

INSPECTION REPORT

**BADEN POWELL AND ST PETER'S CE MIDDLE
SCHOOL**

Poole

LEA area: Poole

Unique reference number: 113792

Headteacher: Mrs Siân Thornton

Reporting inspector: Mr Rob Crompton
7230

Dates of inspection: 25th – 28th November 2002

Inspection number: 247407

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Middle deemed primary school
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	8 – 12 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Mill Lane Parkstone Poole
Postcode:	BH14 8UL
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	The Revd Canon LLoyd
Date of previous inspection:	12 th January 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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7230	Rob Crompton	Registered inspector	Music	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? <i>The school's results and achievements</i> How well are pupils taught?
13874	Jane Chesterfield	Lay inspector		How high are standards? <i>Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development</i> How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
14509	Philip Mann	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology	
16971	Roger Hardaker	Team inspector	Art and design Design and technology	How well is the school led and managed?
14971	Edgar Hastings	Team inspector	Geography History Religious education Educational inclusion	
6169	Mel Bradshaw	Team inspector	Mathematics Physical education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
18706	Janet Gill	Team inspector	English Special educational needs (General provision)	
12112	Gill Carter	Team inspector	French Special educational needs (Dyslexia Unit)	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is situated in a suburb of Poole. It is bigger than other middle schools nationally, with 606 boys and girls aged from eight to twelve. Attainment on entry to the school is broadly average. Seven per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is below the national average. About a quarter of all pupils have special educational needs, most of whom have learning or behavioural difficulties. This is broadly in line with the national picture. Eighteen pupils have a statement of special educational needs or a similar entitlement¹. Twelve pupils are dyslexic; they are integrated into mainstream classes but have some of their lessons in the 'Lighthouse' (the special needs centre) where they receive specialist support, particularly for literacy. This means that the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational need is well above average. Almost all pupils live locally, have cultural roots in the British Isles and are fluent English speakers. Some pupils who attend the dyslexia unit are from outside the school's immediate area and arrive by special transport. The headteacher was appointed in January 2002 and the deputy head took up her post in September 2002.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school. Good quality teaching means that pupils make good progress. Standards are above the national average in English, mathematics and science but below those achieved by similar schools in English and mathematics. The school is successfully addressing this relative weakness. Very effective provision for personal development and the rich curriculum contribute significantly to pupils' very positive attitudes. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and has the confidence and support of staff and governors. There is a very strong commitment to success and the school has identified the key areas for further improvement. Children know that they are valued whatever their background or level of achievement and their parents are pleased with the school. It gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Effective teaching and learning leads to good progress
- Very good leadership is driving up standards
- Highly effective provision for personal development and strong pastoral support means that pupils are happy, socially well adjusted and have positive and caring attitudes
- Pupils enjoy a rich and stimulating curriculum
- Good provision in the main school helps pupils with special educational needs to grow in confidence and make good progress
- Governors are effective in moving the school forward

What could be improved

- The quality of provision in the dyslexia unit

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the last inspection in January 1998, improvement has been satisfactory overall. Standards have improved but not enough progress had been made in addressing the weakness identified in the last report before the appointment of the current headteacher.

¹ The majority of pupils attending the dyslexia unit do not have statements of special educational need but are selected by a panel set up by the local educational authority.

Improvements were made to the management of information and communication technology (ICT) but gaps in the curriculum remain. Little was done to improve the provision in the dyslexia unit and despite recent positive changes, there are still several weaknesses. Shortcomings in pupils' reports were not fully addressed. The headteacher has implemented a rigorous programme of self-review and with the support of governors and staff, things are now moving forward at a more urgent pace.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	2000	2001	2002	2002	
English	B	B	B	D	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
mathematics	C	C	C	D	
science	C	B	A	B	

- Pupils enter the school with broadly average levels of attainment. They make good progress and achieve above average standards.
- Current work in Year 6 and in Year 7 reflects recent test results, except in mathematics where standards are higher than results indicate.
- Year 6 pupils achieve good standards in art and design, design and technology (DT) and physical education (PE) and very good standards in music. Standards in history, geography, information and communication technology (ICT) and religious education (RE) are in line with those expected at Year 6.
- Pupils in Year 7 continue to make good progress and standards reflect those in Year 6 with the exception of DT where standards are well above expectations. Pupils also attain good standards in French in Year 7.
- The below average performance in English and mathematics in relation to similar schools was largely the result of some under-achievement by pupils with broadly average levels of attainment. Such pupils are now making better progress.
- Trends in performance have matched the national picture over the last five years.
- Challenging but achievable targets have been set for future performance and the school has the capacity to reach them.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils enjoy school and are keen, attentive and enthusiastic. They take a pride in their work, their appearance and the school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils are polite, courteous and trustworthy; they are a credit to the school and to their families.
Personal development	Very good. The school is an harmonious community where the

and relationships	atmosphere is relaxed but purposeful.
Attendance	Very good. Attendance is above average and pupils arrive promptly.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Years 4 - 6	Year 7
Quality of teaching	good	good

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

- Teaching is good in all subjects and across all year groups.
- Teachers are very successful at motivating pupils to do their best.
- English and mathematics are well taught.
- Pupils have good opportunities to practise and consolidate their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects. Speaking and listening are given strong emphasis in many subjects.
- Teachers meet the needs of all pupils well. They generally provide challenging work for higher attaining pupils and give good support to those with special educational needs. However, teaching in the dyslexia unit is unsatisfactory.
- In most lessons, teachers tell pupils what they are to learn so they are aware of their own progress.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and become increasingly independent as they move through the school. They have good study skills and use the library and the Internet well to conduct their own research.
- Homework plays an important part in pupils' learning and is well supported by parents.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The rich curriculum is very well balanced. It is flexible enough to develop children's individual talents.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good: Pupils who need extra support are identified early and their progress is carefully tracked. Provision for pupils attending the dyslexia unit, however, is not satisfactory.
Provision for pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good: There are many opportunities for reflection in assemblies and lessons. The school provides a secure moral framework and a highly effective background for social development. Cultural development is strongly supported through art, music and dance.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. Child protection procedures are well established and the school has due regard for pupils' health and safety. Personal development is monitored very carefully. Assessment systems are satisfactory and are increasingly used to plan new work.

Parents make a good contribution to children's learning at school and home. Newsletters are informative and the school is consulting parents in order to improve the quality of annual reports.

Good links are made between different subjects but the use of ICT across the curriculum is limited. Music is a major strength. Other practical subjects – art and design, DT and PE – contribute to the well-balanced curriculum. However, the curriculum for ICT does not fully meet statutory requirements.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and is well supported by the deputy and senior staff.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors fulfil their responsibilities well. They are playing an increasing part in the development of the school
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. Priorities are systematically identified and increasingly focus on improving pupils' performance.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school is making effective use of its resources.

The school has good numbers of well-qualified and experienced teaching and support staff. Accommodation is satisfactory overall. Specialist facilities for primary aged pupils contribute significantly to their learning but accommodation for pupils in Year 7 is just adequate. Many classrooms are too small. The practical areas are useful but also serve as corridors, which means that group work is often disturbed. The hall and playground are inadequate for the number of pupils and this puts a strain on day-to-day school life. Resources are satisfactory overall. The school seeks best value when making decisions about spending.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school is open and welcoming. • Children like school and make good progress. • Teachers are very effective and expect pupils to work hard. • The school is well led and managed. • Pupils behave well and are learning to be mature and responsible. • Parents feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or problems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information about their children's progress. • The partnership between the school and parents. • The amount of work children are asked to do at home.

The inspection strongly endorsed parents' positive views. The school provides a reasonable level of face-to-face feedback for parents but written reports do not provide a clear picture of children's progress and attainment. The school is currently consulting parents in order to improve them. Inspectors agreed that, although satisfactory, the partnership between parents and the school could be stronger. Although there are minor inconsistencies, homework makes a positive contribution to pupils' attainment.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

English, mathematics and science

1 Standards in English and mathematics and science are above the national average. This is due to the consistently good teaching and pupils' positive attitudes. Since 2000, results in national tests have been above the national average and at times very good. However, against similar schools² results in recent years have been below average. Recently the school has introduced good systems to analyse test data and track pupils' attainment and progress. These brought out the fact that pupils of average attainment had not always made sufficient progress, since taking the tests in Year 2. This under-achievement meant that the school's results were below those of similar schools. The school now has good strategies to address this situation and has set more challenging targets for the present Year 5 and 6 pupils. These strategies are working well; teachers are more rigorous with marking and pupils are more aware of what they need to do next to improve.

2 Recent results of national tests in science have been well above average. Most pupils entering the school in Year 4 have achieved well in the Year 2 tests. Good teaching enables them to build steadily on this attainment and to sustain good standards. Higher attaining pupils make particularly good progress, often achieving very well in the national tests in Year 6.

3 Good standards in English, mathematics and science are maintained in Year 7 because the transition from the primary to secondary phase is seamless and the quality of teaching remains good.

Other subjects

4 Standards achieved by the end of Year 6 are above expectations in art and design, DT and PE. In geography, history, ICT and RE standards are in line with those expected. The same levels of attainment are evident in these subjects in Year 7, except that attainment in DT is well above expectations. Standards in music are very high by Year 6 and by Year 7. Standards are good overall due to the school's determination and success in providing pupils with a broad education. Because of the range of teacher expertise, pupils with a particular interest or aptitude have opportunities to fulfil their potential. Pupils' positive attitudes and strong support for each other also contribute; academic success and personal achievements are appreciated and celebrated so pupils gain confidence and strive even harder.

Literacy and numeracy

5 Pupils' good skills in literacy and numeracy contribute to their learning in other subjects. In particular, their speaking and listening skills help to enhance their understanding. As pupils are expressing their ideas or commenting on one another's work, teachers often pick upon things and take their learning forward. Standards in subjects such as DT are raised as pupils use their numeracy skills, but there is more room for numeracy to contribute further to standards in science.

² Comparisons are based on the number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.

Achievement of different groups of pupils

6 Higher attaining pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress and achieve well because work is set at appropriate levels for both groups. More able pupils are often given problem-solving activities and tackle investigations independently and, as a result, they achieve well. Pupils who are less confident in English often achieve average and sometimes above average results in mathematics and science, reflecting the success of the school's provision.

7 Pupils with below average prior attainment also do well because they are identified early and given extra support. Pupils in the middle band of attainment have not achieved as well as they might in previous years but they are now making better progress because the school has better tracking systems and can set more challenging targets. Pupils' standards of attainment are necessarily low when they enter the dyslexia unit, but the majority do not make the progress that might be expected of them, at least in literacy, which is the main focus of the unit's work. In other subjects, pupils often achieve good standards.

8 There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls because the school ensures that they get equal opportunities. The wide range of activities is open to all, and those pupils who have particular talents and abilities are given encouragement and support. Similarly, the school's policy on inclusion means that pupils with specific physical disabilities enjoy the same variety of experiences as other pupils and do as well as they can. The small number of pupils from minority ethnic groups do as well as their peers.

Trends

9 The overall picture is one of good progress and rising standards. Improvements in test results have broadly matched the national picture over the last five years. Until recently, the school targets for pupils' performance in national tests were rather unambitious. Targets set for English and mathematics were not challenging enough considering the performance of similar schools. Suitably challenging and achievable targets have now been set and the school is on course to achieve them.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10 The school has been very successful in maintaining the already very high standards in this area of its work since the time of the last inspection. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour, relationships and personal development are consistently very good. Pupils come to school ready and willing to learn, and they are always very receptive to what their teachers have to tell them. When teaching is at its best, pupils really have the chance to show their capabilities. In an excellent music lesson, for example, Year 7 pupils relished the opportunity to create their own compositions and concentrated intensely on their work for every second of the time they had available. Pupils show a maturity and appreciation in their attitudes both to their lessons and to the many other rich and varied activities the school offers them.

11 Behaviour is very good, both in class and around the school. Pupils move around the building in an orderly and sensible way, which helps to minimise the inconvenience of the narrow corridors and the need to walk through shared areas where others may be working. They have a very good sense of occasion and of what is proper, for example when they file silently in and out of assembly. Excellent behaviour was seen as pupils came in from the playground one lunchtime and entered the hall quietly for the last sitting. Outside, the playground is rather barren which means that pupils' play can sometimes be rather boisterous and unrestrained. However, pupils say that they feel safe in the playground and that there is

very little bullying or similarly unacceptable behaviour in the school. The headteacher has only had to make one exclusion during the past year.

12 Pupils attend the dyslexia unit willingly enough, but they sometimes arrive late, and do not always behave as well as they do in class lessons. Because teachers' expectations of behaviour are not as high as they are in the rest of the school, pupils have become adept at finding ways to avoid settling to the tasks they continue to find difficult and will, for example, spend long periods choosing a piece of paper or finding the right equipment. Back in their classes, they behave well, are fully accepted by their peers and play an active role in all aspects of school life.

13 Pupils respond very positively to the very good provision the school makes for their personal development. They get on very well with one another and with staff. Pupils respect each other and show an understanding of those who have problems in learning or behaviour. The accepting and valuing attitude of the school means that everyone receives the attention they need and no one is denied any area of school life. The few pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds are readily accepted and well integrated. Pupils have a polite attitude to adults and are able to converse easily and unselfconsciously with them. Staff respect and treat them as mature and sensible individuals, so that pupils have good role models to copy in their own relationships. Pupils are very supportive of one another and appreciative of others' talents. Pupils in the school have a sustained commitment to charity fund-raising, as the enduring link with the Guide Dogs Association demonstrates. They also take responsibilities, such as membership of the school council, very seriously.

14 The level of pupils' attendance at the school is very good. Most absence is caused by illness, although an increasing number of families disrupt their children's education by taking them on holiday during term time. The school is justifiably strict about this so that most holiday absence is unauthorised. The level of unauthorised absence at the school is in line with the national average for middle schools. Punctuality is good. Most pupils arrive on time each morning, so that lessons can begin promptly.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

15 Good teaching throughout the school means pupils make good progress. About eight in ten lessons observed were good or better, with a quarter being very good or excellent. Through their own enthusiasm, teachers motivate pupils to learn. Many subjects are brought to life because of teachers' dynamic approach. Subjects such as art and design, DT, PE and especially music benefit greatly from the practical experiences offered to pupils. The major strength of the teaching is that it is good or better in every subject and across each year group. All lessons are well planned and most are taken at a brisk pace which keeps pupils alert and interested. Teachers have very good relationships with their pupils; pupils know that teachers have their best interests at heart and respond very well to high expectations of behaviour and effort.

16 Literacy and numeracy are taught well during English and mathematics lessons and pupils are successfully encouraged to develop these skills in other subjects. Occasionally, however, teachers accept untidy written work, which they would not accept in English lessons, so opportunities to reinforce standards of presentation are lost.

17 Teachers are fully committed to helping all pupils learn. They are mostly successful in this, preparing different work for groups of pupils. Teaching assistants play a major role in supporting pupils, especially those with special educational needs or who are a little behind their classmates. The skilled teaching assistants show a high degree of sensitivity in supporting these pupils. They work unobtrusively to ensure pupils are fully included in

lessons. Class teachers support dyslexic pupils effectively. There is good communication between all staff and teaching assistants, who are well briefed with regard to what is planned and how to respond to individual pupils. High flyers are encouraged to tackle more challenging work and to hone their independent research skills. Boys and girls are taught equally well.

18 Teachers are good at checking pupils' progress, knowledge and understanding on a day-to-day basis. They do this by asking questions, scrutinising work and marking it, talking to pupils and giving them extra support. A new effective marking system linked to the lesson objective is beginning to work well throughout the school, particularly in literacy, numeracy and the humanities. Pupils understand the system; it helps them to know how well they have learnt and whether or not they need to improve. In addition, when teachers are marking, individual targets are often set for pupils to achieve, which helps them to know the next step in learning. Teachers keep good records of pupils' progress in lessons and over time. This means they can modify their plans to meet pupils' emerging needs. Homework is set regularly and helps pupils to practise and consolidate their learning, particularly in English and mathematics.

19 Standards of teaching in the unit are often unsatisfactory. Lessons lack a precise focus. Whereas in English lessons throughout the school the lesson starts with a sharing of the objectives for the day, this does not always happen in the unit, and neither pupils nor teachers seem clear about what is to be achieved in the session. Sometimes lessons begin without all the necessary resources being put out and time is wasted. Many of the tasks set are undemanding, often small phonic activities which do not assess or promote pupils' abilities in writing sounds and words, and do not inspire their concentration. In the lessons seen, limited attention was paid to the other skills apart from phonics which promote reading and understanding, such as focusing on the meaning of text, discussing vocabulary, encouraging pupils to self-correct, predict and infer. There is a lack of pace and challenge which does little to promote pupils' involvement or self-esteem. The use ICT is limited.

20 Although there are individual education plans (IEPs) in place for all pupils, targets are not always absolutely clear-cut and measurable and lessons, in any case, do not always focus on meeting them. Pupils, when asked, were not sure what their targets were. Targets are nearly always concerned with literacy, often mainly aspects of phonics and rarely deal with other curriculum aspects. Behaviour is not often targeted, despite the fact that teachers admit that pupils' behaviour in the unit is not as good as it might be.

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

21 The school provides a rich and interesting curriculum for its pupils, which, with the exception of ICT, meets statutory requirements. The curriculum for music is excellent, aided significantly by the strengths of the teacher and extra-curricular opportunities offered. Pupils' progress in art and design, DT, geography and history is supported by a good curriculum. French, taught to pupils in Year 7, is also well organised. Subtle differences in the way the curriculum is organised and timetabled prepare Year 7 pupils well for secondary schools.

22 The broad curriculum offered at the time of the last inspection remains a strength of the school. Most of the weaknesses in ICT have been addressed successfully. However, a lack of suitable resources means that the full ICT curriculum cannot yet be taught. Plans are in hand to rectify this situation during the current year.

23 Although the national literacy and numeracy strategies have been implemented fully only recently, the school develops key skills well. Provision for English is good because

additional time is given to aspects of reading and extended writing. Good opportunities are planned for pupils to use and develop literacy skills. In subjects such as geography, history and science, pupils are encouraged to write for different purposes, and in a range of styles. Speaking and listening skills are well promoted. When pupils are withdrawn from the literacy hour to work in the dyslexia unit, however, there is very little linkage with the work going on in class and pupils miss out on the opportunity to enrich their language skills by sharing a story, poem or a piece of non-fiction writing. Numeracy skills are used effectively to support work in geography and DT but could feature more strongly in science. The use of ICT in other subjects is not extensive, but is improving.

24 Most pupils benefit well from the learning opportunities the school offers. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. They receive the same broad curriculum as all pupils in the school. Individual education plans (IEPs) have improved since the last inspection and now include specific targets for literacy, numeracy and behaviour. Teachers and support staff effectively use the IEPs in conjunction with the work the class is set. This helps pupils to make progress in the small steps in learning that they need. Much work in the dyslexia unit, however, is dull and uninspiring.

25 The school has a policy to identify pupils who have particular gifts and talents. However, owing to recent changes in responsibilities, it is not yet fully implemented. Despite this, pupils who are very able usually make good progress, as evident in the regular achievement of high levels by a few pupils in mathematics tests at the end of Year 6. The specialist teaching in music, and the extra-curricular activities, especially for music and athletics, enable pupils with particular gifts and talents to develop them fully.

26 The curriculum is enriched with a very good range of extra-curricular activities that make a strong contribution to pupils' personal development and learning. The range of activities is wide and includes various sports, athletics, chess, art, French, choir, African drumming, recorders, wind band, brass and string groups, hand bell and jazz ensembles. This range of activities is very well supported by pupils and makes a positive contribution to achievement.

27 Links with the community are satisfactory and particularly good with the local church. Pupils make many contributions to charities, such as Guide Dogs for the Blind and the Children's Society. All pupils have an opportunity to take part in a residential trip during their time in the school. There are examples of visitors to the school helping to extend pupils' experiences, but these are not very extensive. Satisfactory, and growing, links exist with partner institutions including the nearby first and secondary schools.

28 There has been further improvement in the good provision for pupils' personal development identified by the last inspection and it remains a strength. The school's values and aims are evident in all aspects of its work and pupils are very responsive to them. All pupils are made to feel valued and this is manifestly clear in the way they are encouraged to aim high and to achieve their best. The PHSE programme, which includes 'circle time' when pupils discuss aspects of personal development, helps this process. Pupils in Year 7 study aspects of citizenship. In addition to relevant work in science, drugs awareness and sex education are covered within the PHSE programme.

29 Provision for pupils' spiritual development is clearly evident in its daily work. In particular, daily acts of collective worship of high quality provide pupils with uplifting and reflective experiences. During inspection the assembly theme was 'music'. Pupils considered their feelings whilst listening to a range music. They were enthralled when listening to the unaccompanied singing of the school's a cappella group and the delicate and expressive harp playing by a Year 6 pupil. The words of songs are used very effectively as a

focus in assemblies as a way of inspiring pupils to consider the importance of personal achievement. Opportunities for moments of quiet reflection are also provided. Pupils' spiritual development is very well promoted through areas of the curriculum, such as art and design, music and RE.

30 Provision for moral development is very good. There is a clear and strong whole school ethos and code for good behaviour, which is consistently applied and promoted by all school staff. Each classroom has its own set of rules displayed prominently, reminding pupils how they are expected to behave. In lessons, they have the opportunity to analyse the impact of their actions upon others and to develop an awareness of the functioning of the school as a community.

31 The social development of pupils is promoted very well. The quality of relationships is very good and staff ensure that pupils' self-esteem is well fostered through being treated in a caring, considerate and respectful manner. Pupils learn to get along with others and increase their social awareness. This is further developed through residential visits and participation in the school council. Teachers provide opportunities in lessons for pupils to work together and this ensures the quality of the very good relationships is sustained.

32 The provision for pupils' cultural development is good. Pupils are taught to appreciate their own cultural background and they celebrate the main Christian festivals both in school and the local church. They take part in a range of visits to sites of local historical and cultural interest. Regular opportunities are provided to develop an understanding of the diversity of other cultures through art and music, and through the study of faith and beliefs in RE. Some reference is made to life in a multicultural society but this aspect of personal development is not as strong as others.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

33 The school has been successful in building upon and refining its systems for pastoral care since the time of the last inspection. These are now very good. The key to this is the very thorough way in which pupils are monitored by their teachers, year group leaders and senior staff so that the right support can be given to them, in conjunction with their parents and outside agencies where necessary. The role of the pastoral support worker³ also plays a vital role here, looking after pupils who are sick or injured and watching out for pupils who need help in the playground. Staff use homework diaries very well to alert parents to initial concerns, for example when pupils start to wear the wrong uniform or fail to bring in a proper lunch. In Year 4, communication between teachers and parents is very much encouraged, in order to help pupils settle in. The school has suitable arrangements for induction, and recognises that the transition from a small first school to a large middle school is bound to be a big shock for many pupils. PHSE and circle time lessons are well targeted to help pupils get used to their new situation over the first term. The school's policies covering pastoral care are very detailed indeed, so that they provide very clear guidance to staff to ensure consistent practice across the school.

34 Procedures for child protection are very good. The teacher responsible and the headteacher work closely together and children causing concern are monitored carefully. Staff have good guidelines for reference, and pupils are taught appropriately about keeping safe through their well-planned programme of PHSE. First aid is well organised and administered, with new improvements underway to provide better facilities for treating and supervising pupils. Health and safety matters are effectively managed in the school. The school does its best to minimise the constraints caused by the inadequacies of its accommodation. Daily routines on a rota basis ensure that there are not too many pupils

³ The pastoral support worker is employed on a part-time basis to support children and their families.

trying to use the hall, the toilets, the corridors and the playground at the same time. The school has a good policy for Internet safety, of which parents are aware.

35 The monitoring of attendance is very good. The school contacts parents on the first day of absence, which they find very reassuring. Good use is made of computer technology to keep an overview of pupils' attendance levels, and the school liaises effectively with the education welfare service and other outside agencies where necessary. Behaviour is monitored very well, and staff are very skilled in maintaining good discipline. Rewards and punishments are fair and simple, and are well known to pupils who feel they are just. The school is sensibly consulting pupils and parents on how to redevelop the outside playgrounds to make sure that everyone can find something there that they want to do. Any instances of bullying or other unpleasant behaviour are dealt with firmly by the school. The school is very aware of the need to monitor any suspicion of racism, particularly as there are so few pupils from ethnic minorities. There is a good policy for racial equality.

Assessment

36 At the time of the previous inspection, the school was at an early stage of developing assessment procedures and use of the information gathered. Little progress towards developing assessment had been made until recently; rigorous procedures have now been developed by the headteacher, assessment co-ordinator and deputy headteacher. Systems are good for assessing pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics. In most other subjects, systems are very new and the school is working well towards a common approach. In French and music assessment works well but in ICT assessment is unsatisfactory.

37 The progress of pupils with special educational needs is monitored well in the main school with the help of outside agencies, such as speech and language teachers and the educational psychologist. Tracking systems are increasingly enabling the school to determine how much progress has been made and to determine the next step in learning.

38 Although there are individual education plans (IEPs) in place for all pupils attending the dyslexia unit, targets are not always clear-cut and measurable and lessons, in any case, do not always focus on meeting them. Pupils, when asked, were not sure what their targets were. Targets are nearly always concerned with literacy, often mainly aspects of phonics and rarely deal with other curriculum aspects. Improving behaviour or building pupils' confidence and self-esteem are not often targeted. Reviews are carried out six-monthly by the local education authority and pupils' progress in terms of reading and spelling ages are carefully monitored. However, evidence of pupils' progress against IEP targets was not found.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

39 The school has successfully maintained the goodwill and support of parents since the time of the last inspection. The school does all it can to communicate and consult with parents on developments that affect them. The school newsletter, for example is welcoming in tone, and is full of detailed information about school events and organisation. Parents have been invited to give their opinions on issues such as the amendments to the behaviour policy and the restructuring of reports; many have responded with constructive criticism or reassuring praise. The school tries to deal with parents' individual concerns fully and fairly, though it does not always give parents the answer that they want. The school's firm stance on the authorisation of term time holiday is an example of this.

40 Links with parents are satisfactory overall. There have been some good new initiatives recently, such as the increase in regularity of the newsletter, the beginnings of systematic consultation, the introduction of formal parents' evenings, and the welcoming of

parents onto the site at the beginning and end of the day. Parents are happy with the system for liaising with their children's teachers via the homework diaries, which are well used by both parties. Parents are also happy that they can talk to teachers quickly by phone or by appointment. Although there are sometimes difficulties when parents' messages do not get through, the system usually works well. Written information for parents is satisfactory. Reports on their children's progress now meet legal requirements, but have still not improved sufficiently since the previous inspection, because their quality is too inconsistent. While some reports clearly state what pupils have achieved and what their targets for improvement are, others comment more vaguely on pupils' attitudes in lessons. The reports indicate the levels pupils have reached in the English, mathematics and science subjects, but do not explain these levels to let parents know how well their children are doing for their age. The school is currently reviewing the way in which parents are given information about the curriculum.

41 Parents are kept closely informed if pupils have special educational needs. The teachers, teaching assistants and special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) ensure that they are available at parents' evenings to bring parents up-to-date, to review individual education plans and exchange observations about individual pupils. Parents whose children attend the dyslexia unit are kept informed and involved with IEPs and reviews and meet regularly with staff or speak to them on the phone on matters which need to be resolved quickly.

42 Parents make a good contribution to the work of the school and to their children's learning at home. They uphold the values of the school and ensure that their children complete their homework on time. Many make good use of the homework diaries to raise queries about their children's understanding of their tasks or to comment on topics that have been particularly enjoyed. Some parents are able to get actively involved in the day-to-day life of the school, as parent governors, classroom helpers or as members of the thriving Friends Association, and the school appreciates their hard work and commitment.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

43 The school is very well led and managed. The headteacher, very ably supported by the deputy, provides excellent leadership. She has a very clear vision for the school based on a striving for continuing improvement and a need to raise standards. She successfully communicates to all staff and governors and this gives the school an extremely clear educational direction and purpose. This is reinforced by a very clearly defined school improvement plan, which is effectively monitored and regularly evaluated by the headteacher, senior staff and governing body. The assistant headteacher, who is also the SENCO, contributes significantly to the successful day-to-day running of the school. Together with the assistant headteacher responsible for the curriculum, she has provided valuable continuity following changes in the school leadership.

44 The governing body plays an increasingly active role in supporting the work of the school. The school's aims and values are wholly appropriate and promoted well in all its work. In its implementation of these, the school shows a good commitment to equality of opportunity for all pupils and staff. The school is very caring and, since the headteacher's arrival, rapidly improving.

45 Several concerns about aspects of management were expressed in the last report. There were weaknesses in the management of ICT. Management in this area of the curriculum is now satisfactory. Responsibilities of some key staff did not clearly relate to the common vision for the school and the way in which this was to be realised. Since taking up her post, the headteacher has restructured management responsibilities throughout the

school. All staff, including those with management and leadership roles, now have very clearly defined responsibilities that relate directly to school improvement. Overall, managers at all levels fulfil their responsibilities well. At the time of the last report there were some minor statutory responsibilities that the governors were not fulfilling. The governors now fulfil their statutory responsibilities well. Governors involvement in monitoring standards was a further concern. Governors now scrutinise performance data and reconcile this against targets with the result that they are well aware of the strengths and weaknesses of attainment in English, mathematics and science.

46 The shared commitment to improvement within the school is very good and there are some effective procedures to monitor standards. The headteacher and deputy headteacher monitor teaching in all classes. As a result, the quality of teaching is consistently good. The scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning, is contributing to improving standards. Pupils' annual progress reports still have weaknesses, although plans are well in hand to improve them. However, there are still shortcomings in the management of the dyslexia unit.

47 The SENCO provides highly skilled and committed advice and support for pupils with special educational needs, their families and the staff who teach them. The management of teaching assistants, the planning and review procedures and links with outside agencies, are all facets of an efficient and effective management structure. The governor whose responsibility is special educational needs is knowledgeable and shows a high level of involvement and commitment to the work and pupils in the school. She contributes to the management of special educational needs effectively, ensuring that specific funds are spent efficiently.

48 The management of provision for special educational needs is weakened by the current arrangements for running the dyslexia unit. Until comparatively recently, the unit was a local authority resource, but the funding and management of the unit have now been delegated to the school. Because of long-standing historical precedents that are hard to overcome, it is only since the appointment of the current headteacher in January 2002 that the unit began to play a full part in the life of the school. Clear management structures have been set up to monitor and evaluate the work that goes on there. The accommodation has been moved to the centre of the school building with the idea that the unit should from now on provide a central focus for wider special educational needs work in the school.

49 The influence of the unit is not yet widely felt in the school, although a valuable booklet of guidance on the problems of dyslexic children has recently been produced. There is a need for far more support, advice and resources to be made available to class teachers who deal with the dyslexic pupils for the majority of their time in school. A recent change of support assistants attached to the unit has meant that new staff have not yet had the appropriate training.

50 Governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They regularly receive full and open reports from the headteacher which they carefully scrutinise and question. The governors have a strong commitment to the school and considerable confidence in the headteacher. Most governors are in a good position to make strategic decisions because they know and talk about relevant issues with confidence and good understanding. Through the curriculum committee, they play a full part in curriculum monitoring and evaluation.

51 Financial planning is good with the school managing its available resources well. Guided by national priorities and those outlined in the school development plan, money is appropriately allocated; spending is kept under constant review by the finance committee.

Governors evaluate the effect of the school's spending decisions on standards. Parents are consulted so that their views are taken into account when some decisions are made.

52 Effective routines are in place for day-to-day administration and these ensure that the school runs smoothly. The school has good procedures to ensure the cost effectiveness of the goods and services it purchases.

53 The school has good numbers of teaching and support staff, who are well deployed to meet the demands of the curriculum. Systems for performance management are well established and up-to-date, and there are good arrangements for the induction of newly qualified teachers and other new staff. The work of the support staff is monitored and supported well by the senior management of the school.

54 The school benefits from good specialist accommodation for practical subjects such as ICT, art and design, DT, and science. Much of the rest of the building, though, is too small for the numbers of pupils in the school. Most classrooms are too cramped for the children to move about freely, while the shared areas outside are prone to constant disruption from adults and pupils who have to use them as their only route through the school. This makes them especially unsuitable for groups of pupils with special educational needs who find it hard to concentrate. The school's learning resources are satisfactory overall and very good for music. Those for English, art and design and DT are good. The library is well stocked and used well by pupils.

55 The relocation of the dyslexia unit has provided delightful, spacious accommodation and an adequate range of resources. The staffing provision is generous. In order to ensure good value for money, the school should now seek to improve the quality of teaching, raise expectations of what pupils might achieve and draw up a unit policy with clear guidelines for management and day-to-day provision.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

56 The school should:

Improve the quality of provision in the dyslexia unit (paragraphs 19, 24, 38 and 48) by:

- i. increasing the pace and challenge of teaching;
- ii. ensuring that work covered links closely with the National Curriculum and extends beyond literacy activities;
- iii. ensuring that expectations of what pupils will achieve are high enough and giving pupils a clear idea of what they need to do next to improve their standards;
- iv. establishing guidelines which clarify arrangements for the management of the unit.

Minor points for improvement

- i. Plans to improve resources for ICT need to be implemented urgently to ensure that each aspect of the curriculum can be covered (paragraph 96).
- ii. Annual written reports need to provide a clearer picture for parents of how their children are doing in relation to what is expected at their age⁴ (paragraph 40).

⁴ The school is currently reviewing reports

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	89
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	44

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	5	16	46	19	3	0	0
Percentage	6	18	52	21	3	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y4 – Y7
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	606
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	39

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	No of pupils
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs or equivalent entitlement	18
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	151

English as an additional language

Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0
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Pupil mobility in the last school year

Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	30
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	24

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.1
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.6
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 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	85	69	154

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	62	63	80
	Girls	60	53	67
	Total	122	116	147
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	82 (79)	75 (73)	95 (94)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	56	64	77
	Girls	56	53	63
	Total	112	117	140
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	73 (76)	76 (77)	91 (78)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
566	0	0
0	0	0
26	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
6	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0

No ethnic group recorded

0

0

0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y4 – Y7

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	26.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	27
Average class size	30

Education support staff: Y4 – Y7

Total number of education support staff	22
Total aggregate hours worked per week	356

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001-2
	£
Total income	1419118
Total expenditure	1407563
Expenditure per pupil	2342
Balance brought forward from previous year	42894
Balance carried forward to next year	54449

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	12
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	2
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	606
Number of questionnaires returned	340

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	40	52	6	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	32	60	6	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	26	64	5	1	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	22	59	16	1	2
The teaching is good.	30	61	2	0	6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	22	53	20	2	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	43	46	7	1	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	48	46	4	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	20	56	17	2	4
The school is well led and managed.	24	58	7	1	10
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	28	62	4	1	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	34	50	9	2	5

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

ENGLISH

57 Standards are above average at the end of Years 6 and 7. Pupils make good progress in speaking, listening, reading and writing and achieve well by the time they leave the school. Pupils with special educational needs in mainstream classes make good progress. This is because they are well supported, both in class lessons and in withdrawal groups. Work is matched well to their levels of understanding and pupils are supported in their learning very well by teaching assistants, which helps them complete similar work to the rest of the class. Pupils of average attainment are now making good progress because teachers are providing more challenging work for them. Pupils are set by levels of prior attainment in Year 7 which means that teachers match work very well and offer good challenge to the higher attaining pupils.

58 Teachers offer pupils good opportunities for speaking and listening in literacy as well as in other subjects. Pupils ask and answer questions, listen and respond to others and present their ideas and opinions clearly. High expectations and effective discipline ensure pupils listen attentively and build on one another's responses whilst waiting for their turn to speak. In Year 7, pupils evaluated each other's work on characterisation with maturity and stated clearly how it could be improved.

59 There is a strong emphasis on reading during library sessions and within literacy lessons. Pupils have secure study and research skills due to effective lessons in the library. They fully understand the use of the contents, index and the glossary and skim and scan text when taking notes. Pupils are aware how the computerised system works and understand the classification system the school uses. By Year 6 and 7, pupils make choices of favourite authors, such as Nesbit, Dahl and Rowling and compare style and genre. Throughout the school, the average readers in the class are reading well – and better than expected. In Years 6 and 7, pupils have a good understanding of the deeper meaning behind the text and can explain, with clarity, the events and characters in stories. When teachers give pupils opportunities to read aloud, it helps them with expression and understanding, as in Year 7, when pupils took turns to read 'A Kestrel for a Knave' by Barry Hines. They were able to discuss the text and justify their views with maturity.

60 By the end of Year 6 and 7, pupils have a good understanding and recognise the importance of writing for different audiences. In addition, there is a good focus on different styles, including letters, poems, instructions, book reviews and play scripts. Good teaching of these aspects results in lively, thoughtful and interesting writing throughout the school. For example, pupils in Year 6 produced imaginative newspaper titles and leading sentences based on a picture, following a good introductory lesson on the conventions of journalism. They remembered prompt words – why? when? what? where? and successfully used alliteration and direct and reported speech to complete their work.

61 Teaching is good overall with some very good lessons in all year groups. Lessons are planned well and work is built on what most pupils can already do. This is supported by good assessment, within lessons and over a period of time. Teachers use resources well to enhance learning, there is particularly good use of white boards where pupils write their responses to questions – this helps the teacher to check their efforts quickly. Teaching assistants explain things during class introductions and reviews, and pupils are encouraged to offer their ideas. This gives significant support to boost pupils' self-esteem. A good example was observed in Year 6, when pupils gave their ideas for newspaper headlines. Homework supports learning well and is matched effectively to work in the classroom. For

example, Year 7 pupils prepared at home for work on the use and impact of direct speech in stories.

62 Pupils use ICT well to develop research skills, such as finding out about Norman castles in Year 7. Spelling programs consolidate learning for Year 5 pupils who have special educational needs. Word processing is used well to support literacy across the curriculum. For example, in writing letters to famous kings and queens in history, instructions in DT and expressing views on the work of Andy Goldsworthy, in art and design. There are good opportunities to promote spiritual and cultural development in English, for example, the study of famous authors and poets, such as Dickens and Hardy. Drama also supports cultural development, for example, Year 6 pupils act out events in Tudor times. Teachers offer pupils good opportunities to reflect on their own achievements and those of others, particularly in the review at the end of lessons.

63 The co-ordinator is making a good contribution to raising standards, for example the initiative to give pupils a regular 'sustained writing assessment task' (SWAT) is helping to improve pupils' literacy skills. The library has been refurbished and is well stocked with a computerised catalogue and borrowing system. Pupils appreciated being invited to select books. The librarian trains the pupils to take on responsibilities in the library, which they do efficiently.

MATHEMATICS

64 Standards are above average; an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils in Year 6 are on course to do well in the national tests at the end of the year. The level of work in Year 7 is above that generally expected. These standards are the result of good and sometimes very good, teaching. Since the last inspection, teaching has remained strong in Years 4 to 6 and has improved in Year 7 where teaching it is now consistently good.

65 Pupils in all years enjoy mathematics and achieve well. By the end of Year 6, pupils correctly identify equivalent fractions and recognise the link between fractions, percentages and decimals. They draw and interpret line graphs correctly and understand that the perimeter of a rectangle can be calculated accurately from its base and height. Higher attaining pupils accurately multiply to two decimal places. Other pupils demonstrate more errors in this type of work. In Year 7, most pupils have a good understanding of negative numbers and probability. About a third of pupils achieve particularly well, using indices, including negative ones, correctly. They plot coordinates accurately in all four quadrants. Pupils' progress in Year 7 is generally good. This is especially evident in these pupils' attitudes to mathematics. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve well especially in their shape work but their number skills are much less secure.

66 The needs of pupils are well met by carefully planned teaching, good group organisation, work that is usually matched well to their current attainment and the use of extra adults. This helps pupils make good progress and acquire satisfactory, and improving, numeracy skills. In Year 4, pupils' multiplication and division skills are about average, and they interpret word problems well to sort out the information required to complete them. Year 5 pupils handle numbers with reasonable confidence, usually multiplying large numbers correctly. Some of the average and lower attaining pupils, however, do not always set out calculations carefully enough and hence make errors. When a teacher noticed this, she drew particular attention to it at the start of the next lesson.

67 The effectiveness of teaching is aided by the use of additional teachers, learning support staff and the effective use of the spacious accommodation outside the classrooms. In the best lessons, very clear explanations, the effective involvement of all pupils and

Carefully organised tasks help to ensure good progress. In lessons that are less successful, teachers do not raise the pace of pupils' learning, especially for those whose attainment is about average. Occasionally the work lacks challenge. Although aspects of perimeter work in Year 6 were well taught, the problems set did little to extend, or reinforce, pupils' numeracy skills, since in most examples the lengths quoted were whole numbers and did not extend beyond 12. Marking is generally effective in supporting pupils' awareness of their own learning, however it is not so good where inaccuracies are not identified, such as in the plotting of coordinates or drawing of bar graphs.

68 Although specific ICT lessons assist in mathematical development, such as the use of spreadsheets, there is little use of ICT to support learning in mathematics. There are some examples of the use of numeracy skills in other subjects, especially in DT but opportunities in science are limited. Assessment procedures are good and are now being used to identify trends, organise groups and inform planning. Mathematics makes a sound contribution to pupils' personal development. In particular, pupils have opportunities to co-operate and work in pairs or groups. A temporary co-ordinator took over responsibility for the subject recently. With the help of the headteacher's observations of teaching, she has a good view of current strengths and weaknesses.

SCIENCE

69 Standards are above average; an improvement since the last inspection. Higher attaining pupils make good progress as shown by their good use of scientific vocabulary, a clear understanding of the investigational process with detailed explanations of investigations and good quality diagrams and illustrations. Year 7 pupils are performing above expectations. Well-established investigational procedures learned in their previous years enable them to develop confidence with their practical work and progress in their knowledge and understanding.

70 Much work is practical which helps pupils to understand scientific ideas and methods. For example in Year 5, investigations were being carried out into how a mixture of salt and sand could be separated through filtering and evaporation. Pupils worked well together, exchanging ideas and discussing possible ways to bring the salt back again. They were able to make reasonably accurate measurements and use diagrams to explain aspects of how they carried out the investigation. Pupils are taught from Year 4 to follow the accepted scientific routines in their investigations; they are able to make predictions, ensuring that their tests are fair and draw conclusions from their findings. By Year 7, pupils are very familiar with routines in carrying out investigations. In an effective lesson, pupils were carrying out an activity to discover whether the amount of salt that could be dissolved in water depended on the temperature of the water. They were confident in carrying out their task and were able to explain how the warmer particles of water could accept more salt.

71 The quality of teaching and learning is generally good. Teachers have high expectations of both their pupils' work and behaviour. Pupils enjoy science lessons; they often work productively in pairs or small groups. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of science and investigational activities are good. Investigations are often supported by informative guidelines outlining the various stages that pupils need to work through. This helps them have a clear sense of purpose about what they are doing, especially in the early stages of learning a topic. Marking is supportive and includes remarks suggesting pupils think why certain outcomes were reached or reminding them to keep closely to the investigational format in their writing. This helps them understand what they need to do to reach above average standards.

72 Written descriptions underpin many science activities and this is most successful when pupils are encouraged to decide how to set things out rather than use photocopied worksheets. There are some opportunities for pupils to use their numeracy skills in investigations – such as illustrating their findings with graphs – but these are limited. There is scope for pupils to make more use of graphs to help them reach conclusions.

73 The subject is well led. The half-termly topic guides ensure that the curriculum is well balanced and teachers find them very helpful when planning lessons. The Year 6 and Year 7 pupils benefit from the use of the science laboratory. Although the furniture is too big for the younger pupils, the room is an asset to the school. The last report stated that ICT was not being used to support learning in science and this is still the case.

ART AND DESIGN

74 Standards are good. Since the last inspection the school has maintained the high standards attained by pupils at the end of Year 6, whilst the standards achieved by Year 7 pupils have improved.

75 Pupils throughout the school have good opportunities to develop their skills in art. They explore a range of different media and techniques and this enables them to make good and sometimes very good progress as they move through the school. The youngest pupils study imagery and relate this to perspective. They are introduced to works of great artists, including contemporary artists such as David Hockney. Year 4 pupils made good use of ICT and the digital camera in their Natural Art work based on the artist Andy Goldsworthy. All pupils use sketch books to design their compositions and sketch and practise a range of techniques including shading and colour mixing. Year 6 pupils have good colour mixing skills. They also have a good awareness of primary, secondary and complementary colours. When painting, these pupils work purposefully and carefully, taking a pride in their work.

76 Teaching is at least good and sometimes very good. The teachers' own level of knowledge and enthusiasm for the topic contributes to its success. Teachers are very positive and encouraging of pupils while they work. They give good support and guidance, helping them to improve. Lessons are well planned. Pupils work enthusiastically and carefully. For example when creating linear designs, Year 5 pupils drew lines of differing thickness with good effect in creating tone, form and shape. Pupils discuss their techniques using range of technical vocabulary. They are encouraged to comment on their own and each other's work and to suggest ways it might be improved. Whilst doing this, Year 5 pupils used words like pattern, texture and shape in correct context.

77 Throughout the school, pupils enjoy a wide variety of art and design experiences. For example, they draw, paint, print, and model, improving their skills systematically. They learn about different artists, studying their paintings to examine different techniques. For example, Year 7 pupils study how to convey movement through art, gaining inspiration from the works of Henri Rousseau, Giacomo Balla and others. These pupils produce movement sketches and paintings of high quality. The school has a wide range of prints to inspire pupils and for them to study, including the work of Picasso, Kandinsky and Modigliani. Many of these are attractively displayed around the school accompanied by informative labels. Pupils can choose to develop their art and design skills further by participating in the well-attended art club.

78 The subject is managed very well by a knowledgeable and enthusiastic co-ordinator. She supports her colleagues well especially in planning. Good curriculum guidance ensures that pupils receive a well-balanced programme of experiences and that they are introduced to a wide range of painting, drawing and designing techniques. Resources are good. Much of

the pupils' work is attractively displayed around school making many areas exciting and vibrant places to visit. Art makes a valuable contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural development.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY (DT)

79 Standards at Year 6 are above expectations, as at the time of the last inspection. Year 7 pupils build very successfully on this base and achieve standards that are well above expectations – an improvement on the good standards identified last time. All pupils achieve well. The subject is a strength of the school.

80 The high standards owe much to the enthusiasm and expertise of a very good subject co-ordinator. He models excellence in his teaching and supports colleagues well with advice and guidance, particularly with regard to planning. Overall, teaching is very good and sometimes excellent. Pupils respond very enthusiastically to this high quality teaching, displaying very good working habits. Throughout the school they draw, measure and cut accurately, co-operate very well together and are very safety conscious. Year 7 pupils learn to use quite sophisticated equipment, working safely and accurately while sanding, shaping and sawing.

81 As a result of high quality teaching, pupils make good progress throughout the school. Year 4 pupils make attractive 'pop up' pictures, which incorporate simple moving mechanisms, first designing them before proceeding to the making stage. From their labelled sketches, they draw outlines carefully and use scissors to cut accurately. They successfully incorporate simple lever mechanisms into their designs. Year 5 pupils study how commercially produced toys using a cam are made before designing and making their own toys. Their designs and the finished products reflect well-developed design and making skills. Year 6 pupils study how biscuits are commercially packaged before designing their own packaging, incorporating a marketing logo. In this project, pupils effectively apply a range of mathematical skills. They measure accurately and use geometrical instruments to draw appropriate shapes. They extend their food technology skills by making biscuits to be packaged. Pupils learn good hygiene habits, how to follow a recipe, how to weigh ingredients accurately and how to mix and stir ingredients together. All pupils are encouraged to evaluate their designs and the objects they make and to consider how they might improve them. Pupils are given a range of focused practical tasks and very effectively taught to complete them safely and well.

82 Year 7 pupils design and make novelty clocks with considerable enthusiasm. The novel yet realistic designs they produce are well drawn and labelled. Working in wood from their own plans, pupils display very good skills, sawing and shaping the wood and incorporating a range of moving mechanisms into the clocks. Many pupils express well-placed pride in their work.

GEOGRAPHY

83 The planning of the geography curriculum is closely interlocked with history so that they are organised and taught in topic blocks. During the inspection only a small amount of geography was being taught. Therefore, the evidence gathered is largely based upon the work available in pupils' books; only one lesson was seen. This clearly indicates that pupils in Year 6 and Year 7 are on track to achieve standards in line with national expectations by the end of the year. All pupils make good progress.

84 In Year 5, pupils develop a good understanding of the influence of rivers on the human and physical environment. This is taught in a thorough way and opportunities are presented

for pupils to have first hand experiences through fieldwork. For example, tests are carried out on the River Piddle to measure pollution, flow and depth. Pupils are well versed in geographical terminology and the vocabulary of the river. They have an understanding of how rivers are formed and the effect on weather of the water cycle. This learning is usefully extended through opportunities to carry out independent research using atlases, encyclopaedias or the Internet. In the lesson seen, pupils considered the possible threats to river creatures like the otter and what could be done to improve their environment. This enabled pupils to extend their thinking about pollution, and to find solutions to preserve the wildlife that inhabits the river.

85 Year 7 pupils show a developing understanding of geographical processes and patterns of development in their work on settlements. They visit a Dorset settlement at Corfe Castle and look at the benefits and problems of settlement growth. This is well linked to study of a modern settlement of a new town at Milton Keynes and present day Poole. Pupils try to establish why people settled in different places. In their writing, pupils give clear explanations and support them with carefully drawn diagrams.

86 Lessons are well planned and ensure that pupils in parallel classes have the same learning opportunities. However, most pupils work at the same level and there is no provision to extend the learning of the higher attaining pupils so that they will make quicker progress. Work is marked regularly and includes comments that are helpful to pupils in making progress. Good links are made with other subjects and there are plenty of opportunities for pupils to practise and develop writing and speaking skills. However, ICT is currently underused.

87 The subject is very well led and managed. The subject leader supports her colleagues well, and ensures that pupils experience a rich curriculum. She evaluates the effectiveness of teaching and learning through monitoring pupils' work and teachers' planning. New assessment procedures have only just been introduced and have not yet had time to give a picture of current standards.

HISTORY

88 Pupils in Year 6 and Year 7 are on course to achieve the standards expected for their age. The school has ensured that the sound standards achieved at the time of the previous inspection have been maintained. Pupils are now making good progress in their overall development of enquiry skills and their knowledge and understanding of history.

89 By the end of Year 6, pupils have a good knowledge of different periods of British history, as well as how people lived in some of the ancient civilisations. In Year 4, pupils have learned about the effects that the Roman and other invaders had on the way of life for people in Britain. In a successful lesson, pupils gained an insight into the Saxon legal system and how people were tried for crimes. In their discussion afterwards they were able to judge that the system was unfair and that innocent people were likely to have died under it. Pupils learn that there were some benefits to the quality of life under Roman rule, and in many respects the early Britons were sorry to see them leave. Pupils use their literacy skills to write imaginary letters to the Roman governor making the case for them to remain. In Year 6, pupils carry out their own independent research into life at sea during the period of Tudor exploration. They gather information to compile biographical details of the life of Sir Francis Drake. This work is reinforced by examination of details of the Studland Bay wreck, and helps pupils to understand the value of studying first hand evidence. They gain an insight into the perceptions that people in Tudor times had of the universe, and examine early maps that were influenced by religions.

90 In Year 7, pupils carry out extensive studies of British history from the time of the Norman Conquest. They write about the social scene at that time, the different communities and self-sufficiency. They express their own interpretation of events at that period of history and give their reasons. They show an understanding of events and give plausible accounts of what happened. In one lesson, pupils were learning about the changes in the methods of building castles. They had recently visited Corfe Castle and understood the main features of the motte and bailey construction. They were able to make deductions about the change from using wood for construction to stone.

91 Teaching is good throughout the school. It is taught in an interesting way that fosters effective learning through practical activities and role-play. Pupils are taught research skills successfully using the library and occasionally ICT, although this is underused at present. Resources are used well to support learning. For example, whilst learning about the building of castles a teacher demonstrated the construction of an arch using wooden blocks. The effect was marked when the teacher removed the scaffolding and the arch remained firmly in place. Pupils are able to work independently, but often work successfully in pairs or small groups, and this contributes well to their social development.

92 History is very well led and managed. The subject leader has ensured a well-balanced curriculum with considerable cross-curricular links, and a programme of visits, visitors and activities that support the teaching well. She is able to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses through her monitoring and provides effective support to her colleagues.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

93 Standards are in line with those expected by the end of Year 6 and Year 7. Progress over recent years has been satisfactory. This represents an improvement since the last inspection when standards were unsatisfactory.

94 The school has worked hard to address the shortage of resources identified in the last report. There is now an ICT suite plus smaller suites in the four practical areas. With single computers also available in the majority of classrooms, the number of computers per pupil is at the recommended level. Teachers have taken part in further training and now plan lessons more effectively. As a result of these factors, pupils use computers more often and make good progress in lessons.

95 Pupils in Year 4 use graphics tools to paint in the style of Seurat. The good resources in the computer suit enabled teachers to demonstrate a variety of graphics tools and the pupils chose a particular painting from which they drew a small section. They were able to control brush size and spray paint density and matched colours well. In a history context they wrote about their visit to Upton House and used a digital camera to illustrate what they had found out about the Celts and Romans. When saving images, they demonstrated a good understanding of the school network. As Year 5 pupils were using spreadsheets, they entered formulae and adjusted these for different mathematical operations such as addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. They used graphical modelling to make plans of their classrooms and used similar software to help design cushion covers in DT. Year 6 pupils made good progress in a lesson where hyperlinks were being inserted into their word-processed accounts of Tudor explorers. They were confident in their explanations of how the hyperlinks worked. Year 7 pupils were using multimedia software to make a presentation about themselves. They were aware of the importance of background and font colour, style and size.

96 The quality of teaching was good in the lessons observed during the inspection. However, with the evident restrictions to the full range of software and some weaknesses in

teachers' subject knowledge, teaching in general is satisfactory. Teachers are using the suite efficiently and this enables them to demonstrate many features of software that pupils can immediately investigate and use. Pupils, working in pairs, share their findings and expertise and, in the lessons seen, made good progress. The support of a technician allows teachers to concentrate more effectively on their pupils, resulting in increased opportunities for them to learn. Teachers' lack of knowledge and confidence with the full range of software, however, is limiting pupils' progress in a number of areas. Pupils are not offered enough opportunities to develop skills in advanced word processing such as the use of frame-based desktop publishing software. Nor do they make enough use of control applications and data logging equipment, or have sufficient access to the Internet for both emailing opportunities and general reference work. Due to limited space, in three of the Year 7 classrooms there is no additional computer which restricts pupils' access time. The school is aware of these limitations and plans to rectify them.

97 The temporary co-ordinator ensures that the ICT suite is well maintained and that software is carefully catalogued. This means that lessons are rarely affected by equipment failures. The school has made good progress in implementing ICT across most of the curriculum and now needs to ensure pupils' progress is monitored. There is no systematic assessment of pupils' ICT capability.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

98 French is taught to pupils in Year 7 for two one hour periods per week. The specialist teacher teaches most lessons, but a non-specialist teaches one class.

99 Standards in the subject are good overall. After only a few weeks of French, pupils can exchange basic greetings, understand and respond to basic classroom commands and enquiries and follow and answer simple questionnaires about likes and dislikes. Pupils in classes with the specialist teacher tend, understandably, to develop more fluency and accuracy in speaking. The majority of pupils, though, do well in reading and written exercises, demonstrating a good level of independence in their use of dictionaries, or referring back to the text book or previous work when they are unsure of an answer. Pupils with special educational needs do the simpler tasks set for them with ease and confidence, often benefiting from support by a teaching assistant. Although the standards of these groups are lower than the rest of the pupils' they achieve well in terms of their prior attainment.

100 Teaching is generally good. The teacher in charge is fluent and confident in the target language and is able to conduct all classroom transactions in French. This helps her to maintain a brisk pace and ensure that pupils remain on task. Lessons are reinforced by the use of high quality taped material that helps pupils to develop a good accent. Help is given to pupils who need to move forward at a slower pace, and homework activities are carefully designed to consolidate the week's lessons. Explanations of how the homework is to be done are clear and thorough. Teachers use a range of individual, pair and whole-class approaches which give pupils opportunities to practise their speaking and listening in a variety of settings.

101 The subject is well managed and good support is given to colleagues with less experience in the subject. Assessment systems are well developed; pupils have the chance to be involved in evaluating their own progress as well as being monitored by the teacher. Resources are good, and the subject is enriched by an annual residential visit to Normandy and fortnightly pen-pal letters exchanged with a school in France. Standards are a little higher than in the last inspection. In other respects, the subject remains in the same well-organised situation as it was last time.

MUSIC

102 Inspirational teaching leads to very high standards. Pupils are extremely well motivated and rise magnificently to the high expectations. Music makes an excellent contribution to their personal development, especially their spiritual and cultural development.

103 Standards in each year group are well above those expected. Pupils sing with enthusiasm and skill. Year 5 pupils quickly learned how to 'scat' because of the teacher's expertise in demonstrating the technique. Her musical expertise was matched by her infectious enthusiasm. This was evident also during sessions with the a cappella group, the choir and when leading 'Songs of the Spirit' sessions with large groups in the hall. In every case, pupils captured the essence of the songs; they were totally absorbed and performed movingly. These sessions clearly demonstrated the importance of music in meeting the school's aim to support pupils' spiritual development.

104 Composition is central to every lesson. Each aspect of music includes opportunities for pupils to learn through having a go themselves. Year 5 pupils listened to *The C Jam Blues* by Duke Ellington and improvised using the notes of the blues scale. Every pupil made a good attempt. Further demands are made on pupils' understanding of musical composition when they compose their own riffs⁵ in Year 6. After listening to repeated musical motifs from a range of genre, including classical, pop, traditional and world music, pupils were set the task of making up their own. The results were very impressive. As the teacher provided an accompaniment on piano or saxophone, she pointed to pupils in turn and they played their own riffs. One group worked vocally, drawing on the previous year's work on scat singing⁶. The teacher's high expectations were demonstrated as she invited pupils to evaluate one another's attempts and drew out the strengths and weaknesses. Immediate improvements followed as pupils had another go.

105 The teaching programme for Year 7 builds on this earlier practical work. The atmosphere in these lessons was exceptional. Pupils were composing music to accompany films and had to call on their previous learning to meet the challenge. Following a lively introduction, pupils were inspired to be 'musicians'. They worked together in pairs, producing very credible film music. The teacher's 'You can do it!' approach clearly paid off.

106 High standards are also seen outside lessons. When practising, the choir of about 150 pupils soon learned a new song which involved quite difficult pitch intervals and harmonies. Certificates acknowledging the school's success in local and national festivals reflect the high standards in music, as do the various recordings of recent work. Pupils, staff and parents talk with great enthusiasm about the quality of the recent production of 'Smike' and the way it brought the whole school together.

107 The school's strong tradition of instrumental teaching continues. Over three hundred pupils are in the choir or are learning an instrument. Forty pupils have individual piano lessons and other tuition includes strings, brass, woodwind, guitar and percussion. This indicates parents' support for the musical life of the school, which they value very highly.

108 Since her appointment just over a year ago, the co-ordinator has brought a new dimension to the already strong musical tradition. Quite apart from her undoubted expertise, the school is fortunate to have such a dynamic source of inspiration, enthusiasm and joy. Several teachers have musical expertise and contribute to the musical life of the school. A teaching assistant also teaches recorder groups successfully.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

⁵ a short repeated phrase

⁶ improvised singing using sounds imitating musical instruments

110 As found in the last inspection, attainment remains above expectations and teaching continues to be good or better.

111 Standards in dance are well above average in Year 7. This is because of the excellent relationships, teaching which enthuses pupils, and the use of relevant music. In an outstanding lesson, pupils completed high quality group and class sequences to the 'twist'. Pupils in Year 4 have above average skills in floor gymnastics comprising movement and balance sequences. Most pupils put together a range of fluent movements, and hold balance positions well. Good standards were also evident in Year 5 with learning aided particularly well by the use of a videotape of pupils' previous performance. This led to a good improvement to a dance sequence based on music from 'Cats'. Games skills, particularly ball control, whether in netball, football, volleyball or rugby, are about average in each year group. However, there are improvements in Year 7 brought about by some particularly good teaching, such as when very clear guidance was given regards attacking and defensive headers in football.

112 Teaching and learning are good because teachers use their subject knowledge to good effect. Time is used well and each session has precise objectives and a carefully planned structure. Occasionally not enough thought is given to extending pupils' skills, such as dribbling in football, and pupils' evaluation of their work sometimes lacks focus. In the best lessons, such as in dance and gymnastics, opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own and others' work have a very positive impact. Important factors that aid progress in dance are the teachers' level of control, relationships with pupils, high expectations and specific guidance about how to improve. In almost all lessons, pupils' interest and involvement, coupled with the pace of lessons, mean that behaviour and attitudes are good or better. At times, however, teachers are not quick enough in correcting inappropriate behaviour during games.

113 The curriculum is planned well. Each week pupils have a gymnastics session and a games lesson. Football, netball, rugby, hockey, volleyball, cricket and athletics are included according to the season. A short session of swimming is available for pupils in Year 5. The school recognises that this, on its own, is insufficient to ensure all pupils achieve the expected standards by Year 6 and is exploring ways of increasing the time allocated to swimming. A very good range of extra curricular activities, which is supported by many pupils, is available. These have a positive impact on standards, including the development of the skills of higher attaining pupils, such as in cross-country running. Pupils are enthusiastic to start new clubs, such as one for volleyball. Assessment of pupils' skills is being introduced, but is not yet consistent in all areas.

114 The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development, especially as working as part of a team and cooperating in a range of activities. Two co-ordinators share responsibility for the subject, and form an effective team. Although there has been little formal monitoring of teaching, videotape evidence enables them to analyse strengths and weaknesses in pupils' performances. Outside accommodation is good, with the whole of a year group being able to take part in a games session at the same time. There is, however, only one hall. This is just adequate for activities such as dance and gymnastics. It is too small for indoor games sessions, as evident in the Year 6 volleyball lesson. Too often, stray balls interfered with the learning of groups of pupils.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (RE)

115 Standards meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus by the end of Year 6 and Year 7, as at the time of the previous inspection.

116 The quality of teaching is consistently good across the school. This is an improvement since the last inspection when some unsatisfactory teaching was identified. Now lessons are planned carefully so that all pupils in each year group cover the same range of work and have the opportunity to develop knowledge and understanding at the same rate as their peers in parallel classes. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use imaginative methods to promote learning. Visual aids are used effectively. Occasionally, the pace of lessons is too slow, and sometimes the tasks offered to pupils too challenging.

117 Pupils generally find lessons interesting and they participate keenly in all aspects. Work is usually neatly presented and supported by diagrams and drawings. Pupils enjoy the wide range of experiences offered, and make good overall progress in their development of knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other faiths. In Year 4, pupils' work is focused on the use of symbolism in Christian teaching such as the sword, a lighted candle and fire. They are expected to offer their own interpretations related to an appropriate biblical quotation. One pupil said '*These images are used to make what God said more powerful and more passionate*'. Other religions are given strong coverage to provide pupils with opportunities to compare and contrast religious belief and practice, especially Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism. In Year 6, pupils learn about the similarities and differences of marriage for Hindus by making a comparison with their own knowledge of Christian marriage customs. They know enough to understand the implications of the arranged marriage, and to realise that its purpose may be to provide family bonding and to maintain the tradition of family life.

118 Year 7 pupils participate in some interesting activities leading them towards a greater understanding of the commitment of Buddhist monks to a lifestyle of poverty through a lack of possessions. They begin to realise that personal possessions, like mobile phones, are luxuries that it is possible to live without compared with the eight basic items allowed to these monks.

119 The well-planned curriculum fosters the development of pupils' knowledge and skills. Assessment procedures are being developed but have not yet had time to have an overall positive effect upon standards. The study of comparative religions makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

120 The subject is well led. There is a determination to offer a stimulating curriculum. Management is also good although the subject leader has not yet had the opportunity to evaluate the overall effectiveness of the teaching of the subject. The prospects for the future improvement are good because of the commitment currently being given to it by the subject leader and staff.