intends, for example, to introduce a school council.

36. Pupils have satisfactory opportunities to develop their understanding of the local culture and the school works hard to provide opportunities for them to discover and understand a multicultural society. Good use is made of the immediate community but there are few opportunities for pupils to travel further afield to look at contrasting areas. In a range of subjects, opportunities are found to promote understanding of cultural diversity, for example, the use of musical instruments from different parts of the world. Displays around school give pupils the opportunity to study Egyptian writing and masks and the much-travelled Bobby Bear sends postcards from his holidays in Europe.

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

37. The school continues to take good care of the emotional and physical needs of its pupils. There are also satisfactory procedures in place for the promotion and monitoring of attendance and good procedures to promote and monitor behaviour. The procedures for monitoring pupils' progress are satisfactory overall.
38. The governing body takes its responsibility for the care of pupils seriously with regular visits to school and a formal annual health and safety inspection. However, it now needs to ensure that this good practice is included in a redraft of its health and safety policy. The school maintains thorough records for first aid, fire drills, accident recording and the emergency contact of family and friends in case of an emergency. The procedures for child protection are effective and the designated teacher ensures that all members of staff have an appropriate understanding of them. However, the governing body should ensure, as a matter of priority, that the policy is reviewed so as to reflect current practice.
39. The school promotes and monitors behaviour well through the good provision of moral development and the way that it is implemented. The procedures for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour are also good. The school looks after pupils well at dinnertime and in the playground or field during breaks. The midday supervisors are an effective and important part of the school family. It was particularly noted how well pupils were supervised as they crossed the lane to play in the field. The special educational needs co-ordinator has good links with other agencies and works hard to ensure that pupils with additional needs receive the most appropriate support for their personal and academic development.
40. The school promotes and monitors attendance satisfactorily. It provides adequate reminders to parents about the negative impact on learning caused by removing their children from school for holiday purposes. This has not been totally successful, as the pupils' attendance rate has remained below the national average over recent years.
41. The last report judged assessment procedures to be satisfactory overall but there were some weaknesses. It was a key issue to create comprehensive assessment systems particularly in science and information and communication technology. The school has made good progress in tackling this key issue. Assessment and recording sheets in use for science, information and communication technology and religious education are matched against descriptions of what pupils should achieve. The school has maintained the strengths from the last inspection in assessing progress in English and mathematics. There is better earlier identification of pupils with special educational needs.

42. Assessment procedures for the Foundation Stage are good. There is good liaison with pre-school providers, which ensures assessment information is passed to the school. The reception teacher analyses this against the development markers in the Foundation Stage curriculum and successfully uses this information to ensure children receive appropriate tasks to challenge and meet their needs. There is continued assessment by the teacher and appropriate records are kept of children's progress, which are shared with parents in the first term of reception.
43. Staff have recently introduced tracking sheets for pupils' progress through Years 1 to 4, which show up gaps in knowledge and understanding in literacy and numeracy. This has been a key factor in the improving standards in English and mathematics. New procedures for monitoring science, information and communication technology and religious education have also been introduced though there has been insufficient time for them to impact on pupils' progress. Teachers are growing in confidence in their use so as to identify gaps and give a sharper focus to their curriculum planning. The formal link between assessment and planning is being developed, though the school sees this as an area for further development and is trialling a colour coded 'traffic light ' system based on national guidelines. There are individual targets for English and mathematics to help pupils focus on their own key weaknesses, but little reference is made to these targets in pupils' books or teachers' comments. The school analyses its test results to modify teaching methods and content where weaknesses are identified. Nevertheless, assessment procedures are relatively new and not yet fully embedded in practice. It is too early to see their full effect and there are still some gaps in the processes. There is little formal assessment in other subjects related to the development of pupils' skills and knowledge.
44. There is careful monitoring of the progress of pupils with special educational needs and their specific targets are regularly reviewed. Currently, there is no policy or tracking procedure for gifted and talented pupils. The staff are at the early stages of looking at the impact of planning on the quality of these pupils' work and the effect of teachers' marking and feedback on pupils' knowledge of how well they are doing. The school does not have procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' personal development but this is under discussion. It has recently introduced a personal health and social education programme and linked this to its religious education themes, providing opportunities for discussion in circle time.

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

45. The school promotes itself well to its parents and almost all who responded to the parental questionnaire or who attended the meeting with inspectors had very positive views about most aspects of school life. Parents now hold St Mary's School in very high esteem and there has been an improvement in this partnership since the last inspection. The quality of information provided for parents continues to be good overall.
46. The contribution of parents to school life is good. A small number help in school on a regular basis and additionally parents provide very effective support for visits into the community. The school also benefits from a hard working parent-teacher association. This organisation raises funds each year for resources such as the new climbing frame and playground games. Additionally, parents have been responsible for painting the school hall. The school values all this help and support, which has a positive impact on pupils' learning.
47. The information provided by the school is good overall with the regular weekly newsletters containing very good details of activities and forthcoming events. The quality of annual reports on progress is satisfactory. Parents are given a good idea of what their children have achieved during the school year but targets for improvement or development are not

always set out clearly. Reports do not always give a clear picture of whether children's standards are appropriate for their age. There are good opportunities for parents to meet with staff on a daily basis as they bring their children into class. Additionally, good use is made of the red folders, which are taken home each day. They provide parents with the opportunity to assist in homework and follow what their children are doing in school. The school provides good information for parents of pupils with special educational needs. These parents come into school to discuss the needs of their children, and the school involves them in the reviews of their children's individual educational plans.

## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

48. At the time of the last inspection, the school was going through a period of instability and had a temporary headteacher. Because of a lack of consistent leadership in that period, some teaching was unsatisfactory, pupils' behaviour was a cause for concern and the school was judged to be underachieving. The governing body had not sufficiently developed its role and so did not monitor the work of the school effectively. Since then the school has appointed a new headteacher who has provided clear and decisive leadership. The governing body has successfully developed its role in the management of the school. The school is now well led and managed and, as a result, has made good progress since its last inspection. It is an improving school that currently provides its pupils with a sound education.
49. The school has a clear ethos statement that is published in its prospectus. It aims to provide an education of the highest quality within a Christian context and an environment in which pupils are happy and eager to learn. The school is making better progress towards achieving its aims than at the previous inspection. The quality of education is improving and almost all parents report that their children are happy at school. There is a shared commitment between governors, headteacher and staff to continuing improvement. The headteacher provides strong and committed leadership, with a clear vision for the school and has achieved much in a short period of time. She has developed a good 'team spirit' amongst the staff and governors and won the confidence of pupils and parents, who recognise and appreciate how well the school is led and managed.
50. The school has satisfactorily introduced procedures for performance management. The headteacher carefully monitors teaching and learning and this has had a positive impact on the quality of education provided. The role of the subject co-ordinators has developed since the last inspection. They satisfactorily monitor planning though the school correctly recognises that their involvement in monitoring teaching and learning in subjects other than literacy and numeracy is limited. The management of special educational needs is very effective. All procedures required under the Code of Practice<sup>5</sup> are in place and up to date. Statutory requirements are fully met and the link governor for special education needs is well briefed and meets regularly with the co-ordinator.
51. The governing body is very supportive of the school. It satisfactorily fulfils its statutory responsibilities by ensuring all legally required documents and policies are in place, including a special educational needs policy and prospectus. Some policies, such as those relating to pupils' health and safety, require updating. The governing body meets regularly and has an appropriate structure that includes committees for curriculum and school improvement. Governors have taken on individual responsibilities linked to the subjects taught. These responsibilities, together with their accompanying visits to school and links with the subject co-ordinators, have ensured they have a good understanding of

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<sup>5</sup> [Code of Practice – this gives practical advice to schools and local education authorities about their responsibilities, duties and tasks to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs receive the most appropriate help and support to further their learning and personal development. This is a statutory duty under the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001.](#) [Code of Practice – this gives practical advice to schools and local education authorities about their responsibilities and tasks to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs receive the most appropriate help to further their learning and personal development. This is a statutory duty under the 1993 Education Act.](#)

the work of the school. Consequently, governors play a valuable role in shaping the direction of the school.

52. The school's development plan is detailed and satisfactorily provides a large number of appropriate targets for school improvement. The targets have identified success criteria, though these are not always specific enough against which to measure success. The governing body carefully monitors spending though, as a result of falling numbers, it has set a deficit budget with the agreement of the local education authority. However, the governors have taken good care to ensure that priorities, such as maintaining staffing levels, are supported through the school's financial planning. The school satisfactorily applies the principles of best value to its decision making and makes appropriate use of specific grants.
53. The school has a good number of teaching and support staff to meet the demands of the curriculum. The high level of support has a positive impact on the standards achieved in literacy and numeracy and in the progress made by pupils with special educational needs. The school's office is run very efficiently, as highlighted in the school's most recent internal audit, and this supports the general work of the school.
54. The school's accommodation is adequate for the number of pupils on roll. It is clean and has been redecorated recently. Overall, learning resources are satisfactory. The school has correctly identified the need to improve pupils' access to computers. The computer room has a satisfactory number of computers at present but space is very limited and this impacts on learning, as it is difficult for pupils to observe demonstrations of new activities. The school has improved the outdoor learning area for pupils in reception. However, the area is small and this limits the range of activities possible and number of children able to access the area.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

55. To further improve the quality of education provided and to raise standards, the governors, headteacher and staff should now:

- (1) raise pupils' standards in information and communication technology by the age of nine, by:
  - ensuring all aspects of the subject are taught in sufficient depth;
  - providing pupils with more opportunities to use information and communication technology to support their learning in other subjects;

(Paragraphs: 6, 9, 20, 106-110)
  
- (2) raise pupils' standards in history by age nine and in geography by ages seven and nine (see (3) below).
 

(Paragraphs: 5, 6, 99-105)
  
- (3) develop the planning in subjects other than in literacy and numeracy so that the skills pupils are to learn are more closely identified, taught and assessed, by:
  - clearly identifying within the topics being taught the skills that pupils are to learn as well as the activities and content to be covered;
  - ensuring that all pupils, particularly higher-attaining pupils, build systematically on the skills they have learned as they move through the school;
  - developing whole-school procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress and using this information to guide curriculum development;

(Paragraphs: 28, 32, 43, 92, 98, 99, 116, 121)
  
- (4) further develop recent initiatives to improve pupils' personal development, by:
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to show responsibility and develop independence;
  - completing the recently introduced curriculum for personal, social and health education and citizenship so that it forms a consistent whole-school programme;
  - continuing to develop strategies to improve children's own knowledge of their learning.

(Paragraphs: 11, 15, 30)

In addition to the key issues above, the following minor issues should be considered for inclusion in the school's action plan. They are indicated by the following paragraphs:

<b>Area for development</b>	<b>Paragraph/s</b>
A more consistent approach to marking that helps pupils understand what they have learned and what they need to learn next.	43, 86
The role of subject co-ordinators in monitoring the teaching and learning within their subject.	49, 87, 92, 103, 115
Updating governing body policies related to health and safety and pupils' wellbeing.	37, 50
Investigate further ways of improving the pupils' rate of attendance.	11, 39

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	25
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	24

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	0	4	9	11	1	0	0
Percentage	0	16	36	44	4	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents 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)	83
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	11

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	19

#### English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	22
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	28

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.0
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	9	7	16

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Total	14	15	14
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88 (88)	94 (79)	88 (83)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Total	14	14	14
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88 (88)	88 (83)	88 (88)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

### Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British - Indian
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

### Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
82	2	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
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)	5.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	15.5
Average class size	21

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

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	144

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	6
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	6
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2001-02
	£
Total income	296,793
Total expenditure	306,914
Expenditure per pupil	3,131
Balance brought forward from previous year	9,459
Balance carried forward to next year	-662



## Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate 31%

Number of questionnaires sent out	83
Number of questionnaires returned	26

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	56	40	0	4	0
My child is making good progress in school.	58	38	0	4	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	41	48	11	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	33	56	11	0	0
The teaching is good.	74	26	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	59	41	0	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	81	19	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	78	18	0	0	4
The school works closely with parents.	56	44	0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	81	19	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	63	33	0	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	41	48	11	0	0

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

**AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

56. At the time of the inspection most pupils in the reception class were five or nearly five. Children enter reception with standards of attainment similar to those expected for their age. Nearly all children have some experience of pre-school provision. There is effective transfer of information about what children know and can do. This helps the reception teacher analyse what they need to do next and ensures continuity in their learning. Satisfactory, and at times good, teaching and provision is leading to sound progress overall and good progress in children's personal, social and emotional development and in their communication, language and literacy.
57. The teacher uses her analysis and day-to-day observations to group children and set more challenging tasks for the more able. The activities are wide-ranging and well balanced. Over the year, the format for the day is gradually adapted to prepare children for the National Curriculum at the start of Year 1. Staff make good use of national guidance on the steps in children's learning to plan activities and to continually assess children's knowledge and skills. All staff know the children well. The good ratio of adults to children helps ensure that all children make sound progress, including those with special educational needs. There are useful informal opportunities for parents to talk to staff at the start and end of each session.

**Personal, social and emotional development**

58. The teacher has established clear routines and expectations to ensure that children settle in well and quickly gain independence. All equipment is organised so that it is easily accessible, which enables children to select activities without adult assistance. Staff encourage children to be careful and responsible and take good care of all equipment. Children listen to staff and have good relationships with each other and all adults. They happily work together and share equipment well, taking responsibility for clearing away sensibly and very willingly. The quality of teaching in this area is good and ensures children have positive attitudes to learning and develop an enthusiasm for learning through exploration and investigation. Children meet the expectations for their age and many exceed them.

**Communication, language and literacy**

59. Staff provide a wide variety of activities and model language well, which helps children gain in confidence when speaking to adults and to the class. They respond quickly to questions and speak confidently in sentences, though few answer with a sequence of sentences. Skilful questioning by the teacher successfully helps children extend their thoughts and ideas on the use of language. There is a clear focus on learning sounds and using them to help pupils spell words. Staff help children and monitor and assess how well they write and so all children have appropriate access to what is being taught. There are good opportunities to promote writing in formal and informal situations. For example, children write sentences with adults and choose to write notes and cards in the office role-play area. Their writing develops well. Most children form their letters well to creating their own sentences using words from a word bank. Most children are starting to read simple books. There is good use of big books and children learn from the teacher's modelling of expressive reading. When reading simple books individually, some read with expression, showing their understanding of the story. For example, one child read firmly, 'The farmer said, BE QUIET', and explained this was because the animals were making too much noise. Children enjoy looking at books. They handle them well and know how they are structured and identify such details as the title, author and illustrator. The quality of teaching is good and promotes good listening skills and positive attitudes to writing.

Children make good progress in their communication skills and exceed expectations for their age.

### **Mathematical development**

60. There is an appropriate emphasis on oral number games and rhymes. For example, when standing in line for lunch, children eagerly play counting-games such as counting up to 10 and back down to nought extended quickly to counting in 10s to 100. There is a strong focus on numbers in the classroom environment and the promotion of number usage. For example, areas are labelled 'Only 4 children can use this area'. This promotes number recognition. Children make satisfactory progress in their learning and several can write simple addition sums in their books. The quality of teaching is satisfactory and there is a strong focus on developing children's mathematical vocabulary such as 'more and less' and 'bigger and smaller'. Children reach the national expectations for their age in this area of learning.

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

61. Children have a satisfactory general knowledge of the world around them. The teacher provides good opportunities to discuss what they learn from stories such as the *Very Hungry Caterpillar* and uses this effectively to introduce non-fiction books about other insects. This prepares them for the arrival of butterfly pupae. They learn successfully how important it is to handle all living things gently by passing a set of bells from one child to another without making any sound. Children confidently use computers. They know some programs well and are able to print their work without help. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Staff provide a range of interesting experiences and, through effective questioning and emphasis on specific vocabulary, extend children's knowledge and understanding of the world. This ensures children make sound progress and meet the expectations for their age.

### **Physical development**

62. Children handle small equipment and tools successfully and develop good control of pencils and tools. The teacher makes good use of all the space available including the outdoor area. This is now securely fenced but is too small to provide effectively for external physical development. It is too small to allow for appropriate outdoor play sessions as a natural extension of the curriculum. It lacks an appropriate safe surface for climbing equipment and is too small for safe use of wheeled toys. The teacher, however, makes good use of the hall for specific physical education sessions. For example, children learn to use their bodies in a range of ways with control and an awareness of safety. They show appropriate control of their bodies and good co-ordination when balancing. A strong feature is the teacher's emphasis on helping children recognise the need to warm up their muscles with some gentle exercise and then recognising the effect of more strenuous exercise on their breathing rate. Children confidently use the relatively large space in the hall but there is too little combined use of floor work and apparatus. Children also have the opportunity to go out to play with older pupils at the lunch and break periods. The quality of teaching is satisfactory and children make sound progress in learning new skills. Their overall attainment is in line with expectations for their age.

### **Creative development**

63. Creative play equipment is well organised and accessible. There are appropriate role-play areas but there are missed opportunities to use the good space available to create a play environment that is visually more challenging and linked to the stories children listen to. The room is bright and attractive and well displayed with children's work alongside pictures and information. Children enjoy creative activities such as making impressions with tools in modelling material. They recognise instruments and join the older pupils for assemblies and singing sessions but the work is at times too difficult for them. There are good teaching strategies to promote painting and learning about the patterns objects make when dipped into paint and used in a variety of ways, for example rolling a bead across the

paper or using the edge of a block of wood. The quality of teaching is satisfactory and ensures sound learning. This enables children to meet expectations for their age.

## ENGLISH

64. The overall standards in English by the end of Year 2 are above average. This represents a significant improvement since the previous inspection, when standards in Year 2 were below the national average. By the end of Year 4, standards are average. This is lower than at the time of the previous inspection, but it represents good progress from a low base for the pupils in this year group because the standards they achieved at the end of Year 2 were below average. They have made up the lost ground that was apparent at the time of the last inspection.
65. Standards in speaking and listening are average throughout the school. Teachers give pupils adequate opportunities to discuss ideas. For example, pupils in Year 4 satisfactorily expressed their opinions on the possible redevelopment of a local wood. In some lessons, opportunities to further develop pupils' speaking skills are missed. In replying to their teachers' questions, many pupils tend to use short answers rather than full sentences. While the majority of pupils are attentive, others find listening more difficult. Pupils listen very attentively when activities capture their interest. For example, pupils listened very carefully to the reading of the poem *The Power* during the introduction to a lesson on writing about frightening scenes. Occasionally, teachers do not always make sure that all pupils are listening carefully. Opportunities to capture pupils' attention through, for example, the use of a glove puppet are not fully exploited.
66. The school has ensured that pupils have good opportunities to develop their reading skills. Standards are above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 4. The school has introduced additional guided reading sessions as well as reading sessions within literacy lessons. This regular activity, during which pupils consolidate their reading skills, and support for reading at home, is having a positive impact on standards. In Years 1 and 2, pupils use a good range of strategies, such as sounding out new words and using picture clues, and most read with good levels of fluency. In Years 3 and 4, pupils read more difficult texts accurately and use a wide range of strategies to help their understanding, including their knowledge of phonic sounds and by re-reading a sentence to gain the context. Consequently, they can retell the story in their own words and are beginning to recognise inference and use deduction when reading more difficult texts. Pupils successfully use their knowledge of the alphabet to help locate information in reference books. Their knowledge of famous authors is limited, as is their use of the school library and library classification systems.
67. Writing skills have been a major focus for the school and as a result progress in pupils' writing is good. By the end of Year 2, standards are above average. Most pupils correctly use basic punctuation, including capital letters, full stops and question marks, in much of their writing. Teachers help pupils to organise their writing by the use of helpful story plans and flow-charts. Pupils develop a good style through, for example, the use of imaginative similes, as when one pupil wrote: 'I am as unhappy as a little baby that's lost its favourite cuddly toy.' By Year 4, there is a wide range in pupils' attainment. Overall standards are similar to those expected for this age and indicate good progress, as these pupils were underachieving at the age of seven. Pupils produce satisfactory writing in a variety of styles, including descriptions of characters, giving instructions on how to make toast, expressing their opinions on school uniform and writing persuasively. They are improving the content of their writing by the addition of descriptive words, though for many this is still at a basic level, as when a pupil rewrote 'an elephant' as 'a big tall elephant'. Pupils are beginning to revise and redraft their work in discussion with the teacher. As a result, one pupil wrote a more complex sentence, 'I think school uniform is a good idea because everyone will look smart and we will all look the same.'

68. The school recently identified the need to improve pupils' handwriting, as standards vary widely. The handwriting of some pupils is joined and legible, with accurately formed letters that are consistent in size. Many pupils, however, have difficulty in achieving the expected standard and insufficient time is given to producing handwriting of a high standard.
69. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in their learning. Teachers set clear targets in their individual education plans. Teachers, learning support assistants and voluntary helpers give these pupils very effective support in lessons and in small groups. When learning support staff are present, they ensure that pupils clearly understand instructions and they explain more difficult vocabulary as well as helping to maintain appropriate levels of concentration.
70. During the inspection, teaching ranged from satisfactory to very good. Overall, teaching is good. The school has successfully introduced the National Literacy Strategy and teachers use this to ensure that pupils are building upon previous learning. They often begin lessons with a careful recap of previous activities, which helps to consolidate learning. For example, a teacher's careful questioning reminded pupils of the characters in their shared 'big book'<sup>6</sup> before introducing a writing activity based on the story. In the best lessons, teachers plan activities that quickly capture the pupils' interest, such as a home-made video about the possible development of nearby woodland and poems and drama to create a 'frightening' scene. Both these activities successfully stimulated pupils and resulted in positive attitudes towards their writing. Teachers manage the pupils well and this results in good behaviour in lessons and a calm, purposeful atmosphere. Where pupils have behavioural difficulties, teachers and learning support assistants provide good levels of support and use appropriate strategies to help these pupils.
71. At the beginning of most lessons, teachers share with the pupils what it is they are going to learn. This helps to improve pupils' understanding of their own learning but the impact is limited when teachers do not remind pupils at the end of lessons of their aims and evaluate their success in achieving them. The pace of lessons is in the main satisfactory, but at times introductory sessions are too long leaving insufficient time for pupils to complete their individual tasks. In other activities, time is lost rewriting unnecessary text. Some use of information and communication technology is made when pupils type their stories. However, opportunities to use the computers in a wider range of activities in literacy lessons are missed. The quality of marking is variable. The best examples praise the pupils for their efforts, help them understand what they can now do and make suggestions on how to improve. Individual targets for improvement are shared with the pupil and displayed in their books. However, this approach is not consistent throughout the school.
72. The subject is well managed by an enthusiastic co-ordinator, who has a very good level of expertise and experience. This has led to better planning and the careful monitoring of pupils' progress. Consequently, standards, particularly in writing, have improved. There is an adequate range of resources including reading books, though the school recognises the need to increase the range of 'big books' available.

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<sup>6</sup> A Big Book is a large copy of a classroom book that all pupils can see and read from together.

## MATHEMATICS

73. Pupils reach above average standards in mathematics by the end of Year 2. In 2002, the results of the national tests for Year 2 pupils indicated that almost all pupils reached at least the expected level and an above average proportion reached the higher level. Inspection evidence indicates that the current Year 2 pupils will achieve better results, with all attaining the expected level and almost a half attaining the higher level. There has been a notable improvement since the previous inspection, when standards in Year 2 were below national expectations. However, the school's relatively small cohorts of pupils show considerable variation, with, for example, the current Year 1 pupils achieving much lower standards. By the end of Year 4, pupils reach average levels of attainment, as was the case at the time of the previous inspection.
74. Current standards represent good progress by both groups, as the Year 2 pupils left the reception class with average levels of attainment and the Year 4 pupils were well below average when tested at the end of Year 2. All pupils have benefited from well-planned lessons using the National Numeracy Strategy, from good teaching, particularly in Years 2 and 4, and from small class sizes. Pupils with special educational needs or lower levels of ability in the subject have made particularly good progress because they have received good support from skilled learning support assistants.
75. All pupils in Year 2 understand place value in numbers up to a hundred. They use this knowledge to subtract successfully two-digit numbers from a hundred. Higher attaining pupils identify all the two-digit numbers they can make from 2, 5, 7 and 9 and order them correctly. These pupils find multiples of five by multiplying by ten and halving the result. They have made a positive start to learning multiplication tables. Lower attaining pupils use a blank number line to add 12 and 5 and recognise odd and even numbers. These pupils have difficulty in reading a simple scale but they round smaller numbers to the nearest ten.
76. In Year 2, pupils identify which coins are required to pay amounts up to one pound and solve simple problems relating to money. They know the names of two- and three-dimensional shapes such as *hexagon*, *cylinder* and *ovoid*, describing features such as the number of sides or faces they possess. However, their understanding of symmetry is less well developed so they are unable to classify shapes by properties such as reflective symmetry. Higher attaining pupils understand symmetry better and estimate lengths accurately in centimetres. Occasionally these pupils are given work that is too easy because it repeats work they have already completed correctly. Almost all pupils take care to present their work neatly.
77. Most pupils in Year 4 have achieved a similar level of numeracy to that of the higher attaining pupils in Year 2, but have caught up well from their low level of attainment two years ago. They have begun to use fractions, calculating five-sixths of 30, for example. Pupils add and subtract two-digit numbers accurately and know some of the simpler multiplication tables. They use appropriate strategies to subtract a two-digit multiple of ten from a three-digit number. Some of the higher attaining pupils make careless errors in this task, not checking their work to ensure their answers are reasonable, but nevertheless cope well with larger numbers. They have not yet mastered the process of long multiplication. The few lower attaining pupils have not fully grasped place value and struggle to add two-digit numbers using a number line. Overall, very few pupils have good skills in manipulating numbers mentally.
78. Pupils in their final year in the school have developed their understanding of space, shape and measures to the expected level. They use a range of metric measures and understand perimeter and area. Higher attaining pupils calculate the areas of rectangles by multiplying. Work on handling data is less advanced. Most pupils are insufficiently

aware of the value of each symbol when using pictograms, but construct a bar graph to collate information after tallying. Pupils' skill in using and applying the mathematics they learn is also below average. This is because they have little experience of work, such as investigations, in which they are required to try different approaches to a problem and to organise and explain their thinking, especially in written form. Pupils' evident enjoyment of the subject at this age has not yet led most of them to present their work attractively.

79. The overall standard of teaching is good, as at the last inspection. National guidance is used well to plan three-part lessons that meet the varying needs of the pupils in each class. In the single unsatisfactory lesson, the teacher failed to meet those needs, providing tasks well below the pupils' assessed level. In most lessons, the mental or oral work at the beginning is brisk and lively, often using games to motivate pupils. Support assistants are used well to give extra help to less able pupils, enabling them to participate fully. However, in some classes there is insufficient incentive for all pupils to take part because only a single pupil is selected to give an answer at the same time. In better lessons, all pupils are fully included as they record their answers on individual whiteboards. This also enables the teacher to more easily assess pupils who are having difficulty.
80. Most teachers have good expertise in the subject, which enables them to explain clearly so that pupils grasp new concepts easily. Skilful questioning is used to check pupils' understanding. A good range of methods and resources is used, although more apparatus is required sometimes for younger or less able pupils. Some teachers use imaginative methods to promote learning. For example, the Year 2 teacher asked a higher attaining pupil to set her some questions in subtraction. She asked the pupil to mark her answers carefully as she had deliberately made some mistakes.
81. In most classes, teachers have established good relationships with their pupils. They manage them effectively and, as a result, pupils focus well upon their tasks and lessons proceed with few disruptions. Teachers mark work thoroughly in all classes, but, particularly for older pupils, they do not ensure that their instructions relating to presentation are followed through and that corrections are completed. They give pupils insufficient indications of how they can improve their work. Occasionally they accept too low a volume of work from pupils who are capable of faster work. Teachers provide homework tasks appropriately linked to on-going work in the class. These tasks encourage parents to be involved in helping their children at home.
82. The subject co-ordinator's role is well developed and includes regular monitoring of teaching and pupils' work. This has given the co-ordinator, who has a good level of expertise and experience, an effective oversight of mathematics throughout the school and an appreciation of which areas require development. One such area is the provision of more open-ended investigational work to enable pupils to choose and use a variety of mathematics. There are appropriate assessment procedures but these are not used consistently to ensure that future work is challenging enough for all pupils.

## **SCIENCE**

83. By the end of Year 2, standards of attainment in science are in line with national standards. These findings match those of teachers' judgements of standards of attainment at the end of Year 2 in 2002. By the end of Year 4, pupils' standards of attainment are in line with national expectations for pupils of this age.
84. The quality of learning is satisfactory throughout the school. This stems from the sound quality of teaching. All pupils make similar progress in lessons. There are some good elements of teaching, but not enough to raise standards to above average levels. Teachers have a sound understanding of the required scientific knowledge. However, this

is not matched by a clear understanding of the purpose of scientific enquiry in teaching and learning in the subject. Consequently, whilst pupils learn a reasonable amount of scientific knowledge, they are not encouraged to ask their own questions, devise ways to test them or to record them in different ways. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection with improvements in the assessment systems for science. However, there is still too little use of numeracy and information technology skills to support learning in this subject.

85. In Years 1 and 2, pupils make sound progress in relation to what they already know and understand. Younger pupils learn about what plants need to grow and carefully record their ideas labelling their drawings of beans. Year 2 pupils were excited by an opportunity to investigate habitats in their school environment and search out insects and plants, recording carefully on a map where they found them.
86. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 make sound progress in learning how to classify insects and animals into different classes. They use a branching database to identify which class a particular insect belongs to by answering yes and no questions. There are well prepared resources to support their learning and deepen their understanding. More able pupils are suitably challenged in the lessons that are taught by the science co-ordinator. However, scrutiny of their past work indicates that when support teachers take the lessons the work is based on worksheets that offer too little challenge. The co-ordinator is aware of the need to ensure more able pupils are appropriately challenged to enable them to reach higher levels. Pupils are beginning to make more effective use of computers in this subject but there are few examples recorded in pupils' previous work.
87. Teachers plan carefully and set work for different levels of ability but this is not always reflected in pupils' books. Teachers have good classroom management skills, which ensure pupils know what is expected of them and they respond well. Teachers satisfactorily explain what pupils are to learn and they understand their tasks and settle well to them. These attitudes are fostered by the good relationships teachers have with pupils. Teachers plan activities that pupils find interesting and so they persevere with all tasks. They behave well, work hard and accomplish a fair amount of work in lessons. There are some good examples of teachers' commenting on pupils' work and challenging their thinking in Years 3 and 4 but this is not consistent across the school.
88. The co-ordinator has checked teachers' plans and pupils' work and is keen and interested in developing the subject further, particularly by looking carefully at how work is matched to pupils' individual needs. Much has been done to ensure an appropriate curriculum with an increasing focus on scientific enquiry. However, in-service training to update teachers' skills has been limited to staff meetings with some support from local advisory staff. The school has introduced an assessment and recording system to help teachers identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills. The curriculum is effectively planned and organised to ensure that the requirements of the National Curriculum are satisfactorily met.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

89. Pupils' standards of attainment are in line with national expectations for their ages at the end of Year 2 and Year 4. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. There has been an improvement in the opportunities for pupils to work with artists and the development of the guidance given to support teachers. Only one lesson was timetabled during the period of inspection so it is not possible to make an overall judgement on the quality of teaching.
90. In Years 1 and 2, pupils' work shows some aspects of good skill development. Observational drawing skills in Year 2 are better than those usually seen for pupils of this age. For example, pupils looked very carefully at a wide selection of objects from the



beach. They marvelled at the shapes, patterns, textures and colours that they found in them. The teacher promoted this moment to foster their spiritual development by asking questions sensitively to ensure they appreciated the wonder of pattern in nature. In Year 1, pupils demonstrated very good control of materials when making simple woven pictures and paid close attention to choosing complementary colours. Good opportunities to work with artists give pupils experience of making good quality cat sculptures from milk bottles in Year 1 and tie-dye techniques in Year 2.

91. As they progress through the school, all pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning. Their work shows a clear sense of pride, perseverance and interest to ensure a good quality product. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 make satisfactory connections between art and music when considering the colour and moods created in works by Matisse. They further explore moods and colour using a computer program. They explore tools and the effects they give, for example, using a wash or wave finish on a picture to distort the original and create a new piece with a different mood. Working with an artist they created a batik wall-hanging of creatures in a jungle linked to a theme of *Our World, One World*. There were good opportunities for pupils to explore ideas creating a motif and developing it through a range of techniques and to produce work of a quality above that usually seen. The art club was not operating during the period of the inspection. However, the mural in the corridor showed how it is used well to extend these pupils' experience and work on a large scale.
92. In the lesson observed, the quality of teaching was very good. The teacher provided a wide variety of objects to stimulate pupils' interest and a range of materials from which they were encouraged to choose. High quality organisation and management skills ensured pupils were very clear about what was expected and they responded well. This created an effective learning environment where pupils worked hard and were reluctant to stop. Underpinning good basic teaching skills was a secure knowledge and understanding of the subject. However, the scrutiny of pupils' work shows some weaknesses in teaching overall. There is insufficient organisation of pupils' work particularly in Years 3 and 4 where sketchbooks have not been used this year. This makes it hard for pupils to look at how they are developing their skills. There are no formal procedures for assessing pupils' work or providing formal feedback to pupils on how well they are doing or how to improve.
93. The co-ordinator has a clear view of development for the subject and is working on a portfolio of examples of pupils' work to illustrate standards. She has provided guidance on developing pupils' artistic skills and sees the next step as developing assessment procedures from this. There have been no opportunities for her to provide training or monitor the quality of teaching, which has lessened the impact of the curriculum planning.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

94. Pupils' standards of attainment are in line with national expectations for their ages at the end of Year 2 and Year 4. This shows a marked improvement since the last inspection where standards were below expectations and the school was not making sufficient progress in developing them. As during the last inspection no lessons were taught during the inspection so it is not possible to judge the quality of teaching.
95. In Year 2, pupils draw detailed and carefully labelled designs for hand puppets. They follow their design closely when making the puppet and pay particular attention to the neatness of their sewing and attachment of a range of collage items to create a pleasing good quality product. Pupils in Year 1 design and make cat masks using large paper bags, using paint and collage to make the features on the mask. They make satisfactory development in their designing and making skills. Pupils clearly take a pride in their work.
96. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 are taught as one class and make wooden photograph frames and cloth purses. They learn to design for a purpose by, for example, designing a torch for a

variety of workers explaining why their particular design would be useful. They evaluate their finished items against their purpose, assessing not only whether they like the design but looking carefully at whether it fits the purpose. They display the photograph well and satisfactorily consider questions such as, 'Does it stand up safely?' Pupils also consider what they can do to improve it further.

97. The improvement in the quality of pupils' attainment and learning has come about through the adoption and use of national guidelines. This has helped teachers gain confidence in what they are teaching and ensures that a suitable curriculum is covered. As a result all pupils have a satisfactory experience of designing and making. They draw appropriately upon their literacy skills to label their designs, write instructions and answer questions on evaluation sheets about their finished product. However, teachers rarely mark work with a comment or suggestions for further improvement, which means that pupils receive little formal response to know how well they are working. There is limited evidence of the planned use of numeracy or information and communication technology in this subject.
98. The co-ordinator continues to have a clear vision for further improvement. This has been hindered by pressures of work for other roles, no opportunity for staff training and no opportunities to monitor the quality of teaching. The subject has not had a high priority due to the school's focus on literacy and numeracy. However, the co-ordinator has established a portfolio of evidence and plans to develop this further to include assessments of pupils' work so that staff gain an understanding of what levels have been achieved. At present there are no formal assessment systems and consequently all pupils are set the same work with the outcome varying according to their abilities and skills. This does not ensure more able pupils are challenged to a higher level of skill and understanding. Less able pupils, including those with special educational needs, receive appropriate support as necessary, enabling them to make the same progress as their peers.

## **GEOGRAPHY and HISTORY**

99. It was not possible to observe lessons in geography or history, but pupils' completed work was examined and discussions were held with pupils in Year 4. These indicate that standards in history at the end of Year 2 are at the expected level but that they are below average in geography. Standards in both subjects are below expectations at the end of Year 4. This represents a decline since the last inspection, when standards were at the expected levels at both ages. There are weaknesses common to both subjects. The most significant of these is that the key skills pupils need to acquire progressively through the school have not been identified. The subjects have had a comparatively low profile because of the staff's focus on literacy and numeracy and insufficient time is spent on them in most age groups.
100. In geography, pupils in Year 1 have examined maps of their local area to identify where their homes are. They have recorded how land is used in the village and their feelings about their environment. The skills they have acquired in using and interpreting maps have not been sufficiently developed in Year 2. These pupils produce imaginative pictorial maps but do not yet make use of symbols or make reference to scale. Pupils compare the most common means of transport in their own village with that on a Scottish island, but do not explain the differences. They have not begun to select information from a range of resources.
101. In history, pupils in Year 1 write a letter to ask parents and grandparents about toys they played with as children, and illustrate their findings. In Year 2, pupils study the lives of Florence Nightingale and Mary Seacole. They have good knowledge of hospitals during the Crimean War, recording details with empathetic understanding. They compare fire-fighting methods in 1666 and the present. Although they know the basic story of the

Gunpowder Plot, they have only limited awareness of why people acted as they did. The subject is used effectively to enable pupils to practise their literacy skills as they write at length on some topics.

102. Year 3 and 4 pupils have studied a village in India. They understand some of the reasons for differences in lifestyle, such as the way both climate and poverty influence the provision of education. By Year 4, pupils have progressed to using four-figure map references, but their ability to read a map remains underdeveloped. Pupils identify some of the positive and negative features of their own village but use geographical vocabulary sparsely as they describe them. Too much of the limited time available for both subjects is taken up by low-level activities such as colouring illustrations.
103. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 have not studied history since the autumn term, when they learnt about Ancient Egypt. They have a sufficient depth of knowledge of some of the features of Egyptian society. Although pupils have some knowledge of how we know about life at this time, they do not understand the differences between primary and secondary sources of evidence. They have not made use of a variety of information sources, neither are they aware of changes during the period studied. Pupils have completed most of their work on commercially produced worksheets. This makes it difficult for them to learn how to organise and present their work well. The volume of work is low in both age groups.
104. The teacher who co-ordinates both subjects is comparatively new to the task but has suitable expertise, particularly in geography. She has had no opportunity to monitor the quality of teaching by observing lessons or to monitor standards, but she is aware that more teaching of specific subject skills is necessary to raise standards. There are no strategies for assessing and recording the development of pupils' skills and the overall management of both subjects is unsatisfactory.
105. Some good links have been established with other subjects. For example, work on houses and habitats in Years 3 and 4 linked geography, science and literacy when pupils used persuasive writing to compile estate agents' house details. Pupils in the art club researched how Ancient Egyptians looked, prior to producing artwork of good quality. There are sufficient books in the library to support pupils' studies in history, particularly on the periods studied in detail, but the range of geographical books is too limited.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

106. At the time of the last inspection standards were below expectations for pupils at the end of Years 2 and 4. There was a lack of a coherent programme for each class to systematically develop pupils' skills. The school has made good progress in addressing this weakness and currently standards by the end of Year 2 are in line with national expectations. Standards by the end of Year 4 are just below those expected for this age. There has not been sufficient time for recent improvements to have completely addressed previous weaknesses and raise standards to the appropriate level.
107. By the age of seven, pupils are familiar with the basic skills for using computers. These skills include using a mouse, finding letters on the keyboard and some basic word-processing skills. For example, pupils in Year 1 type and print labels for their work and in Year 2, pupils type short messages into 'speech bubbles' in a story-making program. Younger pupils satisfactorily use a graphics program to produce simple pictures, for example, when producing 'mood' pictures and 'spiders' webs'. They organise information and present their findings in pictograms. They use these to answer simple questions, as when finding the most common form of transport used by their classmates. In science, pupils learn about other uses of computers when they use an electronic microscope to observe mini-beasts, such as a worm.

108. By Year 4, teachers ensure that pupils have an appropriate range of computer-based activities following the introduction of national guidelines to help with their planning. Support for teachers from training activities within the local 'pyramid' of schools has helped to raise staff confidence. This is an improvement on the situation noted at the last inspection. Consequently, pupils have opportunities to use computers to present their work, exchange information and make things happen. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 can produce and print written work using different fonts and sizes, for example, in their persuasive writing from an earlier literacy lesson. They have sent and received e-mails as part of their work on riddles with another local school. Pupils have had opportunities to use the Internet to gain information during a science lesson on habitats and to give simple instructions to a programmable toy robot. Whilst pupils have an appropriate range of activities and make satisfactory progress in their learning, their skills are not sufficiently well developed to fully meet the expectations for their age.
109. During the inspection one whole-class lesson was observed. Several small groups working independently or with a learning support assistant were also observed. The quality of teaching and learning observed was satisfactory. Staff made effective use of appropriate vocabulary, such as log on, icon and font, to help develop pupils' understanding. Staff have a pleasant approach and this results in good relationships with pupils, who show good attitudes to work and enjoy using the computers. Staff manage the pupils well and consequently behaviour is good. Teachers and learning support assistants give good support to pupils with special educational needs, which results in their making similar progress to their classmates. Teachers satisfactorily plan activities for their pupils, but what is provided for the higher-attaining pupils does not sufficiently extend or challenge their learning.
110. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and has good subject knowledge. She has recently introduced an appropriate system for assessing pupils' progress and correctly recognises the need to link this more closely to the units of work completed by pupils. It currently does not involve any self-assessment by pupils and this limits their understanding of their learning. The staff make the best of the cramped accommodation in the small room used as a computer base. They are making growing use of computers to support pupils' learning in other areas but this remains limited because of the difficulties in accessing the computers. Opportunities to use pupils' skills in communicating and data handling, for example, in subjects such as science, mathematics and design and technology, are often missed. The school recognises this and intends to further develop its computer facilities to improve the hands-on opportunities for pupils.

## **MUSIC**

111. By Year 2, pupils achieve the levels expected nationally for their age. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement about overall standards by the end of Year 4, but the standard of pupils' singing is good. At the previous inspection, it was not possible to judge standards in Year 2, but standards in Year 4 were as expected. Although overall standards have remained similar, some elements of the school's programme are not as strong as they were then. For example, the school is not currently teaching pupils to play the recorder. The programme of study emphasises singing, with far less attention to listening, appraising and composing.
112. Pupils in Year 1 identify high and low pitch but have not yet developed confidence in singing as a class, perhaps because they are in a relatively small group. By the end of Year 2, singing is much more confident, with a level of accuracy in pitch appropriate for their age. Most pupils play percussion instruments with correct technique.

113. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 were heard singing only in whole-school contexts, in a singing session and in daily assemblies. All these pupils participate well, singing with accurate pitch and appropriate attention to the articulation of words, with evident enjoyment.
114. Only a single lesson in music was observed during the inspection, together with a brief singing lesson for all pupils from reception to Year 4. These provided insufficient evidence to make overall judgements about the quality of teaching. The whole-school session was of limited value; although there was good quality instruction by two teachers working effectively in partnership, only one song was practised. This was unsuitable for younger pupils, so that Year 1 and reception children remained uninvolved and made little or no progress in learning.
115. Music plays an appropriate part in daily assemblies, with songs and music to listen to as pupils enter and leave. However, the overall programme of study under-emphasises the importance of listening to, appraising and composing music, although some good opportunities have been taken to link listening to music with work in art. Performance skills in singing are enhanced by regular concerts, some for groups of local elderly people. Visiting musicians provide some opportunities for pupils to listen to music in a variety of styles.
116. Through direct teaching the co-ordinator is aware of standards in the junior class. However, she has not had the opportunity to monitor teaching and learning in the two infant classes. Assessment arrangements are inadequate, so that pupils' skills are not recorded and built upon in subsequent lessons. There are adequate resources for the subject, including recorded music representing a variety of cultures, although more minority ethnic instruments need to be purchased. There are occasions when pupils are withdrawn from music lessons to receive additional help in literacy. This depresses the status of music and does not ensure that all pupils are fully included in the subject.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

117. At the time of the last inspection it was not possible to make a judgement on the standards in physical education. The two lessons observed during this inspection, one on gymnastics and one on games, indicate that standards throughout the school are in line with national expectations. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress.
118. Pupils show appropriate co-ordination for their age. For example, pupils in Year 1 add simple balances to their sequence of movements both when working on mats and on apparatus. In Years 3 and 4, pupils satisfactorily develop their hand-eye co-ordination through playing ball games, such as rounders and French cricket. They throw, catch and hit a ball with appropriate skill for their age. Many show a suitable awareness of positional play and have a sense of fairness when they take part in a game of rounders. Pupils enjoy the subject and make satisfactory progress in developing an understanding that exercise helps to keep them fit.
119. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teachers begin lessons with a warm-up, which helps pupils understand how exercise affects their bodies in the short-term. The warm-up activities, however, do not always contain activities that both stretch the pupils' muscles and increase their heart rate. Teachers manage the pupils well and as a result little time is lost dealing with disruptions. Teachers make good use of learning support staff, particularly to support pupils with special educational needs. This additional support ensures these pupils, including those with behavioural and physical difficulties, maintain satisfactory interest levels and make similar progress to their classmates.

120. Teachers ensure pupils are kept physically active during lessons but they do not sufficiently highlight how pupils can improve their performance. Their planning identifies the activity but they do not always identify what skills are to be improved and how. Teachers make use of pupil demonstrations to praise their efforts but do not use them effectively to show pupils how they, and others, can improve their performance. In the main, teachers make effective use of the adequate resources available and the spacious indoor and outdoor facilities. However, at times insufficient equipment is used and this leads to pupils queuing for their turn or larger than necessary numbers sharing equipment. This slows the rate of progress during lessons.
121. In response to the issue on the use of time and funds raised at the last inspection, the school has reviewed its provision for swimming. The school no longer includes swimming in its programme of activities. This is now done at the middle school. Teachers provide pupils with opportunities to take part in a suitable range of activities, including gymnastics, dance and games. The subject co-ordinator correctly recognises the need to more carefully monitor the progression of activities and the development of skills, so as to ensure a well-balanced curriculum for the subject.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

122. Pupils' standards of attainment at the end of Year 2 and Year 4 are in line with the expectations of the local agreed syllabus. Pupils' progress is satisfactory, including those who have special educational needs. Improvement in the quality of teaching has raised standards for pupils aged seven since the last inspection when they were lower than expected.
123. Younger pupils study the Christian faith and learn about the Jewish faith. The spiritual dimension of beliefs is explored when pupils in Year 2 learn how to handle a Jewish Torah and handle it with respect because it is a most precious item. They reflect carefully on what this means by thinking about things that are precious to **themselves**. The teacher entranced the pupils by modelling how to handle the Torah with the greatest of respect and care, setting a very reverential scene. Pupils in Year 1 gain an understanding of the wonder of nature and learn to consider where Christians would see God in the world around them. The teacher's good preparation of the classroom environment brought the concept of help to protect the world to life for the pupils. For example, pre-spilt paper round the bin prompted discussion about whether it should just be tidied up and thrown away or whether it could be recycled and which would be better for the world and why.
124. Older pupils make further studies of Christianity, and in addition, are introduced to the world religion of Islam. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 make good use of their literacy skills in recording their ideas in this subject and in retelling stories from the *Bible*. They learn about the meaning of symbolism and community by considering a story called *The World of Plenty*. The story presents pupils with opportunities to empathise with the main characters and discuss key ideas about remembrance and the symbols of a religion.
125. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall with some good lessons seen in Years 1 and 2. In all lessons, teachers demonstrated clear understanding of the subject and used this sensitively to help the class to increase their understanding of Christianity, and to gain an insight into the feelings of others. Teachers work hard to create a special atmosphere in their lessons and this was particularly effective where the information about Judaism was imparted in such a way that it drew out pupils' understanding of why things are precious and what respect means in its broadest context. Teachers' enthusiasm and interesting approaches ensure pupils are interested and respond well. They plan their lessons carefully and ensure satisfactory coverage of the locally agreed syllabus. Teachers make good use of a wide range of resources, which bring the subject to life for pupils and enhance their learning.

126. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory, and the co-ordinator has clear ideas for future developments to help teachers become even more secure in their understanding of other religions. Teachers look at the steps in the locally agreed syllabus once a term and use this to make decisions about how they approach the next unit of work. This subject makes a valuable contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development by helping them to consider choices to be made in their lives, and to develop respect for the feelings and beliefs of others.