

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **MERE FIRST SCHOOL**

Mere

LEA area: Wiltshire

Unique reference number: 126263

Headteacher: Catriona Williamson

Reporting inspector: Peter Lewis  
21351

Dates of inspection: 23 – 26 September 2002

Inspection number: 248751

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

|                              |                       |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Type of school:              | First school          |
| School category:             | Community             |
| Age range of pupils:         | 4 - 9 years           |
| Gender of pupils:            | Mixed                 |
| School address:              | Springfield Road      |
| Postcode:                    | Mere<br>BA12 6EW      |
| Telephone number:            | 01747 860515          |
| Fax number:                  | 01747 860515          |
| Appropriate authority:       | The governing body    |
| Name of chair of governors:  | Mrs Rachel Porter     |
| Date of previous inspection: | 15 - 16 November 2000 |

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Team members |                   |                      | Subject responsibilities  | Aspect responsibilities   |
|--------------|-------------------|----------------------|---|---|
| 21351        | Peter Lewis       | Registered inspector | English<br>Science<br>Information and communication technology<br>Physical education<br>Religious education | What sort of school is it?<br>What should the school do to improve further?<br>How well are pupils taught?<br>How well is the school led and managed?<br>How high are standards?<br>a) the school's results and pupils' achievements<br>Equal opportunities |
| 9837         | Roy Walsh         | Lay inspector        |   | How high are standards?<br>b) pupils' attitudes, values and personal development<br>How well does the school care for its pupils?<br>How well does the school work in partnership with the parents?   |
| 26519        | Margaret Hatfield | Team inspector       | Foundation Stage<br>Mathematics<br>Art and design<br>Design and technology<br>Geography<br>History<br>Music | How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?<br>Special educational needs   |

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Mere First School serves the growing village of Mere in Wiltshire. There are 90 pupils on roll, most of whom live locally in an area which has a mix of owner-occupied and rented accommodation. An increasing proportion of this is controlled through housing associations. National and local education authority data show that the area contains a high proportion of social and economic deprivation. Most children have attainment that is well below expectations in all areas of learning when they join the school. There are currently 17 pupils who are eligible for free school meals, which is relatively high in comparison with schools nationally. There are 16 pupils identified as having special educational needs, including one with a statement of special educational need. Although no pupils have English as an additional language, there are a small number who are from ethnic minority backgrounds.

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

Mere First school is a very good and continually improving school. It is committed to the intellectual, social, emotional and spiritual development of its pupils. The headteacher has a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and her very good leadership has established a clear commitment to improvement within the school that is focused upon teaching and learning, both of which are good, and frequently very good, across the school.

The headteacher, supported by senior staff and governors, is successful in driving the school forward. The school development plan contains a well evaluated set of priorities for improvement, which have had a positive effect. Teaching overall is very good and pupils achieve well in English, mathematics, and science. As a result of these features, the school offers very good value for money.

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

- Taking account of their attainment on entry all pupils achieve well, and many achieve very well by the time they are aged nine.
- The headteacher's skilled and perceptive leadership has established a very effective management team that has had a significant impact upon teaching, learning, and the standards achieved.
- Teaching is good throughout the school and, particularly in reception and at Key Stage 1, is frequently very good or excellent.
- The school works very well to include all its pupils and, as a result, very good provision is made for those who are gifted and talented and for those with special educational needs.
- Pupils' attitudes, behaviour, and personal development are all very good.
- Governors are well aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and support the school very well.

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

- Opportunities for pupils to extend their good skills in writing to support learning in other subjects across the curriculum are limited.

*This area for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.*

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in November 2000 and has made considerable improvement since then. The areas identified for improvement in the last inspection report have all been well addressed through commitment from staff within the school, and with a good level of support from the local education authority. The school has developed subject leaders' skills in monitoring and evaluating standards in their subjects well. The needs of higher-attaining pupils have been well met through the school's involvement with improving opportunities planned for gifted and talented pupils. This has been further enhanced by the effectiveness of the school's monitoring of curriculum planning, and of the quality of teaching and learning, which ensure the effectiveness of future planning and development. The success of this initiative is clearly demonstrated in the significantly increased proportions of pupils attaining the higher Level 3 in tests and assessments in reading, writing, mathematics and science in the national tests in 2001 and in 2002. The school has ensured that problem solving in mathematics and pupils' skills of experimenting in science are further developed through appropriate training, as well as through its very effective strategies of continued monitoring. The school readily accepts that, while appropriate improvements have been made in the standard of pupils' spelling, and their skills and broader opportunities in information and communication technology, more remains to be done. Plans are in place which have the potential to address these issues fully. The commitment of the whole staff, who work together very well as a team, indicates that the school has a very good capacity to improve further.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by seven year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

| Performance in: | Compared with |      |      |                 |
|-----------------|---------------|------|------|-----------------|
|                 | all schools   |      |      | similar schools |
|                 | 1999          | 2000 | 2001 | 2001            |
| Reading         | E             | C    | B    | A               |
| Writing         | E             | C    | A    | A*              |
| Mathematics     | E             | C    | A    | A               |

| Key                |    |
|--------------------|----|
| Very high          | A* |
| Well above average | A  |
| Above average      | B  |
| Average            | C  |
| Below average      | D  |
| Well below average | E  |
| Very low           | E* |

The table shows that standards in the national tests in English and mathematics have been rising consistently, from a low point in 1999 to the point where pupils achieved above average in reading and well above average in writing and mathematics when compared with all schools. This improvement was even greater in comparison with similar schools. Here, standards were well above average in reading and mathematics, and very high in writing. Standards in science were well above the national average, and very high for the proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 3.

In all other subjects of the curriculum except music and physical education, where standards are above expectations, standards are in line with those expected of seven-year olds, and pupils meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. The school is well on target to meet the standards it is setting itself. This picture is reflected in the standards attained by pupils by the time they are aged nine, in Year 4.



Pupils with special educational needs achieve well and make good progress as a result of the good teaching and support that they receive from teachers and support assistants.

### **PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES**

| <b>Aspect</b>                          | <b>Comment</b>   |
|--|--|
| Attitudes to the school                | Very good. Pupils enjoy coming to school, and are confident and happy there. They are enthusiastic learners.   |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms    | Very good. Pupils concentrate well in their lessons, sharing ideas and equipment unselfishly.  |
| Personal development and relationships | Very good. The school is a harmonious and caring community in which all are valued and included. Relationships are excellent and benefit from the very positive role models set by teaching and support staff. |
| Attendance                             | Satisfactory. However, despite the school's best efforts, too large a proportion of pupils are taken out of school for term-time holidays.   |

### **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

| <b>Teaching of pupils in:</b> | <b>Reception</b> | <b>Years 1 – 2</b> | <b>Years 3 – 4</b> |
|-------------------------------|------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Quality of teaching           | Very good        | Very good          | Good               |

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

The quality of teaching is very good overall. Good teaching has a positive impact on the improving standards achieved and on pupils' attitudes to their learning. In 90 per cent of lessons, teaching was good, including an unusually high 55 per cent that was very good or excellent. A very small proportion of teaching that was unsatisfactory was seen during the inspection.

Strengths of the very good and excellent teaching include high expectations of what pupils can achieve which are linked to detailed planning which meets all of their individual learning needs. Teachers' planning for and use of learning-support assistants are generally well considered and make a positive contribution to pupils' learning, especially those with special educational needs. Successful management of pupils is a strong feature of teaching, which contributes well to pupils' positive attitudes to learning.

The teaching of the key skills literacy and numeracy is very good. Teachers have a clear understanding of the National Literacy and National Numeracy Strategies which are implemented well. Expectations are high, with the result that many pupils achieve very well.

The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good. Teachers work well and in close partnership with support staff to help pupils in their learning.

The teaching of children in the reception class is a strength of the school. The secure knowledge that staff have of the ways in which young children learn enables them to plan a broad range of valuable experiences that strongly promote learning. This foundation gives young children a flying start in the National Curriculum at Key Stage 1.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect  | Comment  |
|---|--|
| The quality and range of the curriculum   | Good. Throughout the school the curriculum is well planned and includes a wide range of activities to motivate and engage all pupils fully.  |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs   | Very good. The needs of these pupils are provided for very well and, as a result, they make very good progress in their learning.  |
| Provision for pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | Very good. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, and social development is very good, and that for cultural development is good, allowing pupils to celebrate the wide diversity of cultural backgrounds in the wider community. |
| How well the school cares for its pupils  | Very good. This is a very caring school that, through formal and informal means, knows its pupils well and enables them to develop maturity and responsibility.  |

Overall, the school's partnership with parents is good and, as a result of the clear focus on this aspect of its work, is a area that is developing rapidly.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect   | Comment  |
|--|--|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | Very good. The headteacher's clear vision of the ways in which the school needs to improve and of the ways in which this is to be achieved is exceptionally well supported by the deputy and other key staff. This has resulted in the development of a strong and successful team who are fully committed to providing the best for their pupils. |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities             | Very good. The governing body is very well led by a committed and very supportive chair of governors. Members of the governing body have a clear awareness of the school's strengths and the areas in which it should improve, and organise their work well to achieve a precise view of the effectiveness of developments.                        |
| The school's evaluation of its performance                       | Very good. The school goes to considerable lengths to evaluate its effectiveness and, in doing this, fully involves a wide range of stakeholders in its work. This understanding of what works and what needs to be improved is very well used to inform future planning.  |
| The strategic use of resources                                   | Very good. All resources, including personnel, are deployed well to benefit pupils' learning. Funds are targeted carefully at areas of identified need, and their impact monitored well. The school applies the principles of best value well.   |

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

| What pleases parents most   | What parents would like to see improved  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Children like school.</li><li>• The progress made.</li><li>• Standards of behaviour.</li><li>• The quality of teaching.</li><li>• The school's expectations.</li><li>• The way the school is led.</li><li>• The support the school gives to pupils.</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A small number of parents felt that the provision of extra-curricular activities and of homework should be extended.</li></ul> |

Inspection evidence supports all the positive views expressed about the school. The inspection team also found that the provision of after-school clubs and out-of-school visits was greater than those usually found in a school of this type and size. Homework was also judged to be in line with the school's policy and consistent across the year groups.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Although children's attainment on entry to school covers a broad spectrum, predominantly it is well below expectations in all the areas of learning. They make very good progress as a result of overall very good teaching in the reception class and, by the end of the Foundation Stage most are on course to attain the Early Learning Goals recommended for children of this age in the areas of learning: communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, and creative and physical development. Excellent teaching in personal, social and emotional development means that most are likely to exceed the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage. A significant number of children have speech and hearing problems, affecting not only language development but also general development in other areas of learning.

#### *Key Stage 1 (Years 1 and 2)*

2. The results of the 2001 National Curriculum assessments for pupils in Year 2 were above the national average in reading, and well above average in writing and mathematics. In comparison with similar schools, results were well above average in reading and mathematics, and very high in writing. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 3 is around the average in reading, very high in writing and in the teacher assessments for science, and well above average in writing. These results show a considerable rise from tests and assessments undertaken in the previous year (2000), and maintain the upward trend that was present at that time.
3. There are a number of factors that contribute to these high standards:
  - The emphasis placed by the school on target setting in English and mathematics;
  - The accuracy of the school's assessments, leading to the planning of accurately targeted work;
  - The focus upon pupils with special educational needs and on those with higher attainment;
  - The consistently high quality of teaching in reception and at Key Stage 1 which promotes rapid learning.
4. The trend in the school's results over the last five years is above that seen nationally, although the relatively small size of the Year 2 groups each year makes annual comparisons difficult. An analysis of the school's own assessment data confirms the improvements that have been made by evaluating the progress made by individual pupils as they move through the school. At Key Stage 1, standards in reading and writing dipped in the year 1999, following a similar fall in mathematics from 1997. In all three areas, standards are now above those seen nationally, reflecting the emphasis that the school has placed upon improvement in these subjects. The school has a skilled and stable staffing team and, more importantly, a management structure that is effective in raising standards of teaching and learning.
5. Inspection findings show that standards are continuing to improve, and are above average in English, mathematics and science. This improvement in standards is largely the result of consistently good teaching, particularly in literacy and numeracy. The school is aware that still

more can be done, particularly in spelling, and is putting appropriate programmes in place designed to raise attainment further.

6. In literacy, pupils use their knowledge of letter sounds well and read with expression. They discuss with knowledge and understanding, characters and events in the books they have read. They make use of a growing range of vocabulary in writing for a variety of purposes although their writing in other subjects is frequently less creative and can, for example, indicate a tendency to choose simpler words of whose spelling they are more certain. In numeracy, pupils use mathematical vocabulary accurately in, for example, estimating the mass of different objects. With some help they accurately name common two-dimensional shapes and are confident in their use of number. In their work in science pupils describe the characteristics of different electrical circuits and compare natural and man-made materials accurately.
7. Standards in information and communication technology meet national expectations. This is also the case in art, design and technology, geography and history, and standards meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus in religious education. Standards in music and physical education are above those expected.

#### *Key Stage 2 (Years 3 and 4)*

8. By the age of nine, when pupils leave the school, the standards of many pupils in English, mathematics, and science are above those expected of pupils of this age. Older pupils take notes accurately and use story planners effectively to help with their creative writing. They use appropriate sentence structures and punctuate their work accurately. In mathematics, pupils show an appropriate understanding of numbers. Most use proper and improper fractions accurately, name common two and three-dimensional shapes, and handle data using charts and graphs. Pupils' work in science shows that they have an appropriate understanding of the human body and of the ways in which materials are classified. Higher-attaining pupils accurately describe the differences between different types of circuit.
9. In information and communications technology, standards meet expectations for pupils of this age, and this is also the case in art, design and technology, geography and history. In religious education, standards meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. As at Key Stage 1, standards in music and physical education are above those expected of pupils of this age.
10. The achievement of pupils identified by the school as having some form of special educational needs is very good in relation to their prior attainment. They are supported very well by the teaching staff, the co-ordinator for special educational needs and the teaching assistant responsible for supporting special educational needs. This very focused and well-planned support enables them to make very good progress towards the learning targets on their individual education plans which identify small, specific, structured steps in learning.
11. The school has set challenging but achievable targets to raise standards. Success in reaching these targets is closely monitored, and very good use is made of the information in modifying provision where appropriate. Inspection evidence indicates that the school has both the quality of teaching and the quality of leadership and management to enable it to continue to secure improvement.

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

12. Since the last inspection, pupils' attitudes have improved and are now very good. Pupils are keen to come to school and are very well motivated in lessons. They respond well to challenge and are attentive and concentrate very well in lessons, which contributes positively to their progress and achievement. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, are enthusiastic about their learning and eager to discuss their work. Pupils working in pairs or groups share equipment and information unselfishly and safely. All the parents who returned the pre-inspection questionnaire agreed with inspection findings that their children enjoy being at school.
13. Although the majority of children enter the reception class showing considerable immaturity in their personal, social and emotional development, the high expectations and role models provided by staff ensure that they behave very well and most begin to show an understanding of the difference between right and wrong. They are enthusiastic about learning, enjoy school and begin to play and work well together. They behave very well, and show positive attitudes towards the activities in which they are involved.
14. Standards of behaviour are very good throughout the school and have a beneficial effect on pupils' learning. Each class negotiates its own rules at the beginning of the year. These are then signed up to and displayed in the classroom. Pupils understand what is expected of them and the great majority follows the school rules, which they themselves have helped to create. Lunchtime supervisors expect and receive the same good behaviour as teaching staff. The practice of providing the best-behaved lunch table with a special Friday treat, of a tablecloth and After-Eight Mints ensures good behaviour from most of the pupils while eating their lunch. Lunchtimes are calm and relaxed with plenty of opportunity given to develop social skills. The playground is used for energetic play and any aggressive behaviour dealt with swiftly and effectively. Behaviour and relationships, including consideration and respect for others, are discussed as part of the social education programme. Pupils display real pride in their school, for example, in leaving their classrooms and cloakrooms tidy at the end of the school day. At present there are no exclusions in force.
15. Pupils' personal development is very good. They work well together in lessons and have developed very good relationships with their teachers. This was evident in a Year 1 English lesson when pupils were asked to retell a story in the first person and their confidence was increased by the rapport developed with them by the teacher. Pupils are given class duties and many assist with distribution of chairs at assemblies and lunchtimes. Some older pupils are responsible for the games equipment used at playtimes. The school is planning to increase pupil involvement with the introduction of a school council and pupils are enthusiastic about the prospect of contributing further to school activities.
16. Relationships are very good and staff are good role models, treating pupils with respect and courtesy; pupils respond well to this and like their teachers and support staff. Relationships with peer groups are friendly and positive and boys and girls get on well together. Good levels of co-operation were observed with pupils sharing toys and play equipment amicably.
17. Attendance rates at present are slightly below national averages for schools of the same type and size. The major causes of present absence rates are pupils being taken out of school for late summer holidays. School documentation places considerable emphasis on the responsibility of parents in this respect and the importance that consistent attendance has on their children's learning. The registration process is effective, with pupils settling to work

quickly. Any lateness is treated seriously so that disruption of lessons is kept to a minimum and this has a positive effect on pupils' attainment.

## HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

18. The quality of teaching throughout the school is very good overall. From reception to Year 4, 90 per cent of lessons are good or better, including an unusually high 55 per cent which are very good or excellent. There is a very small proportion of unsatisfactory teaching. This shows a considerable improvement on the quality of teaching seen in the last inspection, and is having a very positive impact upon the standards achieved by pupils and the rate at which they learn.
19. The quality of teaching in the reception year is very good and varies between excellent and good. Excellent teaching is observed in the key area of personal, social and emotional development. Staff have a very secure understanding of how young children learn and the importance of play and first-hand experiences. These features, and the exceptional relationships between children and adults, have an outstanding effect on the behaviour and attitudes of the children. Staff work very well together and very effective teamwork is evident, promoting equal opportunity. The school is aware of the need to build further on children's learning in small, structured steps to enable them to maintain their very good progress towards achieving the Early Learning Goals.
20. The quality of teaching in literacy is very good overall. Teachers make consistent use of the framework of the National Literacy Strategy for their lessons and have made appropriate modifications to the strategy in the past in, for example, dedicating time to the teaching of extended writing. In the many lessons where teaching is very good or excellent, there is a brisk pace at the beginning of the lesson, lesson objectives are shared with pupils so they know what the purpose of the lesson is, and clear instructions leave pupils in no doubt about the expectations in the lesson. In these lessons, pupils become fully aware of the knowledge and skills they have gained since the beginning of the lesson, and this is supported through good discussion and questioning that probes pupils' understanding fully. Teachers work very well with support assistants, who are well prepared and make a valuable contribution to pupils' very good progress. Literacy is used effectively to support learning in other subjects but there are limited opportunities for pupils to practise the skills that they have learned by writing that is extended and which represents a variety of forms across the curriculum.
21. Teaching in mathematics is very good overall. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed during the inspection and, in reception and at Key Stage 1, teaching is consistently good and occasionally excellent. The best lessons have a clear purpose and run at a good pace, capturing and holding pupils' attention. Most teachers have a good knowledge of mathematics which they use well to teach the National Numeracy Strategy. Their planning is generally good. There is evidence of some variation between the key stages in the levels of challenge offered to pupils and the school recognises the need for teachers to share good practice and, where appropriate, is providing good levels of support.
22. Teachers meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs very well and, as a result, enable very good progress to be made in relation to pupils' previous attainment. Teachers work in close partnership with the co-ordinator for special educational needs and the special educational needs teaching assistant, providing very good help within and outside the classroom. Very detailed individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs are drawn up by class teachers and supported very well by the co-ordinator for special

educational needs. Learning targets identify small, specific, structured steps in learning, enabling very good progress to be made and the needs of these pupils to be fully met. The contribution classroom assistants make to the progress of special educational need children is good. They know them well, are well informed about the purpose of lessons and foster the trust that provides good conditions for learning.

23. In the best lessons, teachers show good subject knowledge which they pass on to their pupils with skill and enthusiasm. In a science lesson with younger pupils, for example, the teacher had the confidence to capitalise on a question asked by a pupil about the function of circuits by enabling the pupil to explore more complex circuitry. Other pupils were very interested in this and were more painstaking in their own work as a result. Lesson instructions are clear and, in the best examples, set very high expectations of what will be achieved, clearly communicated so that pupils and teacher share the target for the lesson. Lesson plans generally include the needs of all pupils, and the use of learning-support assistants.
24. In the small number of lessons where teaching is satisfactory and has some weaknesses, the pace of learning slows down after its brisk beginning. This was also a feature in the only lesson that was less than satisfactory, in which the teacher made learning unnecessarily difficult by moving on to a new element before pupils had the opportunity to fully understand or complete the previous step. These elements mean that planning for the full range of attainment is not always put into practice in lessons. The school has already identified this issue and is introducing a good range of support that has the potential to ensure improvement.
25. Target setting has been effectively introduced in English and mathematics, is applied consistently, and monitored very well by class teachers, co-ordinators, and the headteacher. Similarly, the quality of teachers' marking is high in that, throughout the school, it clearly identifies success and the ways in which pupils should improve. The school has a good range of assessment procedures which are consistently applied within lessons, and is developing these further to include more elements of pupils' self-assessment. As a result, teachers know their pupils well, and planning fully takes into account individual learning needs.

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

26. Curricular provision for children in the reception year and for pupils at Key Stages 1 and 2 has improved since the last inspection and is now good. It meets statutory requirements for the National Curriculum and for the locally agreed syllabus for religious education and provides equal opportunities for all pupils. The interesting range of work observed throughout the school effectively demonstrates the breadth of curriculum opportunities the staff and governors are committed to providing for pupils.
27. The curriculum for reception children is broad and balanced, covers all the recommended areas of learning and links smoothly with the Key Stage 1 National Curriculum. Learning through purposeful practical experiences is successfully promoted and makes a significant contribution to the children's very good progress. There is a good balance of individual choice and guided activities, leading to greater independence. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Individual and group targets are set to help raise attainment in literacy and mathematics. The school is aware of the need to further develop in its planning, assessment and recording of children's attainment and progress the small, structured steps in learning that help them to achieve the national Early Learning Goals. Staff offer useful pre-school home visits. Excellent liaison between the reception class and the local playgroup ensures a smooth entry into school



for most children. Foundation Stage staff work closely together and very good team work is evident. They prepare the children exceptionally well for the National Curriculum.

28. The previous report highlighted the need to provide more challenge for able pupils and to improve spelling, problem-solving skills in mathematics, investigational skills in science and skills in information and communication technology. Good progress has been made overall in addressing these areas and effective improvements have been made. The higher-attaining pupils are now better challenged. Pupils' skills in solving mathematical problems, in science investigations and in spelling are now good overall. The school has made satisfactory progress in its provision for information and communication technology, and further developments are planned now that the school has access to appropriate funding to improve its internet access.
29. The quality of curriculum planning is good. Effective use is made of national planning guidance to supplement the school's own programmes of work and provide helpful guidelines for staff in planning. Comprehensive detailed long, medium and short-term plans clearly reflect the agreed programmes of work and relate effectively to the curriculum the school has planned. Long-term planning includes topic plans in a two-year cycle for Years 3 and 4, effectively addressing the needs of the pupils in the Key Stage 2 mixed age class. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy have been implemented successfully. Daily well-organised literacy and numeracy sessions which follow national frameworks, take place in each class. Pupils' literacy skills are used in other subjects, such as the written recording of geography work, but there are limited opportunities for pupils to write in an extended way, or to practise the skills they have learned in literacy through their writing in other subjects. Numeracy skills are enhanced, for instance, in using history 'time lines'.
30. To help to raise standards, targets are set in English and mathematics, involving both pupils and parents. Pupils are involved in assessing their own work and targets with their teachers. Pupils' own assessment of their work for example, at the end of numeracy lessons, is very effective. This is a very good way of helping them to understand what they are doing, how well they have done and how they can improve their work. The school provides much valuable additional support to improve standards and to help pupils catch up, by organising many support groups. These include groups for early literacy, additional literacy, 'Grammar for Writing' and extra mathematics. Very good extra support is provided to stretch the more able, and the gifted and talented pupils, through focused school, cluster and county support. The school maintains a register identifying these pupils. These arrangements have a very positive effect on the progress made by the relevant pupils. The school actively encourages and helps parents to become more involved as partners in their children's education through the very effective organisation of the 'Family Numeracy Project', the 'Share Project' for homework guidance, curriculum evenings for parents and sending curriculum information home.
31. Provision for pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements of special education, is very good and a strength of the school, an improvement since the last inspection. The requirements of the new Code of Practice are fully met. Pupils' high-quality individual education plans have very detailed learning targets made up of small, specific, structured steps in learning in English, mathematics, personal development and behaviour. These are shared with pupils and parents, who are fully involved. Pupils' individual education plans are thoroughly reviewed, at least half-termly. Their attainment and progress towards meeting their targets are checked and recorded weekly or fortnightly. This enables these pupils to make very good progress, and their needs to be fully met. Pupils benefit from the focused support provided by the very good special educational needs team comprising the special educational needs co-ordinator and assistant. There is also a very positive contribution from class teachers, other

teaching assistants, and the county Learning Support Services. Pupils with special educational needs have full access to the curriculum, and work at the level specified in the targets on their individual education plans. Special educational needs 'surgeries', organised every term, provide very effective support for parents and pupils. Provision for traveller children is good. The school and the Traveller Support Service work well together to overcome any difficulties caused by poor attendance. Good links with the community have been maintained since the previous inspection. The school places great emphasis on being a learning community. A priority for development is for the school to be part of the wider community. Links with the church are strong. Pupils attend and participate in celebrations, for example, at Christmas and Easter, and for special events such as the Queen's Silver Jubilee. The church is also used effectively for work in religious education. Pupils benefit from visitors, such as the local clergy, policeman and the road safety team and they sing carols at a local senior citizens' residential home. Visitors from distant places, for example from Nigeria, raise pupils' awareness of the wider community. There are excellent links with the local playgroup, which most children attend before starting school.

32. The school has very effective links with its partner middle school, and with local cluster schools, an improvement since the last inspection. For example, liaison for special educational needs and curricular links is developing positively and transition arrangements are smooth. Very positive links are maintained with local schools through local cluster meetings. For instance, the more able and the gifted and talented pupils benefit from very focused learning support organised by the cluster. Effective pre-school home visits by reception staff and excellent links with the local playgroup organisation facilitate a smooth introduction to school. Staff liaise very closely and the playgroup children visit twice weekly to use the very good outside secure play area. The school has very effective relationships with Salisbury College through the organisation of the 'Family Numeracy Project'. Links with the University of Bath and Winchester Training College are very positive and school welcomes students for teacher training. Strong links with outside agencies such as the educational psychologist and the county Learning Support Services, strengthen pupils' very positive attitudes towards school. Very good relationships with parents and the active 'Friends Association' support school very effectively.
33. The school provides a wealth of extra-curricular activities. These include a very good range of after-school clubs, such as sporting, musical and pottery clubs, organised by staff. They are very well attended by many pupils and very effectively support the curriculum. Pupils enjoy a variety of activities such as pottery, country dancing, computers, recorder playing and tennis. Very good use is made of a wide range of visits, for example, a pilgrimage to Salisbury Cathedral, and residential visits to Braeside for older pupils. Pupils benefit from visitors, such as musicians, theatre companies and the 'Life Education Centre'. They enjoy events, including annual problem-solving days and sports days with local cluster schools, book weeks and school performances. This very good provision enriches the curriculum and extends and greatly enhances the quality of pupils' education.
34. Good provision is made for pupils' personal, social and health education. A helpful policy and a well-planned programme of work ensure that these aspects are addressed well. Effective provision is made for awareness of drugs misuse and sex education, through science lessons and the personal, social and health education programme. Drugs misuse is also effectively addressed through the visit of the 'Life Education' bus. Opportunities for pupils to take part in many visits and events, together with good community links, effectively support their personal development and their understanding of citizenship. The school has achieved the 'Healthy Schools Award'. Pupils become aware of healthy lifestyles; for example, in a good Year 2 lesson about 'What healthy people do and do not do'.

35. The overall provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and has improved since the last inspection. It is a significant strength of the school. A very positive development has been the school's procedures for self-evaluation, which include a questionnaire for pupils. This is an excellent opportunity to encourage pupils to be involved in monitoring the school's provision.
36. Provision for spiritual development is very good. The school's positive spiritual ethos pervades every aspect of its life. Parents are happy with the values and attitudes the school promotes. Pupils are given very good opportunities to appreciate the wonders of nature. For example, in a Key Stage 1 assembly on 'The Environment' they expressed wonder and delight on being shown a 'Red Riding Hood' basket of wild fruits. Collective worship meets statutory requirements. A very well-planned programme provides effective opportunities for pupils to reflect on their own and others' lives, as seen in an assembly about 'The Good Samaritan'. Very good opportunities for reflection are also given in 'circle time' and lessons; for example, in revision time at the end of lessons. Teachers value the ideas of pupils, including those with special educational needs. For instance, in a Year 2 numeracy lesson, the teacher demonstrated great respect for pupils' ideas when they were working on shapes, encouraging them to further question and reflect on their learning. Pupils are given insight into different values, feelings and qualities in assemblies and lessons. For example, an assembly, taken by the local vicar, about a 'Giant's Garden' emphasised 'caring and sharing' in a way to which pupils could easily relate. Learning about Judaism in religious education helps pupils to understand and respect others' beliefs. Lessons in personal, social and health education provide very effective planned opportunities for pupils to express their feelings. This was observed in a good Key Stage 2 lesson, about feeling happy or sad. Foundation Stage children receive very good opportunities for reflection in lessons and in 'circle time'.
37. Very good provision is made for moral development. The school's very positive approach to managing good behaviour ensures that all staff have a consistent attitude towards, and high expectations of, pupils' involvement in lessons and their behaviour. As a result, pupils clearly understand the difference between right and wrong, and behave very well. Pupils' involvement in creating and displaying the 'Golden Rules' contributes very well to this. The school's positive approach to inclusion enables a very quick response to any inappropriate behaviour. The school has developed very effective strategies, such as awarding certificates and stickers to reward good behaviour and using praise in a constructive way. These very effectively motivate pupils, contributing very well to very good behaviour and attitudes. A specific annual audit of pupils' attitudes undertaken by the headteacher reveals that pupils are positive and eager to learn. This also reflects inspection findings. The school promotes the values of courtesy, morality, consideration, respect, generosity, forgiveness and fairness. Most parents are happy with the school's management and standards of behaviour. Many activities and stories teach reception children to show respect for others and to know the difference between right and wrong.
38. Provision for social development is very good. Adults provide very good role models, show respect for pupils and foster their self-esteem. This contributes well to the excellent relationships within the school. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to think of others through fundraising for charities, such as Dr Barnardo's. Community awareness is effectively promoted through positive links with the police, the church and senior citizens. Very good extra-curricular activities, opportunities to collaborate in group work, and out-of-school visits, residential visits and school productions also promote awareness. Positive strategies to develop responsibility include being monitors, older pupils helping younger ones at lunchtime, preparing chairs for lunch, organising playtime equipment and putting it away, and taking responsibility for computers and music in assemblies. A particularly effective strategy is 'The

Happy Lunchtime' programme. This results in pupils behaving exceptionally well, so that they may enjoy the privileges of eating at a 'special' table, with tablecloth, condiment set, and mint chocolates, afterwards. The school is currently making very constructive plans to form a 'School Council' which will provide opportunities to give pupils a 'voice' in making relevant school decisions and to further develop social skills.

39. Provision for cultural development is good. Pupils' appreciation of their own culture is developed effectively through literature, history, geography, religious education, drama, music, art, assemblies and very good provision of extra-curricular activities. It is enhanced through visitors, such as theatre groups and musicians, through visits, for example; to the pantomime, and events; for instance, 'Book Week', 'Book Club' and concerts. Multicultural education has improved and is now good. Visitors add effectively to pupils' multicultural awareness. Planned curricular opportunities contribute to pupils' understanding of other cultures. These include learning about others' beliefs in religious education, studying ancient Rome in history, and in geography, life in Chembakholi, an Indian village playing instruments of other cultures and listening to Fijian and African music. Reception children become aware of other cultures through stories, for example, 'Handa's Surprise', and through using various tropical fruit in food activities. The school has identified this aspect as an area for further development in its action plan for race equality and aims to further 'develop pupils' appreciation of the diversity and richness of other cultures'.

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

40. Staff know reception year children very well and respond effectively to their needs. All Foundation Stage staff play an active part in checking the children's attainment and progress. Informal assessments undertaken when children start school are used to plan suitable programmes of work. Individual and group targets are set to help raise attainment in literacy and mathematics. Procedures to assess and record children's attainment and progress, based on the recommended Early Learning Goals for children of this age are developing very positively. The Foundation Stage co-ordinator has been awaiting the arrival of suitable materials to make worthwhile recording of attainment and progress in terms of the small structured steps in learning, leading to the Early Learning Goals, and to further develop the use of these in all the areas of learning, to further improve this aspect of provision.
41. For pupils at Key Stages 1 and 2 assessment and recording procedures are very good in English, mathematics, science and, to a lesser extent, information and communication technology. In these subjects, the information gathered is used very well to guide the planning of future work. For example, an audit of mathematics provision revealed that work in problem solving needed further development. This resulted in whole-school planning of the mathematics curriculum being very effectively adapted to meet the needs of all pupils in this aspect of the subject. Teachers' marking is generally helpful and shows pupils how they can improve their work. Pupils' 'Progression Books' and 'Homework Books' contribute to assessing their literacy and numeracy skills and effectively help to check pupils' progress in these subjects. There are no formal, agreed assessment or record-keeping procedures for other subjects, but the school's practice of regularly evaluating pupils' work helps teachers in identifying areas of comparative strength and weakness, and to adapt planning accordingly.
42. Pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2, with their teachers, set their own individual targets for literacy and numeracy which are shared with parents. This is a very positive development contributing effectively to improving standards. Pupils assess their own work very effectively, using a 'traffic light' system very confidently. This is a very good way of helping them to understand what they

are doing, how well they have done and how they can improve their work. The school does a lot to enhance pupils' learning and to raise standards, by organising additional literacy and numeracy support groups for pupils. It also helps parents to become more involved as partners in their children's education through organising the 'Family Numeracy Project' and the 'Share Project' for homework guidance. Staff regularly assess samples of pupils' work to establish the consistency of teachers' judgements on different levels of attainment. The school is developing portfolios of pupils' assessed work to support teachers' assessments.

43. The school analyses assessment data for English, mathematics and science very thoroughly. This helps to identify strengths and areas for development, so that it can take action to improve the achievement of all groups of pupils. This information is used very effectively to set targets for the end of key stage assessments.
44. Overall, the procedures for monitoring and recording pupils' personal development are satisfactory. They are very good for pupils with special educational needs. Individual education plans for these pupils are reviewed at least half-termly. They are very effectively shared with parents and pupils. Pupils' progress is tracked and monitored and their achievements in their targets carefully recorded in detail, so that assessment is used very well to guide the planning of new work. The school has strong links with external agencies, for example, the educational psychologist and the County Learning Support team. Pupils' annual reports are satisfactory and provide information on what pupils know, understand and can do. The use of home link books as a means of two-way communication between home and the school are good examples of how the school provides for and monitors pupils' development.
45. Policies and procedures for promoting health and safety are good, including teachers promoting healthy and safe practices in the classroom. Procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare are also good. The school ensures that support and non-teaching staff have regular and formal updates on the school's policies for behaviour and child protection. Liaison with the education welfare service and with a variety of other outside agencies further underpins the effective care of pupils.
46. Procedures for recording and monitoring attendance and punctuality are good.

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

47. Admission to the reception class is smooth and very effective. Pre-school meetings are organised to help new parents to become involved in their children's education and booklets about 'Starting school' provide very helpful information on how parents and carers can support their children. Relationships between staff and parents in the Foundation Stage are very positive as a result of the encouragement given by staff to help parents to be closely involved as partners in the education of their children. A number of well-briefed parents are committed to supporting the reception class as helpers. Their involvement provides positive support to the progress made by their children.
48. Parents fully support the schools aims and ambitions for their children, which is demonstrated by the fact that they all sign home school agreements when their children start at the school. Attendance at the parents' consultation evenings and the governors annual general meeting is high. Several parents offer their time for school activities such as hearing readers, supervising out-of-school visits and running a book club, and a second hand uniform shop. These activities reinforce parents' understanding of the work of the school, and make a positive contribution to pupils' attainment and progress. Each class also has a parent representative, (Class Mum) who

liaises between the parents and the class teacher. This initiative is now in its second year of operation and is proving to be a useful communication channel between the class teacher and parents. The school has successfully completed a family numeracy project with reception parents and is intending to run a literacy project over the coming year with the aim of encouraging more parents to become involved in their children's education. The share project in operation in Class 2, provides parents with help and guidance with meaningful educational activities to be undertaken at home. This is not only proving to be successful with pupils learning, but also a number of parents are using it to gain National Vocational Qualifications. Homework books contain the school's homework policy and termly targets for literacy and numeracy, which are updated on a regular basis. The impact that parents are having on the life of the school and on the standards that are attained has improved significantly over the past few years.

49. The quality of information provided by the school for parents is very good. The school brochure and governors' annual report to parents are well written and have an informative style. They also contain a number of attractive illustrations which provide an insight into school life. A topic sheet sent to parents makes them aware of subjects to be taught over the coming term. The school has developed an informative and up-to-date web site, which is sponsored by a commercial company. The annual pupils' progress reports are comprehensive and give parents a clear picture of their child's achievements as well as providing targets for future improvements. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are fully involved in discussions about their children's progress and the implementation of their individual education plans, and are also invited to special educational needs surgeries held each term.
50. The school has a strong "Friends of Mere First School Association" which organises successful fund-raising activities including the recent school fete and barbecue. Funds raised have recently allowed the school to purchase a new public-address system. The association is now planning a jumble sale to raise funds to help pay for a school trip to a christmas pantomime. These activities help to fund materials and activities, all of which contribute to providing a simulating learning environment for the pupils.
51. Answers to the pre-inspection questionnaire unanimously supported the school in all but two areas, namely the provision of extra-curricular activities and the amount of homework. Inspection evidence confirmed all the positive views expressed about the school. The inspection team also found that the provision of after-school clubs and out-of-school visits was greater than usually found in a school of this type and size. Homework was also judged to be in line with the school's policy and consistent across the year groups.

#### **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

52. The headteacher, very well supported by the deputy, provides very strong leadership and gives the school clear direction. The school is successful in its vision of providing a supportive environment in which staff, pupils and parents foster and develop an enthusiasm for learning within a supportive environment. The school strives for continuous improvement in pupils' academic and personal development. These aims and values are well reflected in its work and plans for future development. The headteacher is clearly dedicated to the welfare of pupils and the development of staff. Parents enthusiastically acknowledge her contribution to the welfare and development of their children.
53. The headteacher, governors and staff have, overall, made a considerable improvement since the last inspection. They have effectively addressed the recommendations in the report and are

well aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses. A key strength is the quality of the school's evaluation of the full range of its work which is very successful in ensuring that future developments are specifically linked to the needs of the pupils. The role of subject coordinators has been improved so that they have a clear view of standards in their subjects and of strategies by which these might be improved which are used well to inform the school development plan. Teaching and learning are monitored in all subjects through a regular programme and governors are kept well informed through the system of subject governors. Pupils' problem-solving skills in mathematics and science have improved as a result of the closely focused emphasis placed upon this area within the timetable as well as the careful selection of appropriate training for staff. This has been excellently supported by the work the school has undertaken in providing for the needs of more-able pupils. Standards in spelling and information and communication technology have improved and have the potential to develop further as a result of the continued emphasis placed upon spelling throughout the school, and the planned acquisition of an extended range of software to support pupils' development in using information and communication technology across the curriculum. There is a very good sense of teamwork within the school, which includes pupils, members of the governing body and, increasingly, parents. This has assisted the school in improving standards, as well as in raising its profile within its community to a very positive level. This feature is also one that has helped the school to manage very well the uncertainties caused by discussions into the feasibility of a change to the status of the school from middle to primary.

54. The co-ordination of special educational needs is very good. The deputy headteacher is the co-ordinator for special educational needs, and has a very clear overview of all aspects of provision for this area across the school. She works very closely with the well-qualified and experienced teaching assistant for special educational needs and very good teamwork is evident. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported by teachers and by well-qualified and experienced teaching assistants who are very effectively deployed. They also receive effective support from the county Learning Support Service. The governor designated for special educational needs liaises closely with the co-ordinator and is involved in all aspects of this area. Special educational needs provision is given a high priority on the school development plan. All grants are properly allocated and carefully overseen by the governors. Resources and accommodation for special educational needs are very good.
55. The governing body has developed its role well to play a very good part in the school's development. Governors are well informed about the school's strengths and weaknesses through both formal and informal means. Information about standards is very well supported by the school's high-quality assessment procedures, and by the very good quality of its monitoring of the full range of its provision. Considerable emphasis has been placed upon seeking the views of parents and, increasingly, of pupils. All of these features assist the school in developing a very clear overview of the effectiveness of its work and the areas that require improvement. The chair of governors maintains a close link with the school while, in a very successful collaboration with the headteacher and staff, ensuring that governors have access to a wide range of information which ensures that their meetings have a clear agenda and have a positive impact on the strategic decisions that are taken.
56. Levels of staffing are good. The school has suitably qualified and experienced staff, who give very effective learning support to all pupils, including those with special educational needs. Teachers and teaching assistants are effectively deployed and work well together as a team. Staff development is given a high priority. Key learning issues dealt with on external training courses are shared with other members of staff which allows the school to maximise its expenditure, for both the benefit of pupil learning and the development of staff expertise.

57. The school's accommodation is good overall. Classrooms are large, bright and airy and the whole school is enhanced by colourful, effective displays of pupils' work. The library is small but well equipped. The small carpeted school hall is used for indoor physical education as well as for music lessons and assemblies, with good use being made of the adjoining middle school's hall for some physical education lessons. The site manager and cleaning staff work hard to maintain high standards and the school is kept clean and tidy. The large outside play area with seating, shaded areas and ponds provides an attractive environment not only for play but also for outdoor lessons in science and art. The outdoor facilities also include a well-planned and secure area for the use of children in the Foundation Stage, with a large-scale play house and wooden train. In addition, there is a garden area and sandpit, the whole area providing an enjoyable and stimulating learning environment.
58. Well-devised procedures are in place to ensure that the principles of best value and sound financial management are met; for example, because of the uneven distribution of class numbers the school made the important and appropriate decision to use expenditure to provide extra staff, allowing a separate class for Years 3 and 4, which is has the potential to have a positive effect on future standards for all pupils. Even though this has created a temporary deficit in funding, a recovery plan is being implemented to bring the budget back into balance. Governors receive regular reports and monitor expenditure against spending targets, which are detailed and prioritised in the school's development plan. Daily spending is managed effectively and good use is made of computer technology. The school's efficient administrative officer is a good ambassador for the school, and plays an effective role in the school's management team.

#### **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

59. In order to continue to raise standards, the governing body, headteacher and staff should:
- (1) Expand the range of opportunities that are planned for pupils to extend their writing by:
    - planning specific writing activities, representing a range of writing styles, to support learning objectives in other subjects across the curriculum;
    - applying the targets that are set in literacy to pupils' writing in other subjects, and assessing their learning against these as well the requirements for the subject.

(Paragraphs 6, 20, 29, 75, 89, 104, 108)



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Number of lessons observed   | 29 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils | 19 |

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

|            | Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|------------|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| Number     | 4         | 12        | 10   | 2            | 1              | 0    | 0         |
| Percentage | 14        | 42        | 34   | 7            | 3              | 0    | 0         |

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

### Information about the school's pupils

| Pupils on the school's roll   | Nursery | YR – Y4 |
|---|---------|---------|
| Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)      | n/a     | 90      |
| Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals | n/a     | 17      |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

| Special educational needs   | Nursery | YR – Y4 |
|---|---------|---------|
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs       | n/a     | 1       |
| Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register | n/a     | 16      |

| 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 | 15           |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving           | 2            |

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

|                           | %   |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data               | 5.9 |
| National comparative data | 5.6 |

#### Unauthorised absence

|                           | %   |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data               | 0   |
| National comparative data | 0.5 |

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

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

|  | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year | 2001 | 9    | 4     | 13    |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results       |          | Reading | Writing | Mathematics |
|---|----------|---------|---------|-------------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above   | Boys     | 9       | 9       | 9           |
|   | Girls    | 3       | 3       | 3           |
|   | Total    | 12      | 12      | 12          |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School   | 92 (79) | 92 (75) | 92 (96)     |
|   | National | 84 (83) | 86 (84) | 91 (90)     |

| Teachers' Assessments                       |          | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above   | Boys     | 9       | 9           | 9       |
|   | Girls    | 3       | 3           | 3       |
|   | Total    | 12      | 12          | 12      |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School   | 92 (83) | 92 (100)    | 92 (79) |
|   | National | 85 (84) | 89 (88)     | 89 (88) |

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

**Ethnic background of pupils****Exclusions in the last school year**

| <b>Categories used in the Annual School Census</b>  | <b>No of pupils on roll</b> | <b>Number of fixed period exclusions</b> | <b>Number of permanent exclusions</b> |
|---|-----------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| White – British                                     | 60                          | 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                     | 0                           | 0  | 0                                     |
| Mixed – White and Asian                             | 0                           | 0  | 0                                     |
| Mixed – any other mixed background                  | 0                           | 0  | 0                                     |
| Asian or Asian British - Indian                     | 0                           | 0  | 0                                     |
| Asian or Asian British - Pakistani                  | 0                           | 0  | 0                                     |
| Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi                | 0                           | 0  | 0                                     |
| Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background | 0                           | 0  | 0                                     |
| Black or Black British – Caribbean                  | 3                           | 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) | 4.1 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher   | 22  |
| Average class size                       | 30  |

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

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Total number of education support staff | 4  |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week   | 76 |

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

|  |             |
|--|-------------|
| Financial year                             | 2001 – 2002 |
|  | £           |
| Total income                               | 264,818     |
| Total expenditure                          | 269,389     |
| Expenditure per pupil                      | 3,410       |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 25,425      |
| Balance carried forward to next year       | 20,854      |

### **Recruitment of teachers**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years   | 0 |
| Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years   | 0 |
| 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 18.6%

|                                   |    |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 86 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 16 |

### Percentage of responses in each category

|  | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school.   | 44             | 56            | 0                | 0                 | 0          |
| My child is making good progress in school.  | 38             | 63            | 0                | 0                 | 0          |
| Behaviour in the school is good.   | 38             | 63            | 0                | 0                 | 0          |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.                              | 25             | 44            | 25               | 6                 | 0          |
| The teaching is good.  | 50             | 50            | 0                | 0                 | 0          |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.                          | 50             | 50            | 0                | 0                 | 0          |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 56             | 44            | 0                | 0                 | 0          |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.              | 50             | 50            | 0                | 0                 | 0          |
| The school works closely with parents.   | 56             | 44            | 0                | 0                 | 0          |
| The school is well led and managed.  | 63             | 38            | 0                | 0                 | 0          |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.                      | 44             | 56            | 0                | 0                 | 0          |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.            | 25             | 50            | 19               | 0                 | 6          |

## **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**

60. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage has improved since the previous inspection and is now good. The quality of teaching is very good and as a result children's achievement is very good.
61. Twenty-two reception children currently attend school, fourteen on a full-time basis and eight part-time. Reception children are well supported by teaching assistants. Staff work very well together and very good teamwork is evident.
62. Children's attainment on entry to school is very wide-ranging, covering both ends of the spectrum, but predominantly it is well below expectations in all the areas of learning. This is confirmed by initial assessments conducted when children start school. They make very good progress as a result of generally very good teaching in the reception class. By the end of the Foundation Stage most children are on course to attain most of the Early Learning Goals recommended for their age, in the areas of learning of communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, and creative and physical development. In personal, social and emotional development their progress is outstanding and they are likely to exceed the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage, as a result of the excellent teaching in this area. A significant number of children have speech and hearing problems, affecting not only language development but general development in other areas of learning.

### **Personal, social and emotional development**

63. Nearly all the children enter the reception class with immature skills in personal, social and emotional development. For example; many are curious about exploring sand and water but lack confidence. Very positive interaction by reception class staff who value children constantly encourages them to feel confident about what they can achieve. Most children are likely to attain above expected standards by the end of the Foundation Stage. This shows impressive achievement, reflecting the skilful teaching and the high expectations of staff in the reception class. Children behave very well and most begin to understand the difference between right and wrong through sensitive handling of everyday incidents by staff, and through stories. Children are enthusiastic about learning, enjoy school and begin to play and work well together; for instance, sharing constructional apparatus fairly and learning to take turns when they play number games. Staff provide very effective opportunities for children to talk about feelings in high-quality 'circle time' sessions, enhancing social, speaking and listening skills. Adults provide outstanding role models, always treating each other and children with courtesy and respect. This leads to excellent relationships between children and staff, contributing very effectively to exceptional attitudes and response to established routines. Adults promote children's personal development and independence very well through ensuring that resources are easily accessible to them and giving them responsibility to tidy away equipment. This has significantly improved since the previous inspection.

## **Communication, language and literacy**

64. As a result of very good teaching, children achieve very well from a low starting point. Most are likely to attain the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage. Individual and group targets are set to help raise attainment in this area. On entry many have poor speaking skills, are reluctant to respond verbally, and often use single, familiar words to identify needs. Very good adult support helps them to gain confidence. Staff plan very good opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills, for example; in the role-play area, where some higher attainers debate who will be first to make a 'cup of tea'. This aspect has improved significantly since the last inspection. Children enjoy listening to stories and rhymes but many have only limited listening skills and are unable to concentrate for long.
65. The high expectations of staff and very good levels of challenge in 'reading' activities encourage children to try hard and work at a brisk pace, enabling them to achieve very well. Teaching of the basic skills is good, addressing well the development of linking sounds and letters. Children share books such as 'The Blue Balloon' with the teacher, who very effectively encourages them to learn the letter and sound 'b'. Many handle books carefully, become aware of story structure and pick up key features of the story. A few put events into the right sequence. Some learn that print tells them what the story is about and become aware of rhyming words and alliteration. Taking books home to share with parents strongly reinforces learning. Exciting activities such as blowing bubbles and experiencing 'balloon' play, provide high quality opportunities for language enrichment, meeting the children's needs very well. More-able children recognise some familiar words and sounds with growing confidence.
66. Staff encourage children to draw, paint and 'make marks'. One or two more-able children understand that marks carry meaning. A few write over and under the teacher's writing with some success. They practise letter formation with increasing skill. Most find this difficult but are very well supported.

## **Mathematical development**

67. From a low base on entry, children make very good progress as a consequence of very good teaching. Standards are likely to be as expected by the end of the reception year. Individual and group targets are set to help raise attainment in this area. When children start school they have very limited mathematical skills. For example, few know colours and shapes. The use of exciting resources such as a puppet to count and order numbers stimulates very good efforts and a brisk pace of learning. Children are interested in numbers and count to three, then five, and with support the more able children count to ten, but most find it difficult to concentrate for long. They enjoy singing songs, such as 'One Potato' which helps them to understand 'more and less'. The teacher plans a good balance of very well organised, structured, practical activities and games that children choose themselves, as well as taught activities. This adds considerably to their mathematical knowledge and independence, an improvement since the last inspection. Children create simple patterns by threading beads, and use shapes, structured apparatus, water and sand trays, developing basic understanding of space, shape and measures. Very well-briefed teaching assistants give focused support where it is most needed; for example, to children who find learning difficult, so that they achieve very well. Where some activities are too demanding, children lose interest, which adversely affects their learning. The 'Family Numeracy Project', a very positive initiative, supports parental involvement very well.

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

68. Most children achieve very well, reflecting very good teaching. By the end of the reception year many children are likely to achieve most of the Early Learning Goals. They enter school with very limited general knowledge. Staff build on what children already know and can do in a structured way to help them understand more about the world, enabling them to make very good progress. Very effective use of a wide range of interesting resources and purposeful learning activities foster their curiosity and interest; for example, in planting bulbs in the outside area. They are excited about this activity and talk about it enthusiastically, but with very limited language skills. They enjoy practical experiences such as working with play-dough and exploring constructional apparatus, building 'towers' with growing skill and awareness of safety. They show interest in using computers and, with support, develop basic information technology skills. The role-play area is used for various purposes. For example; as a 'Victorian Kitchen' it helps to develop a sense of time. Good use is made of the local area for instance, Castle Hill, to encourage a developing sense of place. Cultural awareness is fostered through using a variety of tropical fruit in food activities and by listening to such stories as 'Handa's Surprise'.

## **Physical development**

69. By the end of the Foundation Stage most children achieve very well and are on course to attain the expected outcomes for their age, as a result of very good teaching. The outdoor secure play area provides a very impressive resource in which children make very good progress in developing their large body skills of jumping, balancing and climbing. They use a good range of large apparatus with growing confidence, co-ordination and skill. Many children lack imagination but very effective adult intervention improves their ideas. In the hall, most begin to develop awareness of space and of others. Children are encouraged to show respect for other people. Many find it difficult to listen and follow instructions but the teacher's very positive approach and interaction foster concentration, an attentive response and the understanding of positional language. Very good opportunities are provided to promote the development of children's fine physical skills. Staff teach skills such as cutting, threading and handling small tools such as writing implements, paintbrushes and scissors, to help children gain safe control of these finer movements. Most find this difficult, but are well supported by staff.

## **Creative development**

70. Teaching is very good and most children achieve very well from a low starting point. Many are likely to attain most of the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage. To encourage creative development and independence the teacher plans activities that adults teach directly, and also activities that children choose themselves. Very good group work ensures that all children are included and have equal opportunities to work at all activities. Most begin to differentiate colours and explore texture, colour and shape. With good support they paint 'blue' patterns and pictures and create 'bubble' paintings. They make large, effective class collage pictures of, for example, 'Rainbow Fish', using a wide variety of materials with increasing ability. Many children lack confidence in singing but with considerable support they soon respond very positively and join in familiar songs with gusto, such as 'Who can play the cymbals?'. Staff provide very good opportunities for children to learn about sounds and experiment with musical instruments. Class management is outstanding, resulting in children learning to take turns, happily experiencing creative activities with increasing confidence. The lively use of the 'Home Corner' provides very good opportunities for children to develop imaginative role play. Active staff intervention very positively supports their speaking and listening skills and personal development.



## ENGLISH

71. Pupils in Year 2 and Year 4 attain standards that are above those expected for their ages in all areas of English and they achieve well. The school has made considerable improvements in English since the last inspection as a result of the consistent emphasis placed upon the subject. Findings from the inspection reflect the 2001 national tests and assessment results in which standards were well above average in reading and very high in writing when compared with those in similar schools. This represents a considerable improvement from 1999 when standards in English were well below the national average. Although it is early in the school year, discussion with pupils and observations within lessons show that the majority of pupils in Years 2 and 4 are attaining standards around the average, with a majority exceeding this. The attainment of boys and girls is broadly similar throughout the school.
72. Pupils have good speaking and listening skills and standards are above average at the end of Key Stage 1 and by the time pupils leave the school aged nine. This was evident in a Year 2 literacy lesson which began with a "Full Circle" game in which the pupils were given turns to change one word into another by changing one letter at a time. Pupils listened carefully to preceding contributions and used them well in offering their selections. Pupils listen well when group instructions are given and move quickly to their activities without wasting any time. Year 1 pupils enjoyed the opportunities to use the correct farmers' accents when retelling parts of the story of Farmer Duck with the rest of their class and were a good supportive audience for each other. This allowed all the pupils to become more confident in their own abilities to use expression and tone as they perform for an audience. The strong emphasis placed on developing communication skills for children in the reception class has a positive impact in making them feel confident when they arrive in Year 1. Considering the high proportion of pupils who enter the school with low levels of speech and language, pupils are achieving well.
73. At the end of Key Stage 1 and in Year 4, pupils' standard of reading is above national expectations. The very good grounding they receive in school in recognising word patterns and in extending phonics encourages them to make very good progress. By Year 2, pupils confidently sound out words that are unfamiliar and higher-attaining pupils use context well in ascertaining meaning. They use their phonic knowledge well as they read with expression from well-chosen storybooks. Higher-attaining pupils can predict what might happen next in a story. Pupils are familiar with the library, are happy to find non-fiction books and confidently use the contents or index pages to locate information. By Year 4, higher-attaining pupils read fluently, and are able to state their preferred choices in reading. They use their knowledge of the alphabet competently to locate books and information.
74. The standard of writing is above average in both Year 2 and Year 4. Pupils soon develop a cursive style of writing early, which they continue to practise regularly. Year 1 pupils are becoming familiar with basic punctuation, including capital letters, commas, and full stops and higher-attaining pupils are beginning to write in clear and structured sentences. In Year 2, pupils increase their range of vocabulary when they write descriptions of favourite animals and accurately suggest joining words to connect linked sentences. They write for a variety of purposes; for example retelling the story of the Paperbag Princess, writing instructions such as recipes and poems that describe the sights and sounds of morning. In Year 4, pupils have fun with words and rhymes as they create acrostics and develop their vocabulary when, for example, they create curses using well-chosen nouns, verbs, and adjectives. In writing for different audiences, pupils are able to describe individual features clearly so that the reader can identify favourite characters from books and the media. The majority of pupils in Year 4 write neatly in a joined style. Pupils consolidate their understanding of sentence structure and learn

to use appropriate punctuation, including speech marks and apostrophes. The school is aware of the comparative weaknesses in spelling which are evident at both key stages and pupils respond well to the consistent emphasis on phonics and decoding skills that is a feature of all literacy lessons.

75. Written work makes an appropriate contribution to other subjects, and is particularly effective in religious education. However, in all other subjects there are instances in which pupils' writing is insufficiently used to record, describe, and comment. For example; in science, pupils record predictions and describe their experiments while, in history, pupils research and describe the development of hospital care from Victorian times. These can be brief and fail to include the variety of forms of writing experienced by the pupils in their literacy lessons. The school recognises the need to develop opportunities for pupils to use their full range of literacy skills through extended writing across the curriculum and, before the inspection, had begun to provide identified time for this through a well-planned modification of weekly literacy time. This has the potential to assist in further raising overall standards in spelling and in writing.
76. The quality of teaching is consistently very good and occasionally excellent at Key Stage 1 and ranges between satisfactory and good at Key Stage 2. Teachers plan carefully and adjust their lesson plans according to the progress pupils make in previous lessons. Assessment information is readily available and is put to good use in planning for pupils' individual needs. Pupils have personal targets for English and there is clear evidence that they are aware of them and that the targets are reviewed by teachers when they mark work. Teachers use the framework of the National Literacy Strategy well in their lessons, although there are some inconsistencies which the school is aware of and is seeking to address, through its monitoring. While all lessons have good features, where teaching is satisfactory the activities that are planned are not sufficiently linked to the learning objective for the lesson. As a result, there is a need for overlong introductions and reminders that slow the pace of learning and hamper pupils' opportunities to participate fully in discussion. Where teaching is very good or excellent, there is a brisk pace at the beginning of the lesson, lesson objectives are shared with pupils, and clear instructions leave them in no doubt about the expectations of the lesson. The majority of teachers use the final plenary well for pupils to share their new learning and in the best lessons pupils become fully aware of the knowledge and skills they gained since the beginning of the lesson. Teachers have excellent relationships with pupils, are reassuring and encourage while setting very high expectations. This feature supports a key element in the school's success in raising pupils' achievement. In the best lessons, teachers have the confidence to allow pupils to make mistakes and to make use of these in sensitively promoting development. As a result, pupils' self confidence is boosted and they are prepared to "take a chance", so extending their achievement and increasing the pace of their learning. The assistants who work alongside teachers are well prepared for lessons and make a valuable contribution to pupils' good progress. Good teaching is characterised by a busy working atmosphere and the ability of teachers to organise their classes so that all pupils receive personal attention at some stage in the lesson.
77. The management of English is very good. A thorough review of standards and of teaching has been undertaken and has been used exceptionally well in developing an action plan which has the clear potential to move the subject forward. Assessment information is collated and used very well to plan effectively by involving pupils in target setting and monitoring their progress against their individual targets. This process allows the school to extend the skills of more-able pupils and has a positive impact on the results achieved.

## MATHEMATICS

78. Pupils in Year 2 and Year 4 attain standards that are above those expected for their ages in numeracy and all areas of mathematics and they achieve well. Standards have improved significantly since the last inspection. The 2001 national test results for Key Stage 1 pupils paint a similar picture and also show that standards were well above average for similar schools. This is a considerable improvement since 1999, with increasing numbers of seven year olds reaching and exceeding the standards expected in national tests. Inspection findings reflect the test results. On the limited evidence available so early in the school year, from discussion with pupils and the observation of attainment in lessons, it can be seen that most pupils in the current Year 2 and Year 4 cohorts attain average standards, with a significant minority reaching above average standards in both cohorts. This is due to good subject leadership and management, to a focused and consistent approach to teaching the National Numeracy Strategy and to improved teaching which is good overall. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 make good progress generally, but this is not always consistent in lessons. Progress, while never less than satisfactory, is not rapid enough and is hampered by a lack of rigour in the approach to planning and a lack of challenge in some numeracy activities. Because of small numbers taking the tests each year, comparisons year on year are unreliable.
79. Girls and boys achieve equally well. Pupils with special educational needs are particularly well supported and make very good progress as a result of this very focused support and learning targets. All pupils are included in all activities and have equal opportunity and access to the curriculum. Work is well planned to match pupils' different levels of understanding, enabling them to make good progress and experience success. To help to raise standards, personal targets are set in mathematics. Pupils are involved in setting their own targets with their teachers. These targets are shared with parents and carers through the very effective use of 'Homework Books' to reinforce pupils' skills. A particularly good strategy is for pupils to assess their own work at the end of lessons. This helps them to understand what they are doing, how well they have done and how they can improve their work. Extra support groups are effectively organised to help to raise standards in mathematics.
80. By the age of seven, pupils have a good knowledge of place value to 100 and many can solve problems using numbers to 1000. They know some of the properties of two and three-dimensional shapes. They use measuring instruments accurately and apply their skills to solving simple problems, for example; "A plum weighs 50 grams. How much will three plums weigh?" By the age of nine pupils can work out calculations in their heads quickly, understand fractions and are developing good measuring skills. They collect information and use a range of diagrams and charts; for example frequency tables and simple line graphs to record data. They make sensible estimations and check their results, because teachers encourage this approach. Throughout the school, pupils are confident in applying their mathematical knowledge to problems. The setting of work involving real life problem solving is a current priority and is now a regular feature of many lessons. As a result of an audit of mathematics provision, the need to improve standards in problem solving was identified. This was also a concern in the previous inspection. The school has tackled this issue thoroughly and is developing a whole-school approach to problem solving. This is paying dividends in the good attainment generally found in this aspect of the subject. The analysis of pupils' work reveals that the demands made on them throughout the school are appropriately high and, overall, they are well challenged and make good progress. Work is well matched to meet the needs of pupils with differing levels of attainment, enabling them to achieve well.

81. The quality of teaching and learning across the school is very good, overall. In the lessons seen in Years 1 and 2 they are at least good and occasionally excellent. In Years 3 and 4, teaching varies from satisfactory to very good, and is good overall. The pace of learning in numeracy for the more-able pupils in Key Stage 2 varies because occasionally planning does not sufficiently challenge them and teaching does not expect enough from them. This has a negative effect on the progress of these pupils. Throughout school, teachers' planning is effective overall. Their class management is very good so that pupils try hard, behave and concentrate very well. Teaching assistants are well deployed and are well briefed on lesson aims and the strategies leading pupils towards achieving them. This means that they provide very good support where it is most needed. Resources are used effectively to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding; for example, number lines and shape games. Group work is well organised to take into account the pupils' differing levels of attainment. Marking is helpful to pupils in showing them how to improve their work and homework is effectively addressed to reinforce pupils' skills. Key Stage 1 teachers' subject knowledge is very secure and their expectations of their pupils are high, so that work matches pupils' varying abilities well, enabling them to achieve well and make good progress. In the most successful lessons the teacher's very high expectations challenge and inspire pupils to achieve very highly. This also stimulates a very brisk pace of learning. For example; through the excellent use of 'shape' games and riddles, and an exciting approach to problem solving, using a 'feelie bag' and various shapes, the teacher motivates Year 2 pupils of all abilities to do their best, as well as making the activities fun for them. This results in pupils attaining above average or well above average standards. Through very good use of games such as 'Match Me', Year 4 pupils develop a very quick response to mental arithmetic questions, confidently using a variety of mental strategies with the four number operations. Less successful features of teaching are seen where more able pupils are insufficiently challenged, so that the pace of learning slows. When lesson introductions are too long they have an adverse effect on achievement and progress, and pupils lose interest.
82. The teachers are familiar and secure with the National Numeracy Strategy, which they apply effectively. The three-part lesson structure is well established and planning is good. The use of clear questions at the end of sessions to assess what pupils have understood is a strong feature of teaching. Identifying what is to be learnt in a lesson is clearly defined in the planning and shared with pupils when lessons begin so that they know what is expected of them. The teachers use a good range of mathematical vocabulary and this results in pupils being able to explain their work using the correct terminology. The oral and mental sessions are usually delivered with enthusiasm. As a result, pupils learn quickly and show good mental agility. The main teaching activities involve pupils practising their skills and in this part of the lesson teachers manage pupils very well and use resources effectively.
83. Little evidence was seen of the use of information and communication technology to develop pupils' mathematical knowledge, skills and understanding. This has already been identified by the co-ordinator as an area for development. Pupils use mathematics effectively to support learning in other subjects. For instance, Key Stage 2 pupils use numeracy skills in history in using time lines. Key Stage 1 pupils record ways of travelling to school in simple tables in geography. Pupils' literacy skills are enhanced by reading 'word' problems and by using and extending their mathematical vocabulary. Very good relationships motivate pupils who have positive attitudes, concentrate well and enjoy lessons.
84. Teachers use informal observations and regular tests, including non-statutory tests, very well to assess pupils' attainment and track their progress. The use of 'Progression Books' and 'Homework Books' for individual pupils also helps teachers to check pupils' progress easily. Staff are involved in regular 'sample and assess' procedures to help them standardise their

judgements of pupils' levels of attainment, a very useful and positive initiative. The information gained from assessments is used very effectively to guide the planning of new work and to identify strengths and areas for development. Very positive and effective developments have been the 'Family Numeracy Project' and the 'Share Homework Project' which encourage and support parents, family members and carers as partners in their children's education. Subject co-ordination is good. The co-ordinator has very secure subject knowledge, has attended in-service training and has been involved in the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning with the headteacher. She has carried out a mathematics audit, as well as drawing up an annual subject action plan, so that she has a clear overview of strengths, areas for development and the future direction of the subject. Good use is made of visits; for example to Stourhead, for a mathematics day to enrich the curriculum for pupils. The school carries out detailed analyses of national tests results and teachers' assessments, which are used well to improve pupils' performance and provide information for governors and parents. The school improvement plan has already identified in its 'Mathematics Action Plan' the need to address the use of information and communication technology in mathematics, and to further develop problem solving.

85. The school has made considerable improvement since the last inspection. The mathematics curriculum has been reviewed, the partnership with parents is developing very well, teaching has improved, the role of the subject co-ordinator has been strengthened and standards are rising.

## **SCIENCE**

86. Standards at the end of Year 2 are above the national average and this is also the case at the end of Year 4. These results demonstrate an improvement since the assessments undertaken in 2001 which, showed that the proportion of children in Year 2 who gained the expected Level 2 and above was close to the national average, while the proportion attaining the higher Level 3 was very high. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported in all lessons and, as a result, make good progress in relation to their prior attainment. Standards in science have also improved significantly since the last inspection when pupils' scientific knowledge was broadly in line with the national average, although their skills of enquiry were less well developed. This improvement is largely as a result of the emphasis placed on developing experimental science, and the very good use made of advice from the local education authority.
87. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make and investigate simple circuits. They understand and can describe what they need to do in order to illuminate a bulb and, by Year 2, most are able to make accurate drawings of their circuits and making good use of accurate vocabulary such as "cell", "circuit" and "crocodile clips". Pupils accurately identify electrical equipment in the school and the home, and are very aware of the dangers associated with electricity. They have a good awareness of their own bodies and describe, for example, that they use muscles to move different parts of their bodies, and that humans reproduce in ways similar to some animals but different from others. By Year 4, most pupils accurately describe differences between series and parallel circuits and the different effects each will have on lighting a bulb. Most pupils show a good grasp of what is happening when a circuit is properly connected and accurately predict what will happen when components are connected in a different way. They describe a fair test in a straightforward way and develop a good understanding of the differences between materials. In describing the ways in which materials can be changed, pupils refer to previous experiments to make jelly, and use this example well to illustrate that some changes can be reversed using heat energy.

88. The quality of teaching and learning overall is good, although there is a very small proportion of unsatisfactory teaching. Most teachers have good subject knowledge and, as a result, use questioning skills effectively to consolidate learning from previous lessons to make pupils think and explain; for example, some of the factors that might prevent a circuit from working effectively. Objectives for lessons are clear and shared with pupils but in the less successful lesson that was seen the planned range of activities were not effective in helping pupils reach the objective for the lesson. Most pupils learn at a good pace because teachers know and manage them well, relationships are good and resources, including support assistants, are used very well. Teachers retain useful background information on all their pupils and this is generally well used in planning work that takes full account of pupils' different abilities. In most lessons, more-able pupils are challenged to go further in their learning. For example, in one lesson a more-able Year 1 pupil was supported well in a higher-level task in the investigation of circuits than other groups in the class.
89. The curriculum, planned around a locally devised scheme, provides a very good basis for teaching key knowledge and concepts in science. Clear guidance is provided for teachers to help develop pupils' science enquiry skills systematically as they move through the school and this provides very good support for teachers who are not subject specialists. The subject coordinator monitors standards and provision well and, as a result, is well informed about strengths and weaknesses in the subject. She has made good use of this information in drawing up a comprehensive action plan which has a clear focus on raising standards of pupil performance in science. While appropriate use is made of pupils' skills in mathematics and information and communication technology to support their work in science, pupils' recording of their work is basic and their skills in English are underused, especially in predicting what might happen and in developing hypotheses.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

90. Only one Key Stage 1 lesson and a short sketching session were observed during the inspection. Judgements are based on discussions with pupils and staff, a scrutiny of pupils' sketchbooks, displays of work and teachers' planning. No overall judgement can be made on the quality of teaching, but teachers' plans throughout are effective and show that they provide a broad and balanced programme based on secure subject knowledge. Resources are used well. Levels of challenge in work show that teachers' expectations are appropriately high, indicating good teaching.
91. Pupils standards at both key stages are in line with those expected for their age, with some good observational drawings seen. Pupils, including those with special educational needs achieve well. Standards are similar to those found at the time of the previous inspection.
92. Pupils in both Key Stage 1 and 2 explore ideas, work with a wide variety of materials and tools, and record investigations in a range of media. All have sketch books and use them effectively to practise the art elements. Teachers provide suitable opportunities to explore colour, texture, shape, line, form and pattern; for example, using pastels to make pictures of trees, birds and 'My House'. By the end of Year 2, pupils demonstrate appropriate understanding of the art elements through using water colour pencils to create a wide variety of delicate shades, after close observation of the illustrations of the book 'Bear Hunt'. They study the work of Vincent Van Gogh and paint portraits in his style. By the end of Year 4, pupils work with improving accuracy to represent things, using art elements with increasing confidence. Their skills, knowledge and understanding are built on and extended through close observations of plants

and hands, resulting in some good observational drawings. They apply their understanding of line, tone and texture to make effective sketches of the church and other features seen on a walk around Mere. They create pictures in a variety of media, including pastels, charcoal, collage, paint and pencil. The needs of more-able pupils are well met and some develop a sound understanding of perspective, for example; in sketching work on three-dimensional shapes, linking effectively with mathematics work. Many begin to evaluate, modify and improve their work. Pupils have very good attitudes and enjoy art. Developing pupils' vocabulary enhances literacy skills and they use terms, such as 'shade, pastel, and sketch' with understanding. Numeracy skills are effectively used in pattern and shape work throughout. Effective links with information and communication technology help pupils use computer skills to good effect in developing artwork.

93. The quality of teaching and learning in the Year 2 lesson seen are good. The teacher's subject knowledge is secure, enabling pupils to achieve well. Her high expectations, and good levels of challenge result in pupils trying very hard, and making good progress in their understanding of how to create delicate colour shades. When the teacher demonstrates the use of these water colour pencils, pupils expressed real wonder and delight on seeing the result. They are given effective opportunities to collaborate and to take responsibility for equipment. Year 1 pupils make appropriate sketches of electrical appliances, developing sound knowledge of line, tone and shape.
94. Subject co-ordination is good. The co-ordinator has very secure subject knowledge, has attended in-service training and well supports other staff well. A portfolio of pupils' art work is being developed. Resources are good, accessible and used well. Art documentation is helpful to staff in their planning. A very effective extracurricular pottery club is well attended and makes a significant contribution to the art curriculum. All pupils are included in all activities and have equal access to the curriculum. Art contributes very well to pupils' spiritual and cultural development but opportunities are missed to develop pupils' multicultural understanding as little evidence was seen of non-western art. Teachers use art appropriately to support learning in other subjects; for example when Key Stage 2 pupils create portraits of Henry VIII and his wives in history. A very effective 'Art evening' was held for parents and pupils to work together, encouraging parental involvement in their children's education. The quality of display throughout school is good and contributes effectively to the learning environment, as well as pupils' self-esteem. Pupils have not benefited from having an artist in residence, or made visits to art galleries. Little three-dimensional work was seen. The co-ordinator has already identified this as an area for development.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

95. It was not possible during the inspection to observe any lessons in design and technology. Nevertheless it is clear from discussion with teachers and from analysis of teachers' planning and pupils' design books that standards in design and technology for all pupils including those with special educational needs in design and technology, are around national expectations. Standards have been maintained in the subject over recent years.
96. The scheme of work builds effectively on pupils' prior knowledge, skills and understanding. Pupils find their lessons interesting and, in discussion, explain accurately how different materials can be cut, shaped, and joined together. Pupils in Year 1 explore how to cut and stick different textiles while, by Year 4, pupils use a broad range of previously acquired skills in designing and making containers for their favourite things. Pupils use a range of materials in making their

products, including card and paper, textiles, plastic, and food. They describe how they design their products initially and what they have learned from their work through the evaluations that are undertaken subsequently.

97. Pupils' recorded work shows considerable care in planning and designing their products. Their designs are clearly set out and careful labelling demonstrates that pupils give thought to aspects such as ease of use and the suitability of materials.
98. The curriculum is appropriately supported by the recently introduced scheme of work derived from the local education authority's guidance. The scheme is appropriately reflected in teachers' planning but the school recognises that work in design and technology is not used sufficiently to support learning in other subjects; for example, there is little evidence of pupils' good skills in writing being used to describe the design process or research into the things that they make. Similarly, scaled and dimensioned drawings are not used sufficiently to support pupils' mathematical development, which hampers the progress that is made.
99. The co-ordinator works effectively to support the subject. As a result of discussions with staff and a review of provision and resources, an action plan has been developed focused appropriately upon developing further the implementation of the scheme of work.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

100. Only one Key Stage 1 lesson was observed during the inspection. Judgements are based on discussions with pupils and staff, a scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning. No overall judgement can be made on the quality of teaching, but teachers' plans throughout are effective and show that they provide a broad and balanced programme based on secure subject knowledge. Levels of challenge in work show that teachers' expectations are appropriately high, and that resources are used effectively, indicating good teaching.
101. At the end of Year 2 and Year 4, standards are in line with those expected for pupils of these ages and are similar to those found at the time of the last inspection. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well.
102. By the end of Year 2, pupils study the local environment and develop appropriate knowledge and understanding of the local area. Teachers organise effective fieldwork, using the school grounds and the immediate village locality for the pupils to identify various types of buildings and local features. They make simple plans of the local village and record their work pictorially, labelling various types of features, for example, trees, houses and the school. They go on to study 'My journey to school' and produce maps of their journey. Using simple keys, they identify and locate familiar human features, such as shops and roads, and physical features, such as hills, the river, and fields. They suggest ways in which they can and cannot travel to school and create charts to record findings, effectively using numeracy skills. They demonstrate an awareness of a contrasting locality beyond their own, through studying, for example, a seaside area. In the Year 1 lesson observed, teaching and learning were good. Teaching assistants are well deployed and well briefed, supporting pupils where most needed. The teacher effectively used 'Barnaby Bear' who travels to faraway places, to raise pupils' awareness of places far beyond their own locality.
103. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils consolidate and extend their previous learning. They develop sound geographical skills, knowledge and understanding. Year 3 and 4 pupils learn about



settlements and begin to understand that different places may contain similar and different characteristics. They compare and contrast different localities in the British Isles, High Wycombe and Braeside, with an Indian village, Chembokhali. They describe physical and human features of these localities, demonstrating sound understanding of the similarities and differences between them. This also contributes effectively to pupils' cultural development and promotes multicultural understanding. Teachers provide a wide range of field studies which make a positive contribution to the development of geographical skills, demonstrated in the detailed 'Braeside' book produced by pupils. They become familiar with a range of maps and complete simple mapping grids, effectively using numeracy skills and applying them to real life situations. They develop appropriate geographical vocabulary, using words such as 'settlement', 'grid', and 'transport', with growing confidence.

104. The co-ordinator provides good leadership of the subject, thanks to her good subject knowledge and commitment to providing effective fieldwork experience for pupils. The school uses a national scheme of work, providing useful guidelines for planning. Literacy skills are effectively used in written recording and labelling but generally, opportunities are missed to develop pupils' extended writing. Little use of information and communication technology to support the subject was seen during the inspection. Assessment and recording procedures are informal and inconsistent. Assessment is not sufficiently used to guide the planning of new work. To provide for both local and field studies, good use is made of the environment, of visits to places such as Stourhead, and of residential visits to, for example, Braeside. Pupils of all abilities are included, fully involved in, and have equal access to all activities. There is little difference between the attainment of boys and girls.

## **HISTORY**

105. At the end of Year 2 and Year 4, standards are in line with those expected for pupils of these ages and are similar to those found at the time of the last inspection. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well.
106. Teaching and learning are good, overall, with some very good teaching seen in Year 2. Throughout the school, teachers' planning is effective, and class management is good, so that pupils behave very well, keep on task and develop positive attitudes. By the age of seven, pupils develop appropriate knowledge and understanding of the lives of people in the past by using terms concerning the passage of time and by re-telling stories to imagine how people lived at the time of the Great Fire of London. Teaching builds effectively on pupils' own experiences and what they already know, for instance, about the dangers of fire, when learning about this event. For example; they find out what caused the Great Fire, and about life in London at that time and how different it was to modern life. Very good use is made of resources from the County Resource Centre, such as a large glass case containing a model of London at the time of the Great Fire. Good opportunities are planned for pupils to study the lives of famous people, for example, Florence Nightingale. They find out how hospitals have changed since Victorian times and the way Victorian children dressed long ago. They develop satisfactory factual knowledge of how life in the Victorian era was different from their own lives.
107. By the age of nine, pupils have developed a sound knowledge of historical periods and events. Teaching builds effectively on their previous learning. They learn about the Roman invasion of Britain. They start to organise their work appropriately, with sound use of terms and dates when creating a time-line from 1800 to 2002. Through marking this with significant events, for example, the invention of the steam ship, Queen Victoria's reign, World War 2, the Space

Shuttle, and the Queen's Silver Jubilee, they make good progress in recognising that past time can be divided into periods and that there are similarities and differences between them. They study Britain since 1930, developing a sound understanding of the impact of the Second World War on British society. Teachers promote pupils' awareness of cause and effect by encouraging them to explain and describe, for example, the evacuation of people from large towns during the war. Pupils are aware that history involves using evidence about the past. At both key stages pupils know that they can obtain information about the past from pictures, books, fictional stories and videos. In a good lesson about the Tudors, the teacher's subject knowledge is secure and the use of correct terms, such as 'long ago, past, and a male heir to the throne' is encouraged. Teaching is less effective where introductions are too long, or where lessons lose pace, so that pupils lose interest. This has an adverse effect on their progress.

108. The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets statutory requirements. The school uses a nationally produced scheme of work to supplement its own scheme, providing helpful guidelines for teachers' planning. The co-ordinator has secure subject knowledge and has had some opportunities to monitor teaching and learning. This has given her an effective overview of the subject to identify strengths and areas for development and future direction. 'Sample and assess' sessions have been carried out to standardise teachers' judgements of attainment levels. Links with literacy, reading, and increased vocabulary are developing appropriately but opportunities are missed to develop pupils' extended writing, or the targets that are established in literacy for spelling or use of vocabulary. Numeracy skills are used effectively for example, in making time lines. The use of information and communication technology is developing positively to support the subject. Good use is made of visits, for example, to museums to enrich the curriculum. Pupils of all levels of attainment are fully involved in lessons and have equal access to all activities. There is little difference between the attainment of boys and girls.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

109. Because of timetabling restrictions it was not possible to see any lessons during the inspection and therefore no judgements on teaching and learning in information and communication technology can be made. Nevertheless it is clear from discussion with the co-ordinator and from an analysis of pupils' work and of teachers' planning that standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 4 are broadly in line with those expected nationally. The recent rapid development of the subject, primarily driven by the adoption and implementation of the local authority's syllabus and the growing confidence of staff in teaching the subject has resulted in many pupils making good progress throughout the school in their basic skills. However, the school recognises that the full use of information and communication technology to support learning across the curriculum is underdeveloped. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well by learning-support assistants and, as a result, make progress in line with that made by their peers. The school provides a suitably wide range of activities that comply with National Curriculum Programmes of Study. This represents a satisfactory improvement since previous inspection when standards were limited and progress, as a result, was insecure.
110. By Year 2 pupils are attaining average standards when they use word processors to produce a variety of text. Pupils are confident when using the mouse and, to a lesser extent, the keyboard to manipulate text. They are willing to try out ideas in the knowledge that mistakes can be corrected, and this helps them to learn new skills and gain an understanding of how the software might be used. Pupils use a good range of software to develop their knowledge and understanding of the procedures of controlling and modelling, which is effective in supporting some elements of their mathematical development. Older pupils in Year 4 accurately describe

how to send and receive e-mails and how they would go about finding particular information on the Internet. They describe skills that they have learned, such as opening and closing different programs, and printing and saving their work. By the end of Year 4, pupils are able to perform all the necessary operations, locating and opening files, copying and pasting work, checking their spelling, manipulating graphics, colour and line, and saving and printing work in different styles. Pupils show good understanding of the benefits of information and communication technology and how it is changing the world. They also identify the problems which users of technology are most likely to encounter and many pupils are able to give informed accounts of how they have learnt to overcome such problems.

111. Pupils of all ages use programmes that help with aspects of literacy. These programmes make a sound contribution to their learning. The school is aware that information and communication technology is not used fully to develop pupils' mathematical knowledge, skills and understanding. This has already been identified by the co-ordinator as an area for development. Appropriate software has already been ordered and training planned which, together, have the potential to address this issue.
112. Teaching of information and communication technology was only observed in a small number of lessons in which computers were being used to support learning in other subjects. In these instances, the tasks that had been set were appropriate to the objectives of the lesson and teachers took care to ensure that pupils were given clear guidance and understood what was expected. Teachers' planning is clear and follows the requirements of the syllabus. Long-term planning shows clearly the development of pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding from reception to Year 4, and this is well reflected in teachers records of medium and short-term planning.
113. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinator monitors and evaluates the subject effectively and has an appropriate understanding of the steps necessary to build on the progress that has already been made. Staff training has been undertaken and plans are in place to extend this to increase teachers' confidence in aspects such as electronic communications. The co-ordinator and the headteacher have worked closely with local education authority advisory staff in developing the subject and in working towards the introduction of a more rapid and efficient internet access through the broadband. The delay in agreeing the cost of this has held up the acquisition of software and training planned to extend the range of pupils' experiences and learning in the subject.
114. While all classes have computers, they are not yet used fully within subjects. The school has identified the need to use information and communication technology in other subjects to promote improved standards. Resources have improved greatly over the past two years but there are still gaps in resources that would support work in other subjects such as sensors to gather and display data in scientific enquiry, and resources to support design and technology.

## **MUSIC**

115. By the end of Year 2 and Year 4, pupils attain standards that are above those expected for their age and enjoy music-making activities. Standards have improved since the previous inspection. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make very good progress.
116. The headteacher is the music co-ordinator and teaches the subject at Key Stages 1 and 2. The quality of teaching is consistently very good and pupils achieve very well, reflecting this very

good teaching. In all lessons across the school, the teacher's very secure subject knowledge and very effective use of a wide range of musical instruments elicit good performances from all pupils. The teacher's very effective class management, enthusiasm and high expectations result in very good behaviour and attitudes and the active involvement of pupils in all aspects of music lessons. Excellent relationships motivate pupils very well, eliciting very positive creative efforts and a brisk pace of learning. The teacher's planning is thorough, addressing all areas of music very effectively.

117. Pupils listen attentively to a variety of madrigals in assembly and begin to appraise these with good understanding. The quality of pupils' singing at both key stages is above expectations for their ages. In assemblies, Key Stage 1 pupils sing tunefully, keeping in time to the beat and showing awareness of rhythm. They sing hymns from memory and are developing a good repertoire of songs. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils recognise and explore ways to combine sounds, confidently using untuned instruments, demonstrating good knowledge of the musical elements. They collaborate very well in small groups, improvising repeated patterns and accompanying class singing with increasing skill. They sing such songs as 'Listen to our Wooden Sounds' with enjoyment and enthusiasm, showing a developing understanding of dynamics. At Key Stage 2, pupils sing with clear diction and improving pitch control and phrasing. In assembly they sing such hymns as 'This is the Day', with enjoyment, and four Year 4 pupils take responsibility for leading the 'copy-cattin' singing of this hymn, enhancing performance and self-esteem. By the end of Key stage 2 most pupils recognise and explore relationships between sounds and the way in which music reflects different intentions, time and place. Pupils listen attentively to a variety of music from Africa and Fiji, as well as to recorder music. The teacher encourages them to describe, compare and judge the different kinds of rhythmical patterns and they use terms such as 'ostinato', 'tempo', and 'rhythm' with growing understanding. Pupils compose and perform their own rhythmic patterns, improvising and developing musical structure within a group, effectively playing a variety of percussion instruments. Most follow simple notation with confidence and are developing a knowledge of rhythm, dynamics, structure and texture.
118. The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets requirements. Documentation provides appropriate guidance for staff on planning. The curriculum is enriched by extra-curricular activities for example; recorder club and country dancing. Christmas and Harvest Festival productions, school performances, a music workshop, theatre group visits and visits to the feeder middle school concerts and performances further enhance provision. Pupils are given recorder lessons by a peripatetic teacher and benefit greatly from his expertise. This very effectively supports the curriculum. Literacy skills are used in reading songs and developing a musical vocabulary. Numeracy skills are used appropriately, counting in beats to keep in time. Little use of information and communication technology was seen in music during the inspection. All pupils are included in all activities and have equal access to the curriculum. Although assessment is informal the teacher's very good knowledge of the pupils enables them to make very good progress. Subject co-ordination is very effective. The co-ordinator has a very good overview of strengths, areas for development and the future direction of the subject. Resources are good, with a wide variety of instruments, including an interesting range of multicultural instruments. Pupils are given a good range of opportunities to listen to music from other cultures, such as African and Fijian music, which contributes very positively to their spiritual, social, cultural and multicultural development.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

119. By the end of Year 2 and Year 4, pupils attain standards above those expected for their age and enjoy their activities in physical education. No judgement was made about standards in physical education in the last inspection. Pupils across the school make good progress and, with effective help from support assistants, pupils with special educational needs play a full part in lessons and achieve appropriately in relation to their prior attainment.
120. By the end of Year 2 pupils know the importance of regular exercise to keep fit and healthy. They know why lessons begin with a 'warm up', although their awareness of the importance of 'cooling down' is less well developed. In most lessons, pupils understand the importance of the teachers' 'stop' command, and they use space well and considerately, reflecting the emphasis placed by the school on health, safety and consideration for others. Pupils perform a range of movements in response to music and put them together appropriately to create simple sequences. They control their bodies effectively and are imaginative in the movements and balances they create and in the ways in which they move from one to another. By Key Stage 2, pupils' use of space has improved so that they can avoid each other while, for example, practising different ways of traveling around the hall. By the time they are nine, pupils have appropriate control in running, jumping and landing. They move with assurance and many show a sound understanding of pace and direction by varying these as they move singly or in groups. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 describe the rules of different games and apply them effectively in, for example, their football coaching club.
121. Overall, teaching is good and makes an effective contribution to pupils' progress. Most lessons begin with a warm up, whose effectiveness is seen in the fact that many are breathing hard at the end of the activity. Teachers make sure that pupils know what they are going to learn, and what they are going to do, and this has a positive effect on pupils' readiness to take part in the lessons. Appropriate advice is given during lessons when teachers move around the hall or the playground supporting individuals or groups in improving skills or techniques. Pupils are used effectively to demonstrate good work, and sufficient time is allowed for pupils to practise what they have seen in order to improve their own work.
122. A wide range of extra-curricular activities enriches the curriculum. Football, tennis, and country-dancing clubs are well attended by pupils and, together with sports days with local cluster schools have a positive impact on their learning.
123. The co-ordination of the subject has helped to increase teachers' confidence. A clear plan for the development of physical education has been drawn up following a review of planning and of the resources that are available.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

124. It was only possible to observe two religious education lessons in Year 1 and Years 3 and 4 during the inspection. However, discussion with pupils, a scrutiny of work and assemblies show that standards are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus at the end of Year 2 and Year 4.
125. In one excellent lesson seen in Year 1, pupils made very good progress consolidating their knowledge of the story of Jonah. They had previously heard the story and were enthusiastic when recalling information. Most pupils had remembered the names of Jonah and Sarah, and

many could describe in simple terms what Jonah was being asked to do. Some higher-attaining pupils accurately remember other stories that they have heard from the Bible; for instance, stories about Moses and Jesus. In Year 3, pupils have a satisfactory range of knowledge of Christianity and Judaism shown in their descriptions of festivals from the two faiths. They refer to “our” Christian girl and Jewish boy who are well used throughout the school to help pupils identify with beliefs and symbols that might be unfamiliar to them.

126. By Year 4, pupils recall the meaning of the story of Elijah and the prophets of Baal and higher-attaining pupils recognise that stories of the Prophets derive from the Old Testament. They know that the Old Testament was written by the Jews and refers to events before the birth of Jesus, and that the Gospel books of the New Testament were written after the death of Jesus and became the “special books” for Christians.
127. The quality of teaching in the lessons seen is good overall and ranges from good to excellent. Where teaching is excellent, the pace of the lesson is good and leads to better learning by all pupils including the high proportion of pupils with limited experience of faith systems. Questioning is differentiated in these lessons and the teacher ensures that all pupils are listening by varying the pace and dynamics of her voice. Marking clearly identifies what has been done well, and what pupils need to do in order to improve.
128. Religious education has a high profile within the school, seen through displays of high quality, the school's assemblies and acts of collective worship, lessons, visitors to the school and visits that are undertaken to local churches and to Salisbury Cathedral. The subject reflects and supports the ethos of the school very well. The school has an appropriately planned curriculum which covers the requirements of the agreed syllabus well. The co-ordinator ensures that the quality of teaching and learning is monitored well through oral assessment of the younger pupils and assessment of pupils' written work as they progress to Years 3 and 4. This level of assessment supports the school in identifying strengths and areas that require further development. For example, although the school has access to a good range of artefacts and resources from the local education authority, it has recognised that a broader collection of its own resources would help in increasing pupils' familiarity with key features of the major world faiths.