

INSPECTION REPORT

**WINTERBOURNE VALLEY C of E (VA)
FIRST SCHOOL**

Winterbourne Abbas, Dorchester

LEA area: Dorset

Unique reference number: 113820

Headteacher: Mrs A Allen

Reporting inspector: Mrs D Wilkinson
23048

Dates of inspection: 6th – 8th May 2003

Inspection number: 247411

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	4 - 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Winterbourne Abbas Dorchester Dorset
Postcode:	DT2 9LW
Telephone number:	01305 889297
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Doctor R Clifford
Date of previous inspection:	October 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mrs D Wilkinson 23048	Registered inspector	Foundation Stage Mathematics Art History Music Physical education Educational inclusion, including race equality	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well pupils are taught? How well is the school led and managed What should the school do to improve further?
Ms J Mynett 9334	Lay inspector	How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?	
Mrs A Wilkinson-Tilbrook 10068	Team inspector	English Science Information and communication technology Design and technology Geography Special educational needs	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Winterbourne Valley CE (VA) First School has 48 pupils (26 boys and 22 girls) taught in two classes, one for the younger pupils and one for pupils in Years 3 and 4. It is much smaller than the average-sized first school and smaller than when it was last inspected. Pupils come from Winterbourne Abbas and surrounding villages, with the majority arriving by school buses. Statistics show the area to be socially advantaged. There have been a considerable number of staff changes in the past two years and pupil mobility is also high. The proportion of pupils (22 per cent) with special education needs and the proportion with a statement of need (2 per cent) are around the national average, but the proportion was much higher in the previous three years. The specific needs of these pupils cover learning, behavioural, and speech and language needs. There are very few pupils from different ethnic backgrounds, and all pupils are fluent in English. Currently 4 per cent of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals, which is well below average. The prior attainment of the group of children entering the school each year varies, but overall it is around average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school is providing a satisfactory education overall, and the caring family atmosphere and the good provision for pupils' personal development are helping to create a positive environment for learning. The headteacher has a clear vision of what the school needs to do next, and the whole school community shares her commitment to moving the school forward. This is helping to improve the quality of the school's provision and pupils' attainment, and provides potential for further improvement. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, and good for the younger pupils. This is helping to improve pupils' achievement. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The school provides well for pupils' personal development, resulting in good attitudes, behaviour and relationships, which support their learning well.
- Teaching and learning are good for the younger pupils.
- The effective leadership of the headteacher has built up especially good teamwork amongst the staff.
- The whole school community is strongly committed to further improvement.
- The school's very good partnership with parents and the local community, and the excellent links it has with other schools, are benefiting pupils' learning.
- The very good accommodation and good resources are used effectively to support learning.

What could be improved

- Standards in English, especially in writing, by the end of both Years 2 and 4.
- Standards in information and communication technology and design and technology by the end of Year 4.
- The role of the subject co-ordinators in helping to improve the provision and standards.
- The use of monitoring and evaluation procedures to help identify where specific improvement is needed.
- Deployment of teaching assistants in the class for older pupils.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The level of improvement overall is satisfactory, with some good features. However, in a few areas the rate of progress is too slow and some other aspects give cause for concern. The deficiencies are largely because of an exceptionally high turnover of staff and governors since the school's last inspection. This means that some of the key issues identified then were not properly addressed until the arrival of the new headteacher. In this recent period the rate of improvement in many areas has been rapid. Standards, which declined initially, are now improving. However, they are not yet as high as they should be, especially in writing. The quality of teaching and of curriculum planning has also improved, as have many of the school's procedures, such as those for assessing and tracking pupils' progress. Nevertheless, the majority of these improvements are still too new to have had a significant impact on the school's work.

The school has shown at least satisfactory improvement in the majority of the issues identified at the time of the last inspection. Standards in reading are now better. Standards in writing, although improving, remain below average, but younger pupils now achieve better in writing. The higher-attaining pupils

receive more challenging work and, in most subjects, their achievement is satisfactory. The school now shares pupils' targets for improvement with parents in the annual reports. Over the past year the school's provision for information and communication technology has improved significantly. This benefits the younger pupils, but has not had sufficient time to make an impact on pupils' achievement in Year 4. The most significant weakness remaining is in the monitoring of teaching and learning by the subject co-ordinators. This is partly due to the significant staff changes, but also because of the small number of teachers who have a considerable number of responsibilities. However, good subject leadership in mathematics by both the past and current co-ordinators has meant that the provision for numeracy is now good and standards in mathematics have improved. The procedures in place and the leadership mean that the school has good capacity to improve further.

STANDARDS

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

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

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

lowest 5% nationally E*

Great care must be taken when interpreting the school's performance, as the number of pupils assessed is very much smaller than in the majority of schools. The small number of pupils taking the tests also means that the results are significantly affected by the proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the year group.

Statistics show that the school's performance in English has been consistently lower than the national average since the last inspection. This was because of previous weaknesses in planning and low expectations of what pupils could achieve. In particular, no pupils reached the higher Level 3 in the tests until last year. Despite the 2002 results being below average they improved on those of the previous year. This is mainly because a higher proportion of pupils reached Level 3 in the tests than is seen nationally. Consistently being below the national average since the last inspection, results in mathematics rose well last year because of improvements in both the curriculum and teaching. Teacher assessments in science in 2002 showed that fewer pupils reached the expected standard than do so nationally. Overall, standards continue to improve and pupils currently in the school, including those with special educational needs, are now making satisfactory progress in terms of their prior attainment.

Children in the reception class reach the expected standards in most areas of their learning. Good provision in communications, language, literacy and number work means children achieve well in these areas and exceed the expected standards. The improved progress has resulted in standards in mathematics and science now being average in Year 2. Standards in mathematics are not as good as they were last year because of the large number of pupils with special educational needs in this year group. This is also one reason why standards in English remain below average. In all other subjects, standards in Year 2 are in line with national expectations and pupils' achievement is satisfactory.

Year 4 pupils reach the standards expected for their age in mathematics and science, and overall in English. Their standards in writing are below average because of unsatisfactory achievement in the past. Currently achievement is satisfactory. Good teaching in music helps Year 4 pupils to exceed the expected standards in this subject. Standards are below expectations in information and communication technology and design and technology because previous weaknesses in teaching and planning meant that pupils had not been taught some important skills and knowledge. Standards in Year 4 are in line with expectations in all other subjects and pupils' achievement is satisfactory.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and are interested in their activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good behaviour in lessons and around the school ensures that the school has an orderly and positive learning environment.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships throughout the school are good. Pupils are courteous, polite and friendly, and work well together.
Attendance	Well above the national average, and punctuality is good.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching is satisfactory overall, and good in the class for the youngest pupils. Throughout the school planning is good, with clear lesson objectives being shared with pupils, helping them to understand what is required. The planned activities help pupils make progress. In English, mathematics and science, appropriately challenging tasks are provided for pupils of different prior attainment. This is an improvement since the last inspection, resulting in a good number of pupils now reaching the above average levels in national tests. The caring ethos of the school and good relationships have resulted in the organisation and management of pupils being good, with very little time being wasted in lessons. Pupils' good attitudes mean that they are interested in activities, concentrate and work hard. Numeracy is taught well throughout the school and this has had a positive effect on raising standards. In the reception class, literacy is taught well. The teacher's high expectations have led to children exceeding the expected standards in reading and writing. The teaching of literacy in other year groups is satisfactory overall, although teachers do not have high enough expectations of pupils' presentation in their written work and this limits standards in writing. The organisation of teaching and learning in the youngest class, where there are three year groups, is very good. The contribution made by the classroom assistant is of an exceptionally high quality and she and the class teacher form a very strong team, which benefits all the pupils. This is a major reason why teaching and learning are good in this class. In the Year 3/4 class there are occasions when classroom assistants are only involved with one small group of pupils and this limits their ability to contribute to the learning of the class as a whole. In a minority of lessons the pace slowed when pupils were working on individual activities or sat too long listening to the teacher. This limited the progress they made. Recent improvements in assessment and marking procedures are helping teachers to plan well for the next stages of learning. In the younger class, effective use is made of this information and that from good assessment of the learning that takes place in group activities. Pupils with special educational needs are satisfactorily taught and this is helping them to make sound progress.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall. Very good links with the local community and excellent links with other local schools enrich pupils' learning activities. The quality and range of extra-curricular activities are good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. Pupils have access to the full curriculum and receive extra support when necessary. They make satisfactory progress towards their set targets.
Provision for pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good and a strong feature of the school's provision. It has a positive impact on pupils' attitudes, behaviour and relationships. Provision is very good for spiritual development and good for moral, social and cultural development. Less emphasis is placed on pupils gaining an understanding of the cultural diversity of British society.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The good quality care ensures that pupils learn in a secure and happy environment. Good procedures are in place to monitor attendance and promote good behaviour. New assessment procedures are helping to provide satisfactory support and guidance for pupils.

The school has a very good partnership with parents and provides them with good information about its work and their children's progress. Parents make a significant contribution to the work of the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The effective leadership of the headteacher has successfully brought the school through a difficult period. She has built a very good staff team and together they are working hard to bring about improvement. However, the role of subject managers is under-developed and unsatisfactory at present.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are well organised, very committed and hard working. Their expertise in key areas is good, but the majority are new to the governing body and currently their contribution to the work of the school is satisfactory.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The procedures for monitoring the effectiveness of the school's work are very new and at present the school does not always have enough detailed information to identify areas requiring improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. Educational priorities are supported by careful financial planning. The school has a secure understanding of how to apply the principles of best value in its decision making.

The spacious and well maintained accommodation and good range of learning resources aid pupils' learning. The school has a sufficient number of suitably qualified teachers and support staff.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

33 parents (66%) responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire and eight parents attended the pre-inspection meeting.

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school and have good attitudes to their work. • The teaching is good. • Children are expected to work hard and are making good progress. • The school is helping children to become mature and responsible. • The behaviour is good. • The school is well led and managed, especially under the leadership of the new headteacher. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A very small number of parents responding to the questionnaire did not agree that the school worked closely with them. • A similar number were concerned about the range of extra-curricular activities. <p>However, these were not the views of the parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting.</p>

The inspection team agrees with parents' positive views, but not their negatives ones. The school has a very good partnership with parents. There are good arrangements for parents to discuss their children's progress. Staff are willing to meet with parents at other times and the school responds promptly to their concerns. Arrangements for extra-curricular activities are good, although few are offered to younger pupils.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

- 1 It is difficult to make comparisons from year to year because of the small number of pupils (about ten) in each year group. This is very much smaller than the average number in a year group in the majority of primary schools. The small numbers also make it more difficult to compare Winterbourne Valley's test results with the national average. A major reason for this is that the results of a small year group are more affected by the number of pupils with special educational needs. Great care therefore needs to be taken when interpreting the school's performance, with more emphasis needing to be given to the progress pupils have made.
- 2 After the last inspection standards initially fell. Over the last two years there have been major changes in staffing, including a new headteacher. Since then standards have begun to rise again and are now improving in all subjects, although in some they are still below the level reported at the time of the last inspection.
- 3 The prior attainment of children entering the reception class varies considerably from year to year, but overall it is around the expected level for this age group. The majority of children have had some pre-school education, although this is usually in a playgroup rather than a nursery setting. In the reception year, children make sound progress and their achievements are satisfactory overall. By the time they enter Year 1, most children reach the Early Goals for Learning¹. However, good provision for literacy and numeracy has meant that children are achieving better in communications, language, literacy and number work. In these areas they exceed the standards expected for their age.
- 4 After the last inspection, overall standards in the national tests initially declined, although they began to rise again in 2001. The decline was due to previous low expectations of what pupils could achieve, resulting in not enough pupils reaching the average Level 2 and none reaching the higher Level 3. The current headteacher, who joined the school 18 months ago, initiated the improvements seen. Now nearly all pupils, except those with special educational needs, are reaching at least Level 2 in mathematics, with a significant proportion reaching the higher Level 3. The reasons for this are good use of the National Numeracy Strategy and good teaching in mathematics across the school, as well as effective leadership and management of the subject. Pupils' achievements in numeracy are good. As a result, the school's performance in mathematics in 2002 was above the average of all schools nationally and in line with that of similar schools. Some improvement was also achieved in the 2002 English results, especially in reading, although literacy skills were still below average, with too few pupils reaching Level 2 in reading and writing. However, in both aspects a greater proportion of pupils than is seen nationally reached Level 3. Despite this, the school's performance was below the national average in reading and well below in writing. The reading and writing results were both well below those of similar schools. In the 2002 teacher assessments, overall standards in science were below average. This is partly because pupils' recording skills were low as a consequence of their well below average writing skills.
- 5 The achievements of Year 2 pupils continue to improve and are satisfactory. However, there is a very high proportion (40 per cent) of pupils with special educational needs currently in this year group. As a result, standards in mathematics and in numeracy skills are not as good as they were last year, although they are in line with the national

¹ The Early Learning Goals are the levels in all the Areas of Learning that children are expected to reach by the end of the reception class. The Foundation Stage includes children in nursery and reception classes.

average. Pupils' literacy skills in both reading and writing remain below average, although their achievement is satisfactory and they are continuing to improve their reading skills. Improvement in writing is slow despite the school's focus on this aspect. There has been a greater improvement in the content of writing, and pupils' drafting skills are also better. However, poor presentation, including spelling and punctuation, limits the standards achieved. Standards in science have improved, with pupils reaching the expected levels in their skills, knowledge and understanding. In all other subjects, Year 2 pupils are achieving satisfactorily and reaching standards in line with national expectations.

- 6 The achievements of Year 4 pupils are also satisfactory overall. Pupils are reaching the standards expected for their age in mathematics, and above this in their numeracy skills. This represents good achievement over the last 18 months, as the performance of these pupils in the Year 2 test in mathematics was well below the national average. The improvement is due to good teaching and use of the Numeracy Strategy. Teachers have higher expectations of what pupils can achieve, so there are now fewer pupils failing to reach the expected levels, and the higher-attaining pupils achieve standards above those normally found among pupils of their age. Overall, standards in English are in line with expectations. Literacy skills have improved and better teaching and higher expectations are having a positive impact on standards in reading. Pupils in Year 4 have also achieved well over the past 18 months in this aspect, with reading standards rising from well below average to be in line with those expected for the pupils' age. Standards are also in line with expectations in speaking and listening. In writing, over the past year, pupils' achievement has been satisfactory. A good focus on increasing the range of writing styles is having a positive impact. However, achievement has been unsatisfactory in past years and there has not been enough time for the current improvements in teaching and learning to raise the standards to those expected, particularly in presentation skills.
- 7 In most other subjects Year 4 pupils are reaching standards in line with national expectations. The effective teaching and curriculum in music have resulted in pupils achieving standards above expectations. Their singing is of a good standard, as are their skills in listening to and appraising music. Weaknesses in the provision in previous years have prevented Year 4 pupils from reaching the expected standards in information and communication technology and design and technology. For example, in information and communication technology, although pupils competently use word-processing programs and access the Internet, they are not so skilled in using data-handling packages and other programs to support their work in mathematics and science. In design and technology, pupils' skills in working with a wide range of tools, equipment and materials are limited.
- 8 The school takes great care to ensure that every pupil is included in all that it has to offer. As a result, there is no difference between the achievement of boys and girls, or between that of pupils with different prior attainment. Particularly in English and mathematics lessons, pupils with special educational needs receive appropriate support and are making satisfactory progress. This ensures that their achievements are satisfactory in terms of their prior attainment. Currently the school has no pupils on the register for gifted and talented pupils.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

- 9 Pupils' attitudes, values and behaviour are good and make a significant contribution to the quality of their learning and the life of the school. These standards have been maintained since the last inspection and were praised by parents.

- 10 Pupils are knowledgeable about and proud of their achievements, and enjoy coming to school. In the reception year, children work and play well together, showing high levels of interest in the activities and positive attitudes to learning. Throughout the school, pupils behave well in lessons and move around the school in a calm and orderly way. Behaviour in the playground is good, with all pupils engaged in activities and most playing happily together. At lunchtime, pupils respond positively to the quiet music that is played and this results in a harmonious and relaxing experience for them. They show respect for the environment, the school's and each other's property. No incidents of oppressive behaviour were seen during the inspection and there have been no exclusions of pupils in the last 12 months.
- 11 Personal development and relationships within the school are good. Adults provide very good role models for the pupils, who are aware that adults in the school are supportive and caring. For example, the school crossing patrol lady, who is also a classroom assistant and midday supervisor, gave a talk to the younger pupils about her role. She stressed that people in the school and community are there to help them. Pupils respond well to praise and enjoy working co-operatively. They respect feelings and have a good understanding of the needs of others. For example, pupils with behaviour difficulties have a 'buddy' who quietly reminds them of their target when they are off task. When asked to do so, pupils willingly take responsibility for tasks around the school. They have contributed to the development of their own 'Golden Rules', and the younger children respond very well to photographs and captions showing pupils behaving appropriately. The school promotes pupils' self-confidence and this contributes considerably to their personal development and to their good attitudes and behaviour.
- 12 Pupils with special educational needs are keen to learn and when supported effectively work with confidence. However, there are times when the support from classroom assistants is not effective and pupils become distracted and fail to complete their work, which limits the progress they make.
- 13 The current levels of attendance in the school are very good and well above the national average, with few unauthorised absences. This is a very good improvement since the previous year, when the attendance of a small minority of pupils was poor. Punctuality in the morning is generally good, with most pupils being brought in by taxi or the school bus. The extended registration period provides an orderly start to the day. Attendance and punctuality are well monitored by the school and this helps to ensure that pupils do not miss important learning activities.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

- 14 Much has been done to improve the quality of teaching since the last inspection, particularly since the arrival of the new headteacher and a significant changeover of staff. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory, with no unsatisfactory teaching being observed. The weaknesses identified at the time of the last inspection have been fully addressed. There is now particularly good teamwork amongst the staff which has resulted in a common approach being seen in all year groups, for example in planning and marking. The good teaching for children in the reception year has been maintained. There are effective arrangements for teaching pupils in Years 1 and 2, including separate lessons for Year 2 pupils in literacy and numeracy. Consequently, teaching in these year groups is now also good. Good progress has been made in improving teaching in the Year 3/4 class, where there are now higher expectations of pupils, particularly the higher-attainers. This has resulted in pupils making good progress in mathematics over the past year. Teaching has improved throughout the school in mathematics, where it is uniformly good, and this is helping pupils to make good progress in their learning. As a result, their achievements in mathematics are now satisfactory in spite of being unsatisfactory in

previous years. Teaching and learning are also good in music due to the good arrangements for the Class 1 teacher to teach the subject in all year groups. It is not possible to make a judgement about teaching in information and communication technology as no direct teaching was observed during the inspection.

- 15 Throughout the school, teachers' subject knowledge is secure in all the subjects covered in the Foundation Stage and National Curriculum Programmes of Study. Subject knowledge is good in mathematics, especially number work, and also in music, and design and technology. Teachers are confident and explain things clearly in these subjects so that pupils easily understand. In the past 18 months, staff have undertaken a great deal of work in order to improve the quality of planning. There is a shared commitment amongst all staff to plan lessons which meet the needs of all pupils, and this is having a positive effect on learning. Work is now well planned for pupils of different prior attainment in English, mathematics and science. In whole-class sessions, teachers are also good at directing questions of different levels of difficulty to pupils, so that all are appropriately challenged. Pupils are helped to understand their learning by teachers telling them 'What I am looking for' at the beginning of the lesson and often asking pupils at the end whether they have achieved the objective.
- 16 All teachers know pupils well and there are good relationships between the pupils and all adults who work in the school. Pupils know that their teachers want them to do well and they respond positively to the work they are given. Behaviour is always at least good and pupils readily move on to the next task when asked to do so, ensuring that no time is wasted. For example, the way the younger pupils readily responded to the teacher's direction to hold the percussion instruments quietly was exemplary. In some lessons very effective use is made of resources to help pupils learn. For example, in the older class, pupils were learning about the Indus Valley civilisation through the use of the interactive white board, displaying material the teacher had downloaded from the Internet. In the majority of lessons the pace of learning is satisfactory. Occasionally it is rigorous, as was seen in a good music lesson for the younger pupils. When learning is rigorous, pupils make good progress. Good progress is also often made when pupils work with an adult. However, there are a few occasions when pupils spend too long sitting on the carpet listening to the teacher. At other times pupils engaged on a task without direct supervision work more slowly. On these occasions the slower pace limits the progress pupils make.
- 17 Marking and assessment procedures have seen a considerable improvement in all year groups over the past 18 months. Work in English and mathematics is well marked and identifies what pupils have achieved as well as setting out points for improvement. The results are effectively recorded in teachers' mark books and give clear evidence of where to move on to next, which is a good basis for future planning. This is less good in other subjects.
- 18 Homework is seen as an integral part of learning and is regularly set in all year groups, mainly focusing on practising literacy and numeracy skills. Parents give particularly good support to this part of their children's education and consequently it is helping their children's learning.
- 19 Children in the reception year are taught well. In particular they make a good start in learning the basic skills of reading, writing and number work. This is because of effective teaching of these skills and the teacher's high expectations of what the children can achieve. This in turn forms a very good foundation for teachers to build on as children move on to Year 1 and has already improved achievement in mathematics throughout the school. Good arrangements are in place for children to learn through a range of adult-chosen activities as well as those they choose for themselves. This helps them to make

good progress in this aspect of their personal development. In the reception year also, good observational assessment regularly takes place which allows the teacher to plan well for the next stages in learning.

- 20 Especially effective arrangements have been made for the organisation of pupils in the youngest class, which covers the reception year group as well as Years 1 and 2. The very good teamwork seen between the teacher and experienced classroom assistant means that the needs of pupils in different year groups are met particularly well. In addition, the Year 2 pupils are taught separately for English and mathematics and this helps to ensure that they effectively build on and extend the skills learnt in earlier years. The methods used by teachers in Years 1 and 2 are good. In particular, they try to make learning fun and to use resources that motivate and interest the pupils. For example, literacy and numeracy skills are often taught through games, which the pupils enjoy.
- 21 Good arrangements are also made for higher-attaining pupils to work with the older pupils in both classes so that they are given appropriately challenging work. Literacy skills are taught satisfactorily in Years 1 to 4. The major weakness for the school to address over the past two years has been the need to improve the teaching of writing. A good focus on improving style and content has seen satisfactory improvement in this area. However, although pupils are taught new spellings and given opportunities to regularly practise their handwriting skills, the importance of using these in all their written work has not been given enough emphasis and this remains a weakness.
- 22 Teaching in the older class is satisfactory overall. As well as planning well for the two year groups in the class and managing behaviour effectively, the teacher has an enthusiasm for some subjects such as history and mathematics which has a positive effect on learning in these lessons. Pupils develop a sound understanding of what they are learning because of a good recall of what has previously been learnt at the beginning of each lesson. Appropriate arrangements are in place for teaching pupils according to their age and prior attainment. There are a number of occasions, however, when the classroom assistants work with only a very small number of pupils and this means that other pupils have to wait for the class teacher when they are unsure of how to complete a task. This prevents them from making greater progress in the lessons.
- 23 Teaching for pupils with special education needs is satisfactory overall. Individual education plans are in place for all pupils on the school's register of special needs. In the reception year and Years 1 and 2 teachers plan well to ensure that pupils are fully included in all activities and very well supported by classroom assistants. In Years 3 and 4 there are times in lessons when the support given by classroom assistants is not as effective as it could be and this has a negative impact on pupils' learning. When pupils are withdrawn for small group work, for example in literacy sessions, the classroom assistant has a good knowledge of their prior attainment, and work is set which is well matched to this.

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

- 24 The school provides a broad curriculum for its pupils, with an especially good range of learning opportunities available outside the formal curriculum. There are very good links with the community with many good opportunities for pupils to learn from visitors and the wide range of visits that are arranged for them. Links with partner institutions are excellent.
- 25 Previous weaknesses in this area of the school's work have now been addressed, with satisfactory improvement being seen since the last inspection, most improvements being in the last two years. Statutory requirements are fully met.
- 26 There is a suitable two-year rolling programme of work, which helps to compensate for the mixed-age classes. Good arrangements are in place to ensure that children in the reception year follow the Foundation Stage curriculum whilst the Year 1 and 2 pupils in the same class follow the National Curriculum Programmes of Study. As a result, teaching and learning for these pupils are good. The school has successfully implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, and they are having a positive impact on standards achieved by pupils. However, while younger pupils are beginning to apply their literacy skills in other subjects, for example in science and in design and technology, the full impact of the Literacy Strategy has yet to be seen across the curriculum, especially among the older pupils. At times good work done in many subjects is spoiled by the older pupils' poor writing and presentation. The school has recently drawn up clear guidelines for all National Curriculum subjects, which give sound advice to staff. However, because the updating of policies had not taken place in previous years, there are no up-to-date subject policies in place. This is one reason why the improvement in standards has been limited.
- 27 Overall, the quality of the planning is good. In the classroom, teachers are working to plan appropriate learning objectives, which they frequently share with the pupils. These are then used to form part of the evaluation of the effectiveness of the lesson. With the younger pupils, the planning clearly takes account of the different learning needs of the mixed age group and the impact of this improved planning is evident in the quality of pupils' work. Inspection evidence suggests that neither group suffers any barrier to learning from this arrangement.
- 28 Pupils with special educational needs receive satisfactory provision. The school is aware of the revised Code of Practice, but currently there is no revised policy for special educational needs in place. There has been recent in-service training for all staff and there is now a sharper focus on target setting in order to establish early identification and intervention programmes. Individual Education Plans (IEPs) are shared with pupils and parents, and the school has completed a successful audit for the local education authority. The special needs assistant provides effective support for pupils with a statement of need when they are withdrawn for specific activities and this enables them to make appropriate progress. However, in class sessions not enough opportunities are provided for some pupils with special educational needs to work independently within a group, which limits the amount of support provided for other pupils. The school is aware of the importance of inclusion and ensures that pupils with special educational needs do not miss important lessons when withdrawn for additional support. However, there are no guidelines or policies that reflect the importance of inclusion, which needs to be incorporated into the new documentation.
- 29 The school offers a good range of extra-curricular activities each day. These enhance the curriculum effectively. There are constraints for many pupils who are bussed into

school and are unable to attend after-school clubs, so, of necessity, most clubs take place at lunch times. All Key Stage 2 pupils have the opportunity to learn the recorder or violin in the lunchtime clubs, and the school offers football, gardening and chess to girls and boys. These pupils also have the opportunity to attend French classes.

- 30 The school provides a satisfactory programme of personal, social and health education, which is taught through different subjects such as science. Suitable guidelines are in place, but omissions by previous management has meant that the school has not yet developed a policy for this area of the curriculum. The visits made by the Life Education Caravan support this aspect of the curriculum very effectively and the school makes very good use of this facility. Circle time² and class discussion time enable pupils to talk about their personal experiences and feelings, and fully support their personal development.
- 31 The school has very good links with the community, which enhances the quality of pupils' education. Good use is made of the locality in geography, with visits to farms and dairies well integrated into the curriculum. As part of the history and science curriculum pupils have been to the Ancient Technology Centre, and visited local churches and a residential care home. There is also a residential visit for the older pupils.
- 32 Exceptionally good use is made of links with other schools through membership of the Dorchester Area Schools Partnership (DASP). This benefits the school in many ways, providing effective counselling support for pupils with behavioural needs and regular access to a computer technician as well as inter-school events and useful in-service training. Both staff and governors acknowledge the benefits they receive from membership of the group and evidence of this was clear during the inspection week.

Opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

- 33 There are clear guidelines in place and the school recognises that the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils plays a significant part in their ability to learn and achieve. The good provision in this aspect of the school's work has a positive impact on the pupils' attitudes, behaviour and relationships.
- 34 Provision for spiritual development is very good. The school's aim, which it successfully meets, is 'to inspire awe and wonder and to develop spirituality and reflection'. In assemblies pupils are given very good opportunities to reflect upon their own beliefs and values, and are able to communicate these appropriately in discussions and through their behaviour. Older pupils are able to talk about the feeling of calm and peace that they experienced when the school held a 'Taize' service³. This service used candles and darkness to provide a very special time for pupils' reflection. In some lessons and at lunch time quiet music is played which has a beneficial effect on pupils' ability to reflect on their experiences. Circle time is well organised, with the teacher emphasising the importance of listening to each member of the group. Teachers also provide pupils with 'silent' time, which enables them to think about those who are special to them. Pupils play a full and active part in church services and talk about their role in Easter and Mother's Day services and how important it is to them. They are encouraged to write their own prayers and the school has its own prayer and hymn. In assemblies pupils pray reverently
- 35 The provision for moral development is good. The Golden Rules of the school have been negotiated with the pupils and all are aware of their importance. Parents confirm the

² During Circle time pupils discuss a wide range of personal and general issues. All agree that no interruptions should occur and only one person at a time will speak. Respect for other pupils' views will occur at all times and therefore pupils feel confident that they can talk with ease and free from any form of interference of interruption from other children.

³ A 'Taize service' is a special form of worship in the Christian religion.

positive effects of this initiative. In assemblies a strong moral message is delivered in a range of different ways that interest and involve all pupils. Teachers ensure that pupils know the difference between right and wrong, and most pupils are considerate and conscious of how their actions may affect others. Pupils are encouraged to be careful with their property and be respectful of that of others. In Circle times pupils have valuable opportunities to talk about the importance of honesty, fairness, kindness and thoughtfulness. They listen attentively to each other and make positive statements about why a particular person is special or is a good friend to them. Through visits and visitors the school provides helpful opportunities for pupils to explore the values, beliefs and experiences of others.

- 36 The provision for social development is good. Relationships between pupils are very good, both in the classrooms and in the playground. In classrooms pupils work together successfully in groups and readily share resources. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 are learning about the importance of social and environmental responsibility through their work in geography on recycling. There is a range of personal and social projects, which help pupils consider social and personal health issues. For example, the Life Education Caravan visits the school regularly and provides pupils with the opportunity to learn facts about their body and to develop drugs awareness. They have also been involved in various personal and social outreach projects, which have heightened their awareness of social problems and needs. Pupils also help to raise money for a range of different charities, including a special care baby unit, a women's refuge, Children in Need and Action Research. They also support a charity that sends Christmas gifts to children in need overseas. These activities provide pupils with valuable experiences that give them a good understanding of the wider social community and the needs of others.
- 37 Cultural development is good. Through the good range of interesting cultural and historical trips the school provides effective ways for pupils to gain experience, knowledge and understanding of their own and other cultural traditions. In art, pupils learn about different artists, and the 'Art Week' enables them to explore a good variety of different media. Pupils are given the opportunity to see live performances and work alongside artists, actors and musicians, some of whom are parents and governors. Pupils learn traditional country dances and take part in a dance festival. Through links with a school in South Africa they are encouraged to acknowledge differences between their experience of school and that of a child in a less privileged society. Older pupils gain valuable knowledge and understanding of other cultures through attending an African cultural exhibition and exploring the cultural tradition of the Indus Valley in history. Less emphasis has been given to developing pupils' knowledge and understanding of the rich diversity of different cultures within the environment in which they live.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

- 38 Teachers and support staff provide a caring and supportive environment for pupils. The schools' provision for pupils' health and welfare is good and makes a significant contribution to their personal and academic development. Although many of the school policies are still in draft form, procedures are well known and effectively implemented. Parents spoke very highly of the care and support offered to their children, which results in them enjoying school and making good progress. Overall, the quality of this aspect of the school's work has been maintained since the last inspection.
- 39 Procedures for monitoring and promoting discipline and good behaviour are effective. There is a clear system of rewards and sanctions. Pupils are aware of the Golden Rules and how they should behave, and this is reflected in their good behaviour and the orderly atmosphere in the school. The weekly celebration assemblies recognise pupils' successes and achievements. Pupils respond enthusiastically to mentions in the 'Golden

Book' and applaud loudly those receiving certificates. Information regarding the school's behaviour policy is circulated in the prospectus and included in the home/school agreement. It clearly highlights the school's expectations and identifies the responsibilities of staff, parents and pupils. Procedures for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour or bullying are in place.

- 40 Other procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are informal. However, the good knowledge all adults have of individual pupils has meant that this area of the school's work is satisfactory.
- 41 Procedures for monitoring attendance are good. Most parents call in promptly to inform the school when their children are away ill; otherwise the school phones home to check on absences. Parents are informed about their responsibility for ensuring that their children attend school regularly and promptly, both in the prospectus and in the governors' annual report to parents. The school encourages parents not to take their children on holiday during term time. Good links are maintained with the educational welfare officer who visits regularly to chase up absences or causes of concern.
- 42 Procedures for child protection are good. The school has an appropriate policy identifying correct procedures and guidelines for child protection. The headteacher is the designated member of staff with responsibility for child protection issues. Any matters relating to child protection are reviewed at weekly staff meetings. Well-established systems are in place to provide for the health and welfare of pupils. There are effective measures to meet the medical needs of pupils, and a sufficient number of staff are qualified to provide first aid and take care of pupils who may fall ill during the day. The school has good links with the various support agencies, and these specialists attend as necessary.
- 43 Procedures for ensuring the health and safety of pupils are good. There is a comprehensive health and safety policy, and effective procedures are in place to address the safety and security of pupils in the school or when out on visits. The governors take their responsibility for health and safety seriously. The headteacher and governors from the environment committee undertake regular health and safety checks and risk assessments along with local authority staff. New fencing around the site has improved the security of pupils during the day, and the emergency school closure procedures were effectively implemented during a recent flood when the school was evacuated. The location of the school on a busy main road has led to clearly defined transport procedures for the start and end of the day. The arrival and departure of coaches and taxis are well managed by staff to ensure the safety of pupils.
- 44 The school's monitoring of pupils' personal and academic development is satisfactory. This allows staff to provide satisfactory support and guidance for all its pupils. Since the last inspection the assessment and tracking of pupils' academic progress have seen a significant development nationally. Many of the school's new procedures to meet the national requirements were not put in place until last year. Therefore, current assessment procedures are not as good as they were at the time of the last inspection.
- 45 Good observational assessment of children in the reception class contributes well to effective monitoring and guidance for these children. In the core subjects of English, mathematics and science good procedures are now in place for assessing and recording what pupils have achieved. This helps staff to plan well for the next stages of learning, taking due account of pupils' prior attainment. The results from both national tests and the school's own assessments are now being used satisfactorily to help track pupils' progress as they move through the school.

- 46 Most other subjects do not yet have formal assessment procedures in place, although most staff effectively record the work that has been covered in each class. This, together with the good knowledge that staff have of individual pupils, allows them to plan satisfactorily for building on and extending pupils' skills in these subjects.
- 47 The assessment of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. When staff raise a concern, pupils are placed on a 'school aware' list and teachers observe their learning and behaviour and record their observations. Pupils' progress is regularly monitored and, through the individual education plans, teachers ensure that work is targeted to meet their specific needs. Regular review meetings are held to discuss the progress of pupils with a statement of special educational need, and annual reviews meet statutory requirements. Where pupils make particularly good progress they are reassessed and, where appropriate, are removed from the special needs register.
- 48 The majority of parents feel that the information they receive about their children's progress both at consultation evenings and in the annual written reports is accurate and informative.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- 49 The partnership with parents is very good and continues to be one of the major strengths of the school. The school provides parents with many opportunities to become involved and this has a positive effect on pupils' learning. Parents commented on the positive changes they had seen since the arrival of the new headteacher. The school seeks to keep parents well informed and the quality of information provided for them is good. Information regarding the school and its activities is detailed in the school prospectus and governors' annual report to parents. Curricular information is circulated each term, enabling parents to see what their children will be covering during the course of the year. Regular newsletters are distributed, providing comprehensive information about what is going on, and celebrating the school's successes and pupils' achievements. The school effectively consults with parents to ascertain their ideas and views, and has run special open days to share new initiatives or introduce new resources, for example to show them how the new interactive white board works.
- 50 Parents expressed a high level of satisfaction with the work of the school in the pre-inspection questionnaire and at the meeting held for them before the inspection. Their children are very happy and they like the atmosphere and benefits of the small family school. Parents feel that the school is well led and managed, and very accessible. They reported that they are very comfortable approaching the school with questions or concerns. They feel that they are listened to and that any concerns are resolved sensitively and promptly. However, some parents felt that they were not kept sufficiently well informed about what goes on or the progress their children were making. This may be due to the fact that many pupils come to school by bus and their parents therefore do not have day-to-day contact with teachers. The school feels that its 'open door' policy addresses this issue and that parents can drop in to meet teachers at any time. Pupils are set individual learning targets which are shared with parents in reports or during consultation evenings. The annual report to parents clearly identifies what their children have covered. However, they do not always detail pupils' attainment or provide a clear picture of how well they are progressing in relation to what is expected for their age. A number of parents expressed concerns about the range of extra-curricular activities offered outside lessons. The inspection team considered the range of extra-curricular activities provided to be good, but they were generally only available to the older pupils.
- 51 Parents are making a very effective contribution to their children's learning by supporting them at home. Parents receive details of the homework policy and information about how

they can help their children at home. Parents who are regularly listening to their children read are contributing to their improved standards of reading. Parents are fully involved in the early stages of assessment for their children who have special educational needs. They are invited to all review meetings and the development of individual education plans. This enables them to make a contribution to the pupils' progress. The school warmly encourages parents to become involved in their children's learning by helping out in the school. A large number of parents, parent governors and other adults are offering their support on a regular basis. Volunteers are listening to reading, working with small groups for art, literacy and numeracy, helping with costume making, swimming or football coaching, and helping out on school visits. Parents are well briefed for these tasks and activities.

- 52 The impact of parents' involvement in the work of the school is very strong. Parents are invited to become involved in the life of the school and are encouraged to attend church services, school productions, sports days and fetes. They spoke enthusiastically about these events, which are well supported by both them and the wider village community. The Winterbourne Valley Friends Association is run by an enthusiastic group of parents and staff. They successfully organise and run a large number of fund-raising and social events each year, which helps to generate significant extra funds for the school. These are used to purchase extra equipment, books and 'treats' for the pupils. Parents are currently fund-raising to purchase a second interactive white board for the younger pupils. The first one, used by the older pupils, is proving to be a considerable asset and is well used by teachers. A number of parents and adults are also providing valuable extra support by volunteering their time to undertake various maintenance tasks around the school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- 53 It is very difficult to make comparisons with this aspect of the school's work at the time of the last inspection. Since then there has been a very high turnover of staff, including a new headteacher, and most subject co-ordinators have had less than 18 months in their role. In addition, very few governors were on the governing body at the time of the last inspection, with the majority having served for less than a year. Before the arrival of the new headteacher, the school went through a period when little was done to address important issues. Current personnel with management responsibilities have made a positive response to the problems that arose since the last inspection, although there has not been long enough for them to address these fully.
- 54 The headteacher is leading the school well. She has a secure understanding of the areas which need to improve, and since her appointment 18 months ago, with the support of the local education authority, she has worked hard to address the weaknesses. She has a clear vision of where she wants the school to be and has built a very effective staff team and forged particularly strong relationships with the whole school community. This means that all share a common goal and are committed to ensuring that current strategies for improvement are effectively carried out. Parents report that the school is now a happy place where their children want to come and want to work hard.
- 55 Current staff are fully supportive of the headteacher. The whole team has worked very well together in addressing the most significant weaknesses, such as improving planning and providing appropriately challenging work for pupils of different prior attainment. In this they have been successful and the impact of their work can be seen in the good lesson planning in all classes and the improved achievement of pupils. Good subject leadership in mathematics has led to effective provision for numeracy, good teaching and raised standards in the subject. However, the overall contribution of subject co-ordinators to improving the school's provision and standards is unsatisfactory. There are three main

reasons for this. First, only one teacher who was at the school two years ago remains in post. Secondly, the small number of staff has meant that each teacher has to take responsibility for a number of subjects. An example of the adverse effect of this can be seen in the high number of subject responsibilities carried by the headteacher, including that for literacy as well as teaching for 50 per cent of each day. This has affected the rate of improvement in the provision and standards in English. Thirdly, most teachers have to increase their expertise in the subject they are managing and also in systems by which they can keep a check on the teaching and learning so that they can give effective support and advice to colleagues. The school has good arrangements in place to link this to performance management and to increasing teachers' proficiency. When staff are given the opportunity to increase their expertise they have the capacity for competent leadership and management. A good example of this can be seen in the growing effectiveness of the co-ordinator for information and communication technology. However, there has been too little time for staff to develop the skills that will allow this aspect of the school's work to be satisfactory overall.

- 56 Despite these management weaknesses the very good teamwork seen in the school has resulted in good support for new members of staff. This has meant that, in a short time, new staff are working well as part of the school team.
- 57 Leadership and management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs are satisfactory. All teachers have received in-service training on the new Code of Practice⁴. The co-ordinator, who is the headteacher, holds regular reviews and liaises closely with parents, teachers and outside agencies. The register of special educational needs is sufficiently detailed and all files are efficiently maintained. A new governor for this aspect of the school's work has recently been appointed. She has good expertise in this area and is becoming actively involved in supervising the processes. The current policy for special educational needs is out of date, although guidelines ensure that statutory requirements for the revised Code of Practice are met.
- 58 Unsatisfactory subject leadership has had a negative effect on the school's capacity to keep a check on how well it is doing. In addition, many of the procedures put in place to obtain the information needed are very new and have not had enough time to support significant improvements in the provision and standards. The school now has satisfactory systems in place for tracking pupils' progress. These, together with the monitoring of teaching, which is also in the process of development, are helping to identify in which aspects of a subject pupils do not achieve well enough. However, the procedures are too new to help staff easily identify some specific strengths and weaknesses. For example, the school correctly identified writing as an area needing urgent attention. Appropriate strategies were put in place to improve standards. However, current monitoring had not identified that, although pupils were improving their handwriting and spelling skills, they were not yet applying these satisfactorily in all their written work. The lack of detailed enough information from monitoring and evaluation of the work of the school also prevents governors from having a comprehensive understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- 59 Before the arrival of the new headteacher little had been done to update the policies in place for the school's work. A great deal of work has been done by the headteacher in consultation with staff to produce guidelines, which are now in place and are satisfactorily helping to direct the work of the school. However, formal consultation procedures and ratification of policies by the governing body have yet to take place.

⁴ Code of Practice – this gives practical advice to schools and local education authorities about their responsibilities and tasks to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs receive the most appropriate help to further their learning and personal development. This is a statutory duty under the 2001 Education Act

- 60 Despite the newness of the monitoring and evaluation procedures, the school's improvement plan is satisfactory and sets out suitable strategies for addressing the major areas where the school needs to improve. This has allowed appropriate funding to be allocated to areas of need.
- 61 The vast majority of governors are new to their role, although the governing body is now very well organised through its committee structure. Governors are hard working and very committed to the school. They fulfil their statutory duties satisfactorily and are very supportive of staff. Many governors visit the school regularly and are becoming very effective in their role as critical friends. Some governors have considerable expertise in areas which will provide effective support as they increase their understanding of their role, for example in special educational needs and finance.
- 62 Financial planning, monitoring and control are thorough due to effective work by the school's own administrative officer and personnel from the local education authority. Careful decisions are made in allocating resources to the areas of most need and in ensuring that specific grants are used for their designated purposes. Both senior management and governors are forward-looking and recognise the need to balance spending on current improvements with what may happen in the future. Partly as a result, the school currently has a large under-spend which is allocated to ensuring that the quality of its provision is maintained in the near future in spite of its budget allocation decreasing. The expenditure per pupil is high, mainly due to the small nature of the school, but effective allocation of funds, together with the quality of education provided, ensures that the school gives satisfactory value for money.
- 63 Improvements are being made in the use of new technology, which is sound at present, and the school is in the process of developing its own web site. The principles of best value are satisfactorily applied, and the school is supported well by both staff and parents in maintaining the building and grounds. The school has a sound understanding of where it needs to be in comparison with other schools and is responding well to the need to raise standards.
- 64 The school has a suitable number of teachers and classroom assistants to provide a satisfactory education for its pupils. Teachers' subject expertise is at least satisfactory and good in some areas, despite there being only three teachers to cover the Foundation Stage and all the National Curriculum subjects.
- 65 The accommodation is very good and well maintained by the cleaning staff. It provides a stimulating environment for pupils and this contributes to their good attitudes to learning. The classroom areas for the younger pupils are very good and there are both secure outdoor play areas and a covered play area for reception children to have daily access to physical activities. The lack of a climbing frame for reception children is compensated for by the well-supervised use of climbing apparatus in the school hall. A good sized hall is effectively used for physical education and there are spacious hard play areas and a field, which present effective spaces for learning. The outdoor areas are well maintained with the help of staff and parents. The school has recently set up a new resource base and a computer suite in Key Stage 2. The library is also in the process of being reorganised.
- 66 The number and quality of resources are good, especially for children in the reception class and for music and physical education. The resources for information and communication technology are very good. Good use of resources in some lessons is effective in helping pupils to learn more easily.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

67 In order to raise standards and improve the quality of education for its pupils the headteacher, staff and governors should:

(1) raise standards in English through:

- improving the presentation of pupils' written work in all subjects;
- instituting a handwriting policy and scheme of work throughout the school so that pupils can build on and extend the good progress they have made in this aspect in the reception class;
- continuing to provide opportunities for pupils to redraft their work;
- emphasizing the importance of correct spelling and punctuation;
- planning more opportunities for pupils to use their writing skills in subjects other than English;
- providing more opportunities for pupils to take part in drama and formal discussion activities;

(Strategies for improving standards in writing have been identified as a priority on the school improvement plan. A new strategy for improving speaking and listening skills is due to be put in place by September)

Paragraphs: 4-6, 21, 26, 77-78 and 80

(2) raise standards in information and communication technology, and in design and technology, in Year 4 by:

- ensuring that pupils are taught all the skills and knowledge identified in the National Curriculum Programmes of Study in these subjects;
- giving pupils sufficient opportunities to use their computer skills to support their learning in other subjects;

(New curriculum plans identify opportunities to teach all the skills required in both subjects. The school improvement plan continues to focus on improving the provision and standards in information and communication technology)

Paragraphs: 7, 101, 103, 105, 118

(3) develop the role of the subject co-ordinators so that they are able to play an effective part in improving provision and standards by:

- providing opportunities for professional development in both subject expertise and monitoring and evaluation procedures;
- giving co-ordinators more opportunity to monitoring teaching and learning;

(This is a current priority on the school improvement plan)

Paragraphs: 53, 55, 58, 82, 94, 100, 105, 110, 116, 120, 128

(4) improve the effectiveness of the school's evaluation of its performance in order to fully address those areas where improvement is needed by:

- continuing to develop effective procedures for monitoring the provision and standards;
- ensuring that all staff with management responsibilities have the skills to clearly identify strengths and weaknesses and suggest appropriate action to bring about improvement;
- providing governors with the information needed to help them monitor the effectiveness of the school's work;

(In-service training is planned in the near future for both governors and staff to increase their expertise in this area)

Paragraphs: 55, 58, 82, 94, 100, 110, 116, 128

- (5) improve the quality of the contribution made by classroom assistants to teaching and learning in the older pupils' class by:
- setting out detailed plans for the roles they are to undertake in lessons;
 - ensuring that they are more effectively deployed in helping the teacher to support the needs of the wide range of age and ability groups in the class;
 - devising appropriate tasks for the assistants to undertake when the whole class is working with the teacher.
- Paragraphs: 22-23, 28, 81, 93

Minor areas for consideration in the action plan include:

1. ensure that policies are drawn up in consultation with all staff and adopted by the governing body for all the National Curriculum subjects and the Foundation Stage and other important aspects of the school's work;
Paragraphs: 26, 30, 38, 57, and 59
2. give consideration to further promoting pupils' understanding of the cultural diversity of British society;
Paragraph: 37
3. include information about the progress pupils have made during the year in the annual written reports to parents.
Paragraph: 50

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	18
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	10

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	0	0	8	10	0	0	0
Percentage	0	0	44	56	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	48
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	2

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	7

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	11

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.6
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002			11

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	7	7	10
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	64 (85)	64 (85)	91 (85)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	8	9	9
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	73 (85)	82 (85)	82 (92)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year. The number of boys and girls is not included because for each group it is less than 11.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	47	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	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: YR – Y4

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16.7
Average class size	25

Education support staff: YR– Y4

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	81

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2002/3
	£
Total income	203,587
Total expenditure	173,304
Expenditure per pupil	3,841
Balance brought forward from previous year	18,738
Balance carried forward to next year	30,283

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate 62%

Number of questionnaires sent out	50
Number of questionnaires returned	31

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	52	48	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	39	55	0	0	6
Behaviour in the school is good.	30	58	3	0	9
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	27	64	6	3	0
The teaching is good.	42	45	3	0	9
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	39	45	9	0	6
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	52	36	12	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	58	39	3	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	39	42	15	0	3
The school is well led and managed.	64	21	6	0	9
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	58	39	0	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	39	33	12	3	12

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

- 68 The school has maintained the strengths seen at the time of the last inspection. Children are given a good start. All are invited to attend a playgroup, which takes place in the school for one afternoon in each week, in the year before they join the school. The school’s caring and family atmosphere helps children to settle in well and take their place confidently in a class which also contains Year 1 and Year 2 pupils.
- 69 The accommodation is very good and resources are good for the reception children. There is a secure outdoor play area as well as a covered play area for use in inclement weather. There is no climbing apparatus for reception children, although they have access to some equipment in the school hall. There are also plans to build an adventure playground on the school field, which would be used by the reception children. The very good teamwork seen between the teacher and classroom assistant is benefiting all in the class. This means that the basic skills are taught well and, as a result, children make good progress in these areas. Very good attention is given to organisation of the class and planning activities to meet the needs of the three year groups. Assessment of children in the reception year is good and this helps the teacher to plan work well matched to their needs, especially in literacy and numeracy. The table below shows the provision for each of the areas of learning in the Foundation Stage.

AREA OF LEARNING	TEACHING	CURRICULUM
Personal, social and emotional development	Good	Good
Communication, language and literacy	Good	Good
Mathematical development	Good	Good
Knowledge and understanding of the world	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Physical development	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Creative development	Satisfactory (Good in music)	Satisfactory

- 70 During the time they are in the reception year, children make sound progress overall and their achievement is satisfactory. The majority reach the expected standard by the time they enter Year 1. However, because of the good provision for literacy and numeracy, children exceed the expected standards in these aspects.

Personal, social and emotional development

- 71 The caring family ethos of the school supports children well in this aspect of their learning. They develop confidence and a willingness to try new things. Most children work well on their activities, even when not directly supervised by an adult. The good relationships seen throughout the school extend to children in this age group and they work and play happily together. Most children know what is acceptable behaviour, although they often turn to an adult to help sort out disagreements with their classmates. They work carefully with resources and help tidy up after sessions. Very nearly all are likely to attain the standards expected for their age by the time they enter Year 1.

Communication, language and literacy

- 72 Good teaching of this aspect, with an effective emphasis on the basic skills, helps children to achieve well. When they enter the school, most children have average oral skills, although they are confident when talking to others. This aspect of their development is promoted well, with many opportunities for speaking in groups and whole class sessions as well as daily role-play activities that the children enjoy very much. Reading skills are taught well, with children being encouraged to use the pictures to 'tell' the story as well as being taught to recognise simple common words and build up new words using the sounds. Writing skills are promoted exceptionally well. A good start is made to learning how to form letters and space them correctly. Very good links are made between reading and writing skills, with children being encouraged to write new words through using the sounds they have learnt. As a result, most children are attempting to write two or more sentences on their own. In this area of learning, all children except those with special educational needs have already exceeded the expected standards for their age.

Mathematical development

- 73 Number work is promoted especially well and children have already achieved the standards expected for their age. Nearly all children recognise numbers to ten and know that zero is 0. Most can say what one more or less than a number is and the higher attainers can combine two groups and say that 2+3 is 5. Less emphasis has been given to recording number bonds. A minority of children reverse their numbers when writing them, but they still recognise the numbers that represent a specific quantity. In other aspects of mathematical development children are likely to achieve the expected standards by the time they enter Year 1. Most recognise common shapes and can say whether an object is larger, smaller, heavier or lighter than another.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

- 74 No specific lessons were observed in this area of learning during the inspection, so evidence is taken from the teacher's records and children's work. Children are gaining a secure understanding of the world around them, especially of their local area. They know about buildings in their own and nearby villages, and the history of the local church and manor. Children recognise different fruits and vegetables, and make fruit salad. They know how babies change and grow, and identify some changes in their own lives. They are beginning to learn the importance of safety, especially when travelling, and enjoyed listening to the school's crossing patrol warden when she spoke about her work.

Physical development

- 75 Good arrangements are in place for reception children to have daily activities in this area of learning. In addition they join in physical education lessons with pupils in Years 1 and 2. During these sessions the classroom assistant makes sure that their needs are met. Most children move confidently and with co-ordination and control. Good attention to health and safety in the physical education lessons means that children are learning the importance of keeping healthy. In design and technology, and in art, children are using tools such as scissors with increasing competency. In this area of learning the majority of children are likely to achieve the expected standards for their age.

Creative development

- 76 Overall standards in this area are in line with those of most children of this age. The majority of children have a sound imagination, which they use in role-play and in stories. They enjoy acting out 'Bob the Builder' stories and can describe their favourite book.

Children's painting and drawing skills are in line with expectations. They correctly draw the shapes of different fruit and can mix some colours. They complete simple collages with tissue paper, and paintings of people such as Bob the Builder. Standards in music are above those expected for this age. This is the result of good teaching in lessons, which children share with pupils in Years 1 and 2. Children enjoy singing simple action songs, which they do tunefully, some singing one line as a solo. They know the names of some percussion instruments and play them correctly, keeping time with a conductor.

ENGLISH

- 77 After the last inspection the school changed significantly with the numbers on roll falling by around a third, so it is very difficult to compare the school's current standards with those from the previous inspection. Although, since the last inspection the school's results in the Year 2 tests have been below the national average, in the past 18 months standards have begun to improve. The attainment of the current Year 2 pupils is below average, partly because a high proportion of these pupils have poor linguistic skills and their prior attainment on entry to the school was below that expected for their age. Forty per cent of the Year 2 pupils are on the school's register for special educational needs. This is well above the national average. The achievement of these pupils is satisfactory. Year 4 pupils' attainment in speaking and listening and in reading is in line with that expected nationally, although writing remains below. The lower standard seen in writing is because, in previous years, teachers did not set challenging enough work for the average and more able pupils. As a result, these pupils did not make enough progress to reach the standards of which they were capable. Following the recent changes in staffing and management it is apparent that teachers are committed to raising standards and improving the quality of learning for all pupils. In the last year the school has put in place a number of initiatives to improve attainment in English. Although these strategies have not yet had time to impact on standards, some work showed improvement. For example, pupils now use a wider vocabulary and their spelling is better. In addition, pupils are writing for a wider range of purposes and audience.
- 78 Attainment in speaking and listening at the end of Year 2 is below average although pupils achieve satisfactorily in this aspect. Standards vary according to the prior attainment of pupils on entry to the school. When the current Year 2 pupils entered the reception class, their language skills were below those expected for their age. In Year 4, standards are in line with those expected nationally. Most Year 2 pupils listen attentively to the teacher and to each other, but many have difficulty in speaking with clear articulation and in contributing to or leading class discussions. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 are encouraged to give explanations in lessons and listen well to the teacher and to each other. In discussion many were able to demonstrate an increasingly expressive and expansive vocabulary, although there are currently insufficient opportunities for them to take part in educational drama or engage in regular debates or formal discussions. The school is well aware of the need to improve achievement in this aspect of English and a new programme to develop speaking and listening skills will be in place for the next academic year.
- 79 Pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well in reading due to good current teaching and many are reaching standards above those expected for their age. However, overall standards in reading by the end of Year 2 are below average. This apparent lack of progress is mainly due to the very large number of pupils with special educational needs in Year 2. Following the considerable staff changes, reading is now better taught throughout the school. This, together with the resources for teaching and learning in literacy and those in the school library, is helping to raise standards, especially in Years 3 and 4. Older pupils read with increasing fluency and expression, and show clear understanding of punctuation. They are able to explain how the contents and index in a book are essential

for finding information. Attainment in reading is in line with what is expected for this age group, and pupils achieve satisfactorily. They read a suitable range of books with increasing skill and understanding, and some pupils talk about their favourite authors, showing that they both value and enjoy reading. Pupils use a dictionary and locate information for research topics. Activities in which the teacher or a classroom assistant works with a small group to teach them specific reading skills take place in each class and books are well organised according to reading levels.

- 80 Although there has been some improvement in spelling and punctuation, by the end of Year 2 standards in writing remain below average. Teachers are making improvement in writing a priority for all age groups, although the finished product is often marred by poor presentational skills, especially in Year 2. Handwriting is well taught to pupils in the Year 1 class, who produce well formed, joined letters, but the written work of the older pupils is often poor, with a mix of capital and lower-case letters. Joined-up writing is mixed with print in much of the work seen and staff do not place enough emphasis on promoting clear, legible and joined writing. There has been some improvement in the content of the work that is produced by older pupils, although the lack of progress in writing over time has been due to the overuse of worksheets which fail to give pupils enough opportunity to express themselves or write in a descriptive and creative format. There have been recent improvements in target setting using the 'First of the month book', which is an effective assessment tool to monitor pupils' writing. In these books there is a good range of writing for different purposes, with lists, accounts of events, instructions, letters and work in the form of a simple play. There has also been an improvement in pupils' drafting skills. For example, in Year 2 the pupils have produced a class book on authors in which they have written about themselves as writers and illustrated their work. In Year 4 the research that pupils have undertaken on the sea horse is clearly and concisely written. The topic also included a very effective seashell poem that demonstrated lively descriptions, with vocabulary that was varied and interesting.
- 81 The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall and some good lessons with pupils in the combined reception and Year 1 class were seen. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. In the good lessons, very good planning and preparation meant that the pupils were well organised and very clear about the task they had to complete. The teacher had high, but appropriate expectations for all children, and the classroom assistant supported pupils effectively. Where lessons were satisfactory, pupils were expected to sit on the carpet for far too long, which resulted in pupils with learning difficulties losing concentration. There was also limited time for higher-attaining pupils to engage in the writing activity, which limited their achievement. In Years 3 and 4 the use of the interactive whiteboard is very successful in holding pupils' attention and helps them to improve their writing. For example, pupils worked well on finding more interesting descriptive words that they could write above the simple version and compare the effectiveness. Overall, the use made of classroom assistants to support pupils with difficulties in learning is not sufficiently effective to maximise their progress. The use of target setting has recently been introduced and teachers are beginning to share targets for improvement with pupils. This is often incorporated with developmental and supportive marking, and enables pupils to learn what they need to do to improve. Teachers use homework well to support pupils' learning in class, and parents are very good at helping their children to complete it.
- 82 Partly due to unsatisfactory leadership and management in the past, co-ordination of the subject is unsatisfactory. The current co-ordinator is the recently appointed headteacher, who has a very large number of responsibilities. Other areas, of necessity, have had to be given priority. Nevertheless, she is fully aware of the need to raise attainment in English and has rightly identified writing as a priority for development, implementing strategies to help address the weaknesses. Initiatives for monitoring have been put in

place, but systems to check on the quality of teaching and learning have not yet had time to affect standards. The tracking of pupils' progress across the school is in place and the regular target setting, which is shared by all pupils and teachers, is starting to provide a positive focus for pupils to improve their written work.

MATHEMATICS

- 83 At the time of the last inspection standards were reported to be in line with national expectations in both Years 2 and 4. However, the results in the national tests taken in that academic year by the Year 2 pupils show that the school's performance was below average. This makes it very difficult to compare standards with those at the time of the last inspection.
- 84 However, due to the effective introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy and good teaching, standards have improved, with Key Stage 1 pupils achieving above average results in the tests last year. Standards in Year 2 are not so high this year because 40 per cent of the group have special educational needs. Despite this, standards are still in line with national expectations, and this group of pupils are achieving well. For Year 4 pupils, standards are also in line with national expectations. That they are not better than this is due to unsatisfactory achievement in previous years. When this group of pupils took the national tests at the end of Year 2 the school's results were well below the national average and no pupils attained the higher Level 3. In the past year much better progress has been made, with pupils achieving well. Currently the higher-attaining pupils are reaching standards above the national expectation. Overall, standards are now in line with what is expected of pupils of this age. Across the school, standards are better in number work because of the good focus on this aspect. Standards are not so high in using and applying mathematical skills, mainly because the majority of problem-solving tasks are completed on work sheets, limiting pupils' choice of methods and approach.
- 85 Year 2 pupils can sequence numbers up to 100 and have a secure understanding of the place value of tens and units, using this knowledge in their calculations. The average and higher-attaining pupils recognise that multiplication is also multiple addition and that division is the opposite operation. For example, in a lesson observed, pupils recognised that 5×4 is the same as $5 + 5 + 5 + 5$ and that there are four fives in 20. Their knowledge of halves is good and they can count in halves to 20. Pupils can estimate whether their answer is correct and use the symbols for more or less than a number. They recognise right angles and understand that an angle is a turning measure. Most pupils accurately tell the time in hours and $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{1}{2}$ and $\frac{3}{4}$ intervals. Good use is made of computer skills for data handling. Pupils accurately collect data in tally charts, feed this into the computer and then present their findings as pictograms, bar charts and pie charts. The higher-attaining pupils are working at a level higher than expectations. These pupils have a good knowledge of place value up to thousands and clearly recall the multiplication number bonds of 2, 3, 4, 5 and 10. They are gaining a good understanding of three-dimensional shapes and can draw a net for making a cuboid.
- 86 Year 4 pupils have a secure knowledge of hundreds, tens and units, the majority confidently adding and subtracting, converting tens into units when necessary. They multiply and divide tens and units by single-digit numbers and recognise place value up to thousands. Most pupils have a good understanding of fractions, recognising that two fifths is the same as four tenths. They are competently adding fractions and converting them to decimals. The majority of pupils can place negative numbers in the correct order and plot two-figure grid references. They have a sound understanding of measures, recognising the value of an eighth of a circle as 45 degrees. Pupils know basic standard measures and most can calculate the perimeter and area of squares and rectangles. In data handling, pupils can interpret block graphs. The higher-attaining pupils are very

confident in working with four-figure numbers and are very accurate in making scaled drawings, including drawing and measuring angles. Most pupils are competent at solving mathematical problems, but not enough opportunities are given, especially to the higher-attaining pupils, for them to choose the best method to reach a solution.

- 87 Across the school teaching is good. There is a good awareness of the different year groups in each class, with the mental starter sessions being well organised to make sure pupils of different ages and ability are fully involved. Good strategies are used to help the speedy recall of number facts. For example, in Year 2 lessons pupils are regularly challenged to improve on their previous time for completion of a number game. Activities such as this motivate them so that they enjoy their learning, behave well, concentrate and work hard. Good attention is given to providing pupils of different ability with activities well matched to their prior attainment when working individually or in groups. This was especially well done in the class for the younger pupils where the class teacher supervised Year 1 pupils in different ability groups whilst the very effective classroom assistant worked with reception children. In this class, pupils remained on task throughout the lesson and good learning took place. Teachers explain things clearly and demonstrate well. For example, in the Year 3/4 class the teacher very effectively illustrated the importance of place value to pupils with special educational needs so that they quickly recognised that 54 is not $5+4$, but $50+4$. These strengths in the teaching, seen in all classes, help pupils to have a good understanding of what they are learning.
- 88 The curriculum has been well planned around the National Numeracy Strategy. Good attention has been paid to the needs of pupils in different year groups in each class and the best use is made of this organisation so that pupils are grouped according to ability rather than age. This meets the needs of all pupils particularly well. Curriculum planning is very effective in helping pupils to build on and extend their skills and knowledge, and this is one reason why they are now making good progress. Good assessment procedures have been put in place over the last year which are also having a positive impact on progress.
- 89 Subject leadership and management by both the previous and current co-ordinators have been good and are a major reason for the improvements seen over the past year. Former weaknesses in the curriculum, and in teaching and learning, were accurately identified and effectively addressed. Resources are good and are effectively used to help pupils' learning. Computer skills are beginning to be used well in some activities.

SCIENCE

- 90 Standards in science are average at the end of Year 2 and in line with national expectations at the end of Year 4. It is very difficult to make comparisons from year to year due to the small number of pupils in each year group. It is also difficult to compare the standards and achievement of pupils currently in the school with those seen at the time of the last inspection, due to the considerable changes in the nature of the school during this time. Inspection evidence shows that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, are achieving satisfactorily, especially when performing scientific experiments. However, recording of their work is sometimes unsatisfactory. In part this is due to pupils' below-average writing skills, but also to the three different age groups that are taught in one class, including a number of pupils with special educational needs.
- 91 By the end of Year 2, pupils have developed a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of how to carry out investigations. For example, they investigate what happens to certain solids and liquids when they are exposed to different conditions, changing chocolate from solid to liquid and making butter from cream. Pupils compare the movement of different objects and can explain their understanding of forces as they design a game of blow

football. Throughout Years 1 and 2, pupils are developing a good understanding of the importance of healthy eating and, through good links with design and technology, have designed and made a fresh fruit salad. They have a secure understanding of an electrical circuit and can draw a diagram of one correctly. Very good use is made of outside visits to enhance pupils' scientific knowledge and understanding. They have visited a dairy and milking parlour, and found out about the different kinds of food that cows need in order to produce milk.

- 92 Year 4 pupils have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of how to make predictions and investigate what will happen in a given situation. For example, they have experimented with magnets and made predictions and tested materials to see which objects are magnetic and have learnt that magnets can attract and repel. Pupils have predicted the effects of stretching springs by different amounts and explained the conclusion in terms of the size of the force. In both these topics pupils achieve satisfactorily and have produced an attractive booklet of their findings. Currently they are learning about the importance of diet and different foods that support growth and those that give energy. They have studied the importance of keeping warm and have recorded their findings and drawn graphs, for example demonstrating how they measure temperature. However, recording of their work is less strong. Educational visits support learning well. For example, the pupils have visited a farm to see how sheep are reared and how ploughing is undertaken.
- 93 The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teachers have appropriate expectations of what the pupils can achieve and use the correct scientific vocabulary. They provide good opportunities for pupils to undertake experiments and use effective questioning that builds on their previous learning. This also helps the pupils to think about what they are going to do. These features, together with good attitudes to learning, interest pupils in science and they clearly enjoy the subject. They work together co-operatively and share resources well. This helps them to make progress in their investigation skills. In some lessons, introductions go on rather long, with pupils spending too much time on the carpet. However, despite some fidgeting, the majority of the pupils listen attentively and contribute well to the discussion. This ensures that they are making sound progress in developing their skills and knowledge in the subject. Overall, teachers manage and support pupils well, but there are times when the best use is not made of the classroom assistants and they fail to intervene when pupils with difficulties in learning are not concentrating on their work. Homework is used well to support the subject, and all pupils, with the support of their parents, are committed to completing homework.
- 94 Currently leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory. This is partly because the subject is not a current priority. In addition, the co-ordinator has only been in post for a very short time and has a number of other responsibilities. There are systems in place for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning, and some work in this aspect has been carried out by the headteacher, supported by the local education authority. However, limited opportunities for monitoring have meant that some weaknesses in the curriculum, teaching and learning have not been identified or addressed. Assessment takes place and, in Year 3 and 4, pupils are regularly assessed on their knowledge and understanding of the topic they have just completed. However, tracking and monitoring of pupils' attainment and achievement as they move through the school are in the early stage of development. Marking of pupils' work is thorough and comprehensive, and provides opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding further. Resources in science are good, but currently not enough use is made of information and communication technology to support the older pupils' learning.

ART AND DESIGN

- 95 Only one lesson was seen during the inspection. Other evidence is taken from looking at teachers' planning and pupils' work, including that on display.
- 96 The overall standard of work attained by pupils in Years 2 and 4 is in line with national expectations. This is not as good as at the last inspection, when standards were judged to be above expectations. However, in both inspections only limited evidence was available and some aspects of the work seen this time are also of a good standard. In addition, across the school, pupils' achievement is satisfactory, as it was at the time of the last inspection. This suggests that the quality of the school's provision has been maintained.
- 97 Pupils in Year 2 are working competently with different techniques and materials, such as using pencil to make observational drawing of historical artefacts, making pastel rubbings of wood sculptures and drawing portraits of their classmates. Pupils also work in three-dimensional media, using clay to make mini-beasts, and make embroidered pictures of a house. All these were of the expected standard. Sunset paintings using colourwash and tissue collage, and a collage landscape, which pupils worked on under the supervision of a parent who is an artist, are of a standard above that expected for their age.
- 98 Older pupils use their sketchbooks effectively to try out different techniques. Some Year 4 pastel work on landscapes in the impressionist style is above the expected standard, as is observational drawing of a shoe from different angles. Most other work is in line with expectations. This includes patterns drawn with pastels, and poster designs to promote caring for the environment.
- 99 Evidence from pupils' completed work shows that teachers are satisfactorily helping pupils to develop a range of skills and techniques. However, as only one lesson was observed, it is not possible to make an overall judgement about teaching and learning. In the lesson seen, an artist who is a governor was instructing the Year 2 pupils on how to draw portraits. This was a good session, with effective advice given on how to achieve the correct proportions and shapes in the portrait. Pupils worked enthusiastically, with the higher-attaining pupils producing some work of an above average standard.
- 100 The curriculum is satisfactory. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to work with local artists and to take part in art activities on visits such as that to a church in the next village. On these occasions, pupils often complete work of a standard above expectations. There is a sufficient variety and quantity of resources to support pupils' learning in all areas of the art and design curriculum. The current subject co-ordinator has a considerable number of other responsibilities and this has prevented her from spending sufficient time on managing and supervising the subject. However, assessment of individual pupils' attainment and progress is satisfactory and this does give some information on the effectiveness of the school's provision.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

- 101 Standards in design and technology are in line with national expectations at the end of Year 2, but are below in Year 4. Although standards are very different from those seen at the time of the previous inspection, there have been considerable changes in the nature of the school. The main reason for the lower standards is unsatisfactory curriculum provision in the past, which meant that the older pupils did not learn some of the skills and techniques identified in the National Curriculum Programmes of Study. Although this has now been rectified by staff currently in the school, these improvements have not had sufficient time to affect the standards of the older pupils.

- 102 In all classes, teachers ensure that pupils have a good understanding of the link between planning and making. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, satisfactorily develop their design skills and produce clear drawings of what they intend to make. For example, in Years 1 and 2, pupils considered their favourite playground equipment and why it is their favourite. They talked with confidence about the construction of different items and were aware of the need for strength and safety. They designed their ideal playground, with the higher-attaining pupils listing the materials they will require. As part of a topic linked to science pupils made simple circuits, by using a battery to light up a bulb. There are good opportunities for pupils to use construction materials and make wind-up cars. They then competed to see whose car goes the furthest. Following the visit to a dairy farm pupils made custard with milk and designed and made their own lunch boxes.
- 103 In Year 4, past weaknesses have resulted in pupils having only limited experience of design and technology. They have looked at cardboard packaging and learnt how materials and components have been used. They have taken a box apart and examined the different parts. Pupils discussed how the boxes were made and this helped them to become aware of the purposes of packaging. Following this they produced ideas for making a packet for a healthy snack bar. Pupils planned their design, deciding on the name of their bar and what other information would appear on the package. They evaluated their design and suggested ways of improving their ideas. These pupils also made electrical circuits in their work in science and related these to their design tasks. However, apart from working with paper, there are few opportunities for older pupils to work with a wide enough range of tools, equipment and materials.
- 104 The quality of the teaching is now satisfactory overall, with good teaching seen in Years 1 and 2. Teachers have good subject knowledge and effectively question pupils, drawing on their previous knowledge. They plan and prepare work well matched to each of the groups based on age and prior attainment. For example, in the Year 1 and 2 class, when they discussed different kinds of puppets, the sensitive management of the pupils enabled even the youngest to answer with confidence. The good organisation and effective management of pupils ensure that they are able to work independently in other areas of the classroom and continue to concentrate on the task. Pupils behave well and share resources readily. Older pupils often help younger ones in a sensitive and considerate way. In the Year 1 and 2 class the teacher's very good use of her voice held the pupils' attention, and the classroom assistant helped pupils with difficulties to learn effectively. At the end of the lesson the teacher drew the class together and they listened well to each other as they described their 'junk' model. When making pizzas, the teacher worked effectively with the mixed age group. Through high but appropriate expectations she helped the older higher-attaining pupils to label their designs accurately before making the pizzas. All pupils were encouraged to think about how the materials change with heating and they are all aware of how important hygiene is when cooking. This is one example where good links are made between design and technology and science. However, very little use is made of information and communication technology to support learning in the subject.
- 105 Current planning shows that the National Curriculum requirements for design and technology will be covered, but weaknesses in the past have meant that older pupils have a very limited knowledge and understanding of the subject. Assessment procedures are in place, but due to the considerable changes in subject management, the co-ordinator has not yet had the opportunity to effectively monitor the quality of teaching and learning. This is having a negative impact on pupils' achievement in the subject, especially in Years 3 and 4.

GEOGRAPHY

- 106 Overall standards in geography at the end of Years 2 and 4 are in line with national expectations, as was the case at the time of the last inspection. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve satisfactorily.
- 107 The curriculum for geography is enhanced by a good range of educational experiences, which include residential field trips and other visits that enable pupils to develop first-hand knowledge of their local environment. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 have looked at a map of the village of Steepleton and they talked knowledgeably about the different kind of buildings they saw on their visit. They compared the different uses of the church and the residential home and know how the design and objects within buildings have a connection with how they are used. However, Year 2 pupils have very little knowledge of places beyond their locality or how people affect their environment.
- 108 Year 4 pupils understand the meaning of 'environment' and have listed the various environmental problems in and around the school. They are aware that noise is a form of pollution. As part of their project on the disposal of waste throughout history pupils have investigated how it has been carried out over the centuries and visited the recycling facilities within the village. They know that rubbish can be reduced, reused or recycled, and have been to a puppet theatre which had as its theme 'Electricity – Waste not, Want not'. Pupils have made effective use of Ordnance Survey maps to check and extend their existing knowledge of the local area, and have compared a woodland site with a landfill site. They are less secure in using information and communication technology to support their learning in geography.
- 109 During the inspection it was not possible to observe any lessons in the subject. A scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning, and discussion with staff and pupils indicate that teaching and learning are satisfactory. Marking of pupils' work is good, with teachers using informative and developmental comments to support learning. However, currently there is no assessment of pupils' geographical skills, knowledge or understanding and this limits the effectiveness of planning for future progress.
- 110 Leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory. This is mainly because the subject was given little attention in the past. In addition, the current co-ordinator has only recently been appointed and has a number of other significant roles that currently take priority. The school is aware of the importance of introducing systems for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning, although at present this does not occur. This means that some gaps in the curriculum, and strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning, have not been identified.

HISTORY

- 111 Only one lesson was seen during the inspection, in the older pupils' class. Other evidence is taken from scrutinising teachers' planning and pupils' work, and talking with pupils.
- 112 The overall standard of work attained by pupils in Years 2 and 4 is in line with national expectations, and their achievement is satisfactory. This maintains the standards seen at the time of the last inspection.
- 113 As part of their study of dairy farming, Year 2 pupils drew a 1920s milk cart and compared the distribution of milk in the last century with that today. This helps them to recognise how things change as the result of inventions such as mechanisation. They know some features of a medieval castle and some facts about important people in the past such as Guy Fawkes and Florence Nightingale.

- 114 Year 4 pupils can compare the different life styles in Celtic and Roman Britain and know how Henry VIII's marriages affected political events. They are gaining a sense of chronology by completing timelines of the different eras they study. They know that artefacts inform us about what life was like in the past. For example, through clues from archaeological digs they know that the Indus Valley was a fertile area over 2000 years ago.
- 115 There is not enough evidence to make an overall judgement about teaching, but pupils are acquiring a satisfactory range of skills and knowledge in the subject. In the one lesson observed, for pupils in Years 3 and 4, the teacher's enthusiasm ensured that they were interested and gaining a good understanding of the Indus Valley civilisation.
- 116 The curriculum is satisfactorily planned and enriched by a number of visits to local historic sites. Good attention is paid to studying the history of the local area, such as the Celtic civilisation at Maiden Castle and the Roman Invasion of Britain. In the older pupils' class good use is made of researching the Internet to investigate different historical topics. In the lesson observed, the teacher made very good use of the interactive whiteboard to help pupils recognise the importance of the Middle Eastern trade routes in the past. The school's own resources are enhanced by the study of various artefacts on different visits in the local area. Satisfactory procedures are in place to monitor pupils' progress. Currently, more important priorities have limited the effectiveness of subject management which is unsatisfactory at present.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

- 117 By the end of Year 2, standards in information and communication technology are in line with national expectations, as they were at the time of the last inspection. Pupils achieve satisfactorily using a wide range of programs to support their learning. There are some good examples of pupils using the computer in science and mathematics. For example, in Year 1, pupils have used a simulation program to compare how the computer will allow them to do things that they cannot do in real life when they try to hide a teddy. They describe objects in literacy lessons, type into the computer the description, make a label and attach it to the object. Year 2 pupils have prepared a database on both favourite foods and eye colour, found and stored information and presented their findings in both charts and bar graphs.
- 118 In Year 4, standards are well below those expected for this age. Although attainment was in line with national expectations at the time of the last inspection, weaknesses in the provision since then prevented some aspects of the National Curriculum Programmes of Study being taught. In the last 18 months there have been considerable changes in the school and a very wide range of new computer equipment has been recently put in place for these pupils, but this has not yet had time to affect standards. Pupils have used word-processing programs to make an attractive poster. They created short pieces of text, which they illustrated with a graphics program using a range of fonts and colour. They can control a programmable toy to draw angles and straight lines. In their topic on recycling in geography pupils have accessed the Internet and used a simple program to help them sort different kinds of rubbish, but few are able to explain what a database is for or store and retrieve information effectively.
- 119 Direct teaching was not observed during the inspection so it is not possible to make an overall judgement about the quality of teaching and learning. Insufficient use is made of information and communication technology, particularly in Years 3 and 4, to support pupils' learning in some subjects. This is partly because of heating problems in the area used for the computers, although these have now been resolved. As a result, computers

are under-used in lessons such as mathematics and science. However, the use of the interactive whiteboard as a teaching tool in Years 3 and 4 is very effective in supporting pupils' learning in a range of subjects across the curriculum.

- 120 Resources for information and communication technology are now very good, with a ratio of one computer to every six pupils. The interactive whiteboard is used effectively and pupils are very interested in further developing their knowledge, understanding and skills. The co-ordinator has a very large number of other responsibilities and has only recently undertaken this role. She is enthusiastic and keen to improve standards, although currently she has little opportunity for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in the subject. The school is extremely fortunate to have the services of a part-time technician employed by the Dorchester Area Schools Partnership, which effectively supports the school, servicing the hardware and providing training and advice for teachers in the use of software. This ensures that pupils have good access to the computers. The school has a detailed and comprehensive development plan for the subject and, despite the low standards, has made considerable improvements over the last year. The school is well placed to build on this improvement.

MUSIC

- 121 It is difficult to make an overall judgement about standards as only two lessons were observed, limiting the aspects of the subject seen. When performing with percussion instruments and in unaccompanied singing, pupils in Year 2 achieve appropriately and reach standards in line with national expectations. When listening to and appraising music, and in singing, pupils in Year 4 achieve well and exceed the expected standard. This is an improvement on the standards seen at the time of the last inspection. The improved standards are due to the good teaching and satisfactory leadership and management of the subject carried out by the music teacher.
- 122 Year 2 pupils know how a range of different percussion instruments should be played. Most can keep time with the pulse and respond well to the conductor. They performed well as part of a group, responding accurately to the pupils who acted as the conductor. Most pupils sing tunefully and are confident singing solo in a call-and-response song. Year 4 pupils can identify some of the instruments in band and orchestral music. They are very perceptive when analysing the mood of different pieces of music. For example, when describing 'Mars' from 'The Planets', one pupil described feeling 'Like I'm in a Star Wars game'. Pupils sang tunefully and enthusiastically in a two-part round.
- 123 Good arrangements have been made for both classes to be taught by the same teacher. As a result, teaching and learning are good. The lessons are well planned and very well organised, with no time being wasted. Lessons proceed at a good pace and the teacher's enthusiasm and clear explanations mean that pupils enjoy their learning, work hard and make good progress. Pupils' behaviour in these lessons is very good; for example, all pupils in the youngest class handled the percussion instruments very carefully and held them without making any noise when instructed to do so by the teacher.
- 124 The curriculum is well planned and enriched by opportunities to learn an instrument such as the recorder, violin and piano from visiting peripatetic teachers or in lunchtime clubs. The school makes sure that pupils have good opportunities for performing in public, for example in church services and in the local schools music festival. Good knowledge of individual pupils means that their attainment and progress are satisfactorily monitored. The teacher is also co-ordinator for the subject, and monitoring of the provision is satisfactory.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- 125 One lesson in each class was observed during the inspection. The overall standard of work in the aspects seen attained by pupils in Years 2 and 4 is in line with national expectations. Across the school, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. This maintains the standards seen at the time of the last inspection.
- 126 Year 2 pupils' gymnastic skills are in line with expectations. They can move in different directions and show sound co-ordination when bunny-hopping on the floor or over a bench. Year 4 pupils have a good knowledge of different warm-up exercises. Most Year 4 pupils have the expected throwing and jumping skills for their age.
- 127 Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Lessons are well planned with good attention to pupils' health and safety, both in ensuring that they work safely on apparatus and in providing effective warm-up and cool-down sessions. Pupils are well organised and managed, and consequently they behave well and work hard. Clear instructions are given and some pupils are used to demonstrate good practice and help others to improve.
- 128 The curriculum gives pupils a satisfactory variety of opportunities to develop their skills across the full range of physical activities identified in the National Curriculum. All pupils attend swimming lessons and older pupils have the opportunity to attend a lunch-time football club, taken by a qualified coach. This has given pupils the skills to take part confidently in football matches with other schools. Resources are good and well maintained. There are good hard-surfaced areas and a school field, as well as a good-sized hall with gymnastic apparatus. Pupils' achievements are satisfactorily monitored, but currently leadership and monitoring of the subject are unsatisfactory, partly due to the fact that the co-ordinator is responsible for a number of subjects, some of which have needed a greater focus.