

INSPECTION REPORT

**SHERBORNE ABBEY CofE (VC)
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Sherborne, Dorset

LEA area: Dorset

Unique reference number: 113766

Headteacher: Mr L. Stockham

Reporting inspector: Ms B. Pollard
OFSTED Inspector Number: 1838

Dates of inspection: 24th – 27th June 2002

Inspection number: 250199

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	infant and junior
School category:	voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	mixed
School address:	Lenthay Road Sherborne DORSET
Postcode:	DT9 6AQ
Telephone number:	01935 812318
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Appropriate authority:	governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Rev Canon Eric Woods
Date of previous inspection:	March 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
1838	Ms B. Pollard	Registered inspector	religious education; Foundation Stage	What sort of school is it? The school's results and children's achievements. How well are children taught? How well is the school led and managed what should the school do to improve further?
9306	Mrs B. Moore	Lay inspector	none	Children's attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its children? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
11122	Mr. D. Collard	Team inspector	information and communication technology; art and design; design and technology; special educational needs.	
18344	Mr. D. Earley	Team inspector	English; physical education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to children?
27602	Mr. R. Perkins	Team inspector	science; geography; history; equal opportunities.	
11419	Mrs J. Underwood	Team inspector	mathematics; music; English as an additional language.	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Sherborne Abbey Primary School is a Church of England Voluntary Controlled school for children aged four to eleven years on the western side of the ancient and picturesque town of Sherborne. Children are housed in a newly built school on a very attractive site. There are 301 children on roll which makes it larger than the average primary school. The catchment area is mixed. There is significant mobility of children with around 10 per cent entering and leaving the school over the course of the year. There are 13 children from ethnic minority groups and 14 with English as an additional language. There are 10 per cent of children entitled to free school meals which is below the national average. The percentage of children on the school's register of special educational needs is 22 per cent and above the national average; three of them have statements. Children start school part-time in September aged four and attend full-time from January. Assessments, carried out soon after entry, show that attainment varies from year to year, sometimes being below the average for Dorset and sometimes above. This year, attainment was broadly average with around a third of children below average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school is effective in providing children with a secure foundation in basic literacy and numeracy and the very good range of out-of-school activities enriches the curriculum. There is a strong sporting tradition. Standards have improved this year in English, mathematics and science because of good teaching. The strong Christian ethos is evident in all aspects of the school's life and children's opinions and contributions are valued. Personal development is very good and children leave the school as mature individuals with confidence in their own self-worth. There is a clear commitment on the part of those with leadership and management responsibilities to improve standards. The school enjoys very good relationships with parents and the community. It gives sound value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards in art and design, design and technology and physical education are above those typically found in other schools.
- The Foundation Stage provision for children in the reception years is very good; children benefit from very effective teaching and secure foundations are laid for the National Curriculum.
- Very good provision is made for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and this makes a positive contribution to their growing awareness of the world around them and their roles and responsibilities within it.
- Relationships in school and children's attitudes are very good. Children, parents and staff show appreciation and respect for one another.
- The school's provision for extra-curricular activities is very good and contributes well to children's learning.
- The good teaching is a significant factor in the improvement of standards.

What could be improved

- The school needs to continue to raise standards in English, mathematics and science.
- The priorities in the school's development plan need to be identified better in order of importance.
- The school's management structure needs to be clearer to support those with management responsibilities and to ensure that all teachers have opportunities to share and learn from good practice.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the last inspection in March 1998, the school has made satisfactory improvement although its standards have varied from year to year. All the weaknesses identified in the last report have been addressed. The school has developed schemes of work in all subjects which improve the progress made by children as they are linked to assessments of what children can do and what they need to do next. Resources have improved and the facilities in the new building are much better than in the old school. Parents are provided with very good information on how their children are learning and the annual report to parents by the governing body meets statutory requirements. There is a structured programme of homework that is linked to work in classrooms. The National

Literacy and Numeracy strategies have been implemented successfully and are helping to raise standards. Teaching has improved as there were no unsatisfactory lessons seen in this inspection.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	D	B	E	E
mathematics	C	B	D	D
science	D	B	E	E

Key	
very high	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

Nearly all the children in the Foundation Stage (the reception classes) reach the early learning goals expected for the age group in all six areas of learning in the Foundation Stage curriculum. In communication, language and literacy and in personal, social and emotional development, they exceed them. They make good progress and nearly all begin the National Curriculum by the end of the reception year.

The school's National Curriculum test results for eleven year olds were disappointing in 2001 as they show a steep decline from the school's best ever results in 2000. When compared with schools with similar characteristics (based on entitlement to free meals) results are below or well below average. They have improved this year as the school has successfully addressed weaknesses, particularly in writing, identified through analysis of assessments and progress. Significant factors which affected standards in 2001 were the higher numbers of children with special educational needs, pupil mobility (16 children joined the older classes from other schools) and a change of teacher halfway through the year disrupted the continuity of learning. The findings from this inspection show that in English, mathematics and science, most children are reaching levels expected for their age. In art and design, design and technology and physical education children reach good standards for their age. In the other National Curriculum subjects of geography, history, information and communication technology and music, standards are in line with national expectations. In religious education, children reach the standards expected in the locally agreed syllabus. Progress is at least sound and sometimes good for all children, whatever their abilities or gender; it is very good for those with English as an additional language.

National Curriculum test results for seven year olds have also improved this year when compared with 2001. Last year they were below the national average in reading and mathematics and well below average in writing. This was because of the numbers with learning difficulties. This year, the reading, writing, mathematical and scientific skills of most children reach standards typical for the age group and they have made sound progress from the Foundation Stage. Writing is improving considerably because of the efforts made by teachers to raise attainment. Standards in art and design, design and technology and physical education are good as they are above expectations; in the other National Curriculum subjects they are in line with national expectations. In religious education, children reach the goals outlined in the locally agreed syllabus.

Children's learning is on a sounder footing now as the school carries out detailed analysis of assessments and test results and addresses weaknesses by setting targets for learning, as seen in the improved writing. There are plans for teachers to work in closer partnership to improve entitlement for children who are in the same year group but in different classes. Last year the school reached the targets it set itself in numeracy but did not reach them in literacy; this year it has exceeded them.

CHILDREN'S ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good; children are enthusiastic and keen to participate in the school's life.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good; the majority of children behave well and work hard.
Personal development and relationships	Very good; a strength of the school; children understand how their actions and relationships affect others and the positive atmosphere in school is underpinned by mutual respect between children and adults.
Attendance	Good; it is above the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of children in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Very good	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 good overall. It is never less than sound and in seven out of ten lessons seen it was good, very good or excellent. It is a significant factor in the improved standards reached by children. In the Foundation Stage classes, where teaching is very good, there is excellent teamwork that ensures children experience the same high quality of provision. Lessons are planned very carefully, with the needs of young children in mind, and imaginative activities make learning enjoyable. Expectations are very high and this improves standards not only for the slower learners but also for the faster ones who are encouraged to achieve at a higher level because more demands are made of them.

In the infant and junior classes, strengths in teaching include careful introductions to lessons that explain what children are expected to learn and useful sessions at the end of lessons where children's understanding is checked and any confusion is addressed. Teachers are skilled at questioning children to help them express their thoughts and opinions and the worthwhile tasks and attractive resources maintain interest. Children work hardest when discipline is firm and deadlines for finishing work keep the pace of learning brisk. Where class organisation and the management of children are less effective this leads to time wasted as children wait for attention or a turn with equipment and some children do not work as fast as others. The school is intending to improve the planning of lessons as instances were seen where children in split-age classes are not always receiving the same quality of education. Marking of children's work, generally, provides good guidance on what children need to do to reach the targets set for them and is raising attainment, especially in English. The good quality of teaching in English and mathematics is helping to raise standards in literacy and numeracy.

Children with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language experience good provision through effective support from classroom assistants both within the normal class work and when they are withdrawn for the teaching of specific skills according to their needs.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good; the school provides a broad and balanced range of learning. The curriculum opportunities are enriched by very good provision for out-of-school activities.
Provision for children with special educational needs	Good; children are identified early and their needs are met effectively as shown by the good progress they make.
Provision for children with English as an additional language	Very good; children have received such effective support that they no longer require special attention as they are able to take a full part in all lessons
Provision for children's personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good; this is a strength of the school; children are helped to gain insights into values and beliefs which enable them to distinguish between right and wrong; to act responsibly as members of a community and appreciate the diversity of cultural traditions.
How well the school cares for its children	Very good; the level of welfare is high and there are good systems for assessing children's attainment.

Links with parents and carers are very good. Parents express very positive views of the school giving good support; they are kept very well informed and relationships are very good.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides positive leadership and he and his staff are committed to raising standards; the new deputy has already made an impact on the quality of curriculum planning. However, management structures need to be clearer to support those with management responsibilities and share best practice.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities and are aware of the strengths and weaknesses; they are active and supportive.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The effectiveness of evaluation can be seen in the improved writing as a result of monitoring children's performance and the taking of appropriate action.
The strategic use of resources	Resources are used wisely through careful expenditure and funds designated for specific developments are used for their intended purpose.

Teachers and support staff are suitably matched to children's age groups and needs. The very good accommodation and range of learning resources are managed effectively. The school seeks value for money in purchases; consults regularly with parents and children and compares its performance with other schools.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children enjoy school and make good progress. • They are expected to work hard. • They become more mature and responsible. • Behaviour is good. • Staff are approachable. • Teaching is good. • The school is led and managed well. • There are close links with parents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were no significant issues that parents would like to see improved.

The inspection team agrees with parents' views.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and children's achievements

1. The school has, generally, maintained standards achieved in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science since the previous inspection as they remain in line with the national expectations for children aged seven and eleven years. In art and design, design and technology and physical education, standards are higher than those typically found in other schools.
2. Standards in the school vary according to the different abilities of the intake. Assessment undertaken soon after starting school shows that, in some years, children in the reception classes are below the average ability for the County of Dorset and in other years they are average or slightly above. The current reception children are around average in ability but there is a significant proportion of them (about a third) who are below standards typical for the age group. By the end of their first year in school almost all of them reach the expected standards for the age group who follow the Foundation Stage curriculum with some who exceed these, particularly in literacy and personal, social and emotional development. Nearly all of them reach the early learning goals outlined in the Foundation Stage curriculum and they have begun the National Curriculum.
3. The school's national test results for seven and eleven year olds in 2001 were disappointing as they show that achievement in the school was below the national average in reading and mathematics and well below it in writing by the end of Year 2; by the end of Year 6, results were well below average in English and science and below average in mathematics. When compared with schools with similar characteristics, which is based on entitlement to free meals, the school still fared badly as its performance was well below the average in reading, writing and mathematics by age seven; below average at age eleven in mathematics and well below average in English and science. Trends over time show fluctuations in performance but there was a downturn from the year 2000 when the school had its best results ever. The reasons for the disappointing performance last year were owing to several factors: there were more children with special educational needs in the classes taking the national tests; the Year 6 teacher, who was also the deputy headteacher, left in the middle of the school's year and this disrupted their learning; there was significant mobility of pupils as 16 children had joined the school from elsewhere and so had not had the full benefit of the school's programme of learning. There are gender differences in some year groups with girls sometimes doing better than boys and vice versa. The school is alert to this and addresses the issue when it arises by setting targets. In 2001, the school reached its targets for attainment in mathematics (65 per cent to reach level 4 with actual figure at 69 per cent) but did not reach them in English (65 per cent to reach level 4 with actual figure at 57 per cent). This year the school has exceeded its targets for English and mathematics.
4. The findings from this inspection show that, although the school's results are below the national trend, overall, they have improved considerably this year as the staff have addressed weaknesses, especially in writing, which are raising attainment. This year's test results show that over 80 per cent of the seven year olds have reached the expected level 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. This year in English 75 per cent of eleven year olds reached level 4 or above, in mathematics 80 per cent reached level 4 or above and in science, 93 per cent reached level 4 or above.

5. In English, by the end of the infant and junior stages, attainment in speaking and listening, reading and writing is in line with what is expected for children aged seven and eleven. The school has made good use of its assessment procedures to set targets for improvement for ability groups and individuals and this has had a positive impact on attainment. Children are given many opportunities to use and develop their literacy skills across the curriculum and this reinforces their learning. Children are confident speakers who know their contributions are valued. They read fluently and accurately using the strategies they have learned for deciphering unfamiliar words. One of the reasons writing is improving is because teachers' marking provides useful guidance on how to improve techniques. Although regular opportunities are given for learning about spelling patterns, there are inconsistencies in spelling throughout the school when children write independently. The national literacy strategy has been successfully implemented and is helping to raise standards as teachers follow the programme.
6. In mathematics, by the end of the infant and junior stages, attainment is in line with what is expected for seven and eleven year olds. Children in Year 2 have a good understanding of number and place value up to 100. They are confident with the two, five and ten times tables. They are using standard measurements and are developing knowledge about shapes. Their mathematical vocabulary is increasing. In Year 6, children can deal with hundreds and thousands as well as tens and units and they can add, subtract, multiply and divide to solve problems. They especially enjoy the mental arithmetic sessions at the start of lessons. They are beginning to use percentages and their knowledge of shapes has progressed to symmetry and tessellation.
7. In science, attainment is in line with expectations for the age groups at both seven and eleven. By Year 2, they have learned about healthy eating and can use charts and diagrams to illustrate their work. By Year 6, they know about the human skeleton and the habits of creatures such as woodlice and owls; the school's environmental area contributes effectively to science lessons. Children understand the need for fair testing when carrying out experiments.
8. In most other subjects children are reaching standards at least in line with those typical for the age groups at ages seven and eleven. In art and design, design and technology and physical education, standards are higher than what would normally be expected. A strength in physical education is the sporting ethos of the school which encourages children to aim high in a wide range of activities. In art and design and design and technology, sketchbooks are used well to practise skills in design and illustration and high standards are reached. In information and communication technology, children successfully use a computer for making their own presentations of topics. In geography, good use is made of the local environment in comparisons with places worldwide and in history, visits to experience life in wartime Britain and the study of artefacts from ancient times help children to make comparisons between life past and present. In music, they sing tunefully and compose pieces using non-tuned and tuned instruments. A strength is the way they express their feelings when listening to music.
9. In religious education, children reach the standards expected in the locally agreed syllabus for Dorset schools in both the infant and junior sections of school. Children are learning what it means to have a faith and how this influences lifestyles and behaviour.
10. Children with special educational needs make good progress particularly against the targets set for them in their individual education plans. In national tests a few children gain the average levels at the end of Year 6 even though their attainment at the end of Year 2 was below average. This is because there is early identification of their problems and work is well matched to their needs. They receive effective support from classroom assistants, outside agencies and

small group work where they are withdrawn from classes for more specific support. Children with English as an additional language make very good progress as shown by the fact that direct support is no longer required as they are fully engaged in lessons in classes.

11. Progress in learning is sound. In the Foundation Stage it is good as the very good teaching helps children to reach the goals identified for the age group at the end of the reception year and secure foundations are laid for the National Curriculum. The ways in which teachers in the infant and junior sections of school motivate children, maintain their interest and develop their concentration leads to growing independence and they acquire a sound knowledge and understanding of the skills specific to each subject. Care is taken by teachers to ensure that all children are included in assessments that show the progress they are making as individuals and groups, whether they are high or low attainers, benefit from the resulting special attention.
12. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been successfully implemented and the programme is raising standards. One of the difficulties faced by the school in the teaching of subjects is where a year group is split between two classes as this sometimes leads to inequality of opportunity for children where the quality of the activities and teaching varies. Revised curriculum plans, to be implemented, in September should help to improve this situation.

Children's attitudes, values and personal development

13. At the time of the last inspection, children were judged to have good attitudes to school. This has improved as their attitudes to school are now very good and are a strength of the school. Children are enthusiastic and keen to participate in activities and the day-to-day life of the school. This enthusiasm is reflected, overall, in the good quality of behaviour. Children behave well in and around school and, in the majority of lessons, they enjoy learning and work hard. There are lapses in behaviour by a minority of them when classroom organisation is not sufficiently structured to maintain a brisk pace and work is less interesting. However, the majority of children are courteous and polite and very welcoming to visitors; they are happy to talk about their school and the things they appreciate about its ethos.
14. Children with special educational needs have equally good attitudes towards their work. Those with behavioural difficulties are supported well and know what is expected of them. Through the good systems applied, they increasingly understand how they can get the most out of their time at the school. Children who have social difficulties are supported well, sometimes by their friends on the same table or by others in the class.
15. Children form very good relationships with one another and with adults. In a personal social and health education lesson, children listened and responded well to each other's accounts of things they wished they had not done. All joined in the discussion and were able to say how they could make things better. Adults set a good example in their relationships with one another and with the children. This is reflected in the way children relate to one another; the majority work co-operatively without any apparent aggression. There have been no exclusions during the last year. There is an absence of oppressive behaviour at playtimes where children have the opportunity to enjoy the spacious and exciting grounds of the school. Social inclusion is evident in lessons and in the daily life of the school as staff make every effort to meet the needs of all children.
16. The personal development of children is very good. They are encouraged to think positively about their actions and the actions of others. A geography lesson on how to deal with the

problems of litter and a discussion on teasing showed they have a good understanding of the impact of their actions on the well-being of others.

17. Personal, social and emotional development is a strength in the Foundation Stage where standards are good. The success of the teaching about right and wrong and honesty is reflected in the way in which one child felt confident enough to confess voluntarily to accidentally breaking an item of equipment and he was praised for his admission.
18. Children are happy to come to school and the attendance rate at the school is good as it is above the national average. Through the daily routines of school life, children's understanding and respect for others reflects the strong and positive Christian ethos of the school and its links with the community.

HOW WELL ARE CHILDREN TAUGHT?

19. Teaching was considered a strength at the last inspection and it remains so despite a considerable staff turnover. Last time there were a few unsatisfactory lessons, this time there are none. Teaching was either good, very good or excellent in seven out of ten of lessons seen. The quality is generally, consistent throughout the school and is a significant factor in the improvement of standards.
20. In the reception classes, teaching is never less than good and in around a third of lessons seen it was very good or excellent. The teamwork between staff is excellent and this ensures that all children in the two classes receive equality in opportunities. They share activities and the consistent quality of the teaching and support ensures that all have ready access to adults who are very knowledgeable about how young children learn and what motivates them. Expectations are very high and this improves standards not only for the slower learners but also for the faster ones who are encouraged to achieve at a higher level through more demanding tasks. There are particular strengths in the planning of the Foundation Stage curriculum where teachers are skilled at assessing what children can do and use this information effectively to move them to the next step in their learning. The emphasis on communication, language and literacy and the imaginatively designed activities, which children enthusiastically take part in to develop these skills, help children to achieve beyond what is expected for the age group. Staff are good at providing opportunities for children to mix together in role-play situations, co-operate in joint activities such as class artwork and they guide them to make their own decisions on what to do when they have a choice. This results in a growing independence and confidence which helps children to reach standards in their personal, social and emotional development which are above those typical for their age. The high quality of teaching means that children make good progress whatever their abilities and the measure of the success of the teaching strategies is the catching up that the slower learners do so that they are able to begin the National Curriculum in Year 1 on an equal footing.
21. In the infant and junior classes teaching is never less than satisfactory and in seven out of ten lessons seen it was good, very good or excellent. Strengths in teaching include careful introductions to lessons, where teachers tell children what they are expected to learn and remind them of their previous work, and in the plenaries at the end of lessons where teachers reinforce what children have learned and check out their understanding. This is because teachers' plans are clear and they prepare carefully for lessons, providing worthwhile tasks and attractive resources which maintain interest. However, in the split-age classes, where children in the same year group may be taught in two different classes, the plans do not always ensure equality of opportunity as activities may be less rigorous and teaching quality varies. Teachers usually

have good knowledge about the subjects they teach and where they are less confident, they willingly carry out personal research to increase their own understanding as seen in religious education lessons about other faiths. Generally, teachers are good at questioning children to help them express their thoughts and ideas and check out their understanding. Relationships are very good and children are comfortable asking staff for help and reassurance. They know their responses are valued and are, therefore, not afraid to participate actively in discussions and debates. Homework is used to support and reinforce work in class and there were examples of children pursuing their own interests independently which shows good motivation.

22. The best teachers have firm discipline and a range of strategies for dealing with inappropriate behaviour and this ensures a conducive atmosphere for learning in which all children can concentrate. The setting of deadlines for finishing work, a brisk pace in giving instructions and organising groups and activities helps children to work hard and fast. There were good examples seen of how effectively some teachers manage children; in a Year 3/4 class where the potential for disruption by a child with behaviour difficulties was skilfully averted by the calm, sensitive intervention by the teacher who quietly dealt with the problem without many of the other children realising what was happening. The techniques used here would benefit some of the other teachers who have more difficulty in getting children to settle quickly to work and are not always alert to the strategies employed by children to avoid tasks they do not like or find hard. Where class control is very effective, children are more productive and standards are higher. Other weaknesses in teaching are apparent where the demands made of children do not always extend their capabilities and too much time taken over organisation and classroom management leads to a slowing of the pace of learning and opportunities for children to idle.
23. Children with special educational needs are taught well and, as a consequence, they learn new skills and develop understanding. The most success is seen in literacy where these children are often given tasks that match their own capabilities well. These are closely linked to the individual education plans that are prepared and reviewed on a regular basis. The special needs co-ordinator meets with teachers to ensure that the targets set are appropriate and good records are kept that detail what has been achieved. In this way, learning support assistants are provided with good guidance about how best to help individual children and teachers are able to offer suggestions about what needs to be covered in lessons. The help provided enables children to engage in the normal work of the class as fully as they are able to. Teaching is a good, balanced mixture of in-class support and withdrawal when this is felt necessary to help concentration or where more focus is needed. All these systems ensure that children with special educational needs make good progress in their time at the school.
24. Children with English as an additional language benefit so well from the support they receive that they are able eventually to dispense with it as they take an increasingly active role in lessons. There is careful monitoring of the needs of various groups of children through assessments and analysis of information about their progress and the school is raising its standards by targeting groups of children for extra support in order to enhance their achievements. The improvement in results in English this year is an example of how successful teachers' strategies are.
25. The success of the teaching is reflected in the improving standards in literacy and numeracy. Teachers are adept at reinforcing these skills across many subjects. This helps children not only to apply their literacy and numeracy skills in a variety of situations but also reinforces their learning and deepens their understanding. Teachers use information and communication technology as an effective tool for learning, as shown by children using it for presentations and researching from the Internet.

26. Overall, teaching is a strength of the school but there are some opportunities being missed to bring the quality of all the teaching up to the standards of the highest. Some of the best teachers could act as mentors for others and share their expertise and there needs to be joint planning, especially between those classes with similar age groups to ensure all children have equal opportunity to benefit from the best teaching. The school is aware of the need for closer co-operation in lesson planning and intends to introduce a new policy at the start of next term.

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

27. The school provides a broad and balanced range of learning opportunities which meet the needs of children, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. It meets all the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum and religious education meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. This is because it has successfully addressed weaknesses from the previous inspection and now ensures that the teaching of information communication technology meets statutory requirements and that schemes of work in all subjects ensure an appropriate progression of children's skills and knowledge as they move through the school. This is enhanced by the good use the school makes of the national guidance for schemes of work.
28. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is good. It is well planned and carefully based on the early learning goals for children up to the time they leave reception class and the early stages of the National Curriculum. The rest of the school is successful in ensuring that most children, whatever their gender or special educational need, and those for whom English is an additional language, have equal access to the curriculum. However, because there are planning differences between classes, children in mixed age classes do not have equal access and opportunity to succeed in subjects such as history and geography. The school is aware of this and has planned a curriculum for the next academic year which ensures that this issue will be addressed.
29. The curriculum is enhanced by the school's well-planned strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy. This is helping to raise standards. The school makes good use of literacy, mathematics and information communication technology in other subjects of the curriculum. For example, children use their writing skills in such subjects as religious education where they describe religious artefacts and in history where they read and understand government instructions on evacuation during the Second World War. In geography they use co-ordinates in their map work and in science make accurate measurements of length and forces. In geography, children use tape recorders to measure sound pollution and use multi-media presentations in persuasive writing and poetry in English. The school also enhances its curricular provision by making effective use of the interests and skills of staff in such subjects as music and physical education in order to help to raise standards.
30. Children with special educational needs are given an appropriate balance of work that will help them progress. The planning formats used for lessons indicates when different work would better suit their needs and extra support is given by teachers or learning assistants. In literacy, these are often closely connected to the individual education plans. In a junior class for instance the plan indicated "*try to learn about three-letter words*" and the learning assistant referred to this during the written session. Long-term planning for these children is good. Criteria are written down that will clearly demonstrate when success has been achieved and then new tasks

are set. In this way, learning and challenge are kept high and is the reason why these children make good progress.

31. The school makes good provision for personal, social, health and citizenship education. It has achieved the healthy school award and in subjects such as science and physical education, children are made aware of the importance of healthy life styles. At times when each class meets together, teachers work hard to develop co-operation, relationships and self-esteem. Children are provided with opportunities to contribute to the life of the school through membership of the school council. Its members elicit opinions from throughout the school on issues seen as important and make a practical contribution to the life of the school. For example, alterations to the organisation of the playground and the provision of outdoor seating came as a result of suggestions from the school council. Children help with the smooth running of the school as monitors and librarians and older children have help to look after younger ones at play times and when they read together. Education about the uses and misuses of drugs and sex education is taught throughout the school in science and through the personal and social education programme. Sex education is also taught specifically to Year 6 children. The school makes good use of the *Life Van* in supporting its work in personal, social and health education.
32. The provision for extra-curricular activities is very good. This is a strength of the school and enhances its curricular provision. These include such activities as, recorder clubs, craft club, drama club, football, rugby, netball, gymnastics, country dancing, athletics, and swimming. Children go on a range of visits outside school to such places as, the Sea Life Centre, Wookey Hole, Nothe Fort, the Tutankhamen Exhibition and Dorchester Museum. The school also provides opportunities for Year 6 children to make residential visits to Weymouth Outdoor Education Centre and Year 4 children go to Leeson House. These provide children with opportunities to learn to live together and to take part in adventurous outdoor activities and extend their skills in such subjects as science and geography. The curriculum is further enriched by visitors into school such as, theatre groups, storytellers, artists, sculptures and instrumental groups.
33. The school has good links with the local community in order to enhance its curricular provision. Clergy from the local parish church visit school to talk to children and to lead worship. The school also welcomes local clergy from other denominations. The local community police constable and school nurse visit the school regularly and a local tennis club provides coaching for children. Children in Year 3 visit Sherborne Abbey as part of their work in history and Year 4 children conduct local traffic surveys in geographical studies. Children receive guidance on rail safety and representatives of the local Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals visit school. Members of the school choir sing in local residential homes at Christmas and senior citizens come into school to talk to children about their wartime experiences in order to enhance their work in history. The local town band perform for the children and a good measure of the school's involvement in the community was the participation by a large number of former children and local people in celebrations for the closing of the old school and the opening of the new building.
34. The school has good links with partner institutions. It makes effective use of students from local schools in the private sector and colleges of further education who come to the school for work experience or National Vocational Qualification training. The swimming facilities at a local private school are used effectively so that most children make good progress in their swimming. The school co-operates with a group of local primary schools for in-service training for teachers and makes sound use of the local school partnership for special educational needs' provision. Children have opportunities to participate in the local primary schools' music association and

take part in competitive sport with other schools. It has good links with local playgroups and secondary schools so that arrangements for the transfer of children to the next stage of their education ensure that it is usually a smooth one.

35. Personal development is very good and is a strength of the school. When children leave at age eleven they are mature, sensible individuals who show respect for the needs and beliefs of others. Overall provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is very good and the school has maintained these very high standards since the previous inspection.
36. The promotion of spirituality is very good. In assemblies and times when the whole class is gathered together, children have many very well considered opportunities for reflection and prayer. For example, in the infant assembly, the headteacher skilfully explained to children how the idea of light in real life stories may also have a spiritual connotation. When the whole class was gathered together the teacher in Years 5/6 helped children to become more aware of their own and others' qualities and enhanced their self-esteem. The school is very successful in providing children with knowledge and insights into values and beliefs. Teachers respect children's contributions to lessons and in subjects such as physical education and English they very readily celebrate the achievements of others. In religious education lessons, children learn to respect the beliefs of other religions such as Judaism Islam and Sikhism and the school displays collections of religious artefacts from Christianity and other religions. Teachers take good advantage of subjects of the curriculum in order to provide opportunities for children to share moments of reflection and excitement. For example, children in Year 6 were fascinated by the powerful images of poetry by Ted Hughes. In personal and social education lessons, children in Years 1 and 2 talked confidently about things which excited them.
37. Provision for moral development is very good. This is because the principles which distinguish right from wrong are actively promoted through the school's clear behaviour policy. Adults in school provide very good role models in their relationships with children. There is a high expectation of good behaviour, of respect for others and for truth and justice. Most children usually respond positively to this. This is further enhanced by the strong Christian ethos which supports the life and work of the school.
38. Provision for social development is very good. Children are given a good range of opportunities to take the initiative and accept responsibility in such roles as school council members and monitors. The school provides a wide range of extra-curricular activities and opportunities in residential experiences help children to develop social skills and to understand how to live together. The school has a very strong sporting tradition which encourages children to compete enthusiastically and fairly. Relationships between children, and children and staff are, generally, very good. This helps children to work co-operatively and to collaborate very well. For example, in Years 5/6 children worked independently in small groups to prepare pieces of poetry for oral presentation. When these were rehearsed before the class, children gave and received sensitive, constructive criticism. In subjects such as geography and science, children study the effects of such issues as pollution and the use of drugs on society and individuals. The school provides children with many opportunities to help those less fortunate than themselves. For example, they contribute to charities such as, Sports Relief, Link Africa, Barnardos, Royal Society of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, Blue Peter Appeals and proceeds from the Christmas concerts helped the National Children's Homes.
39. Provision for cultural development is very good. Children have many opportunities to study their own culture through aspects of music and dance and through membership of the country-dance club. Local festivals such as the Pack Fair are included in assemblies and children study local

historical and geographical features. They celebrate festivals such as Christmas, Harvest Festival and Mothering Sunday. They participated in the Jubilee Fete and the school holds its annual leavers' service in Sherborne Abbey. In history, children study other cultures such as the ancient Greeks and Egyptians and in geography learn about lifestyles in other lands and communities. In religious education, they study a wide range of world faiths. The school has developed very useful links with schools in Italy, Poland, the Solomon Islands and Ghana. This helps to enhance children's literacy skills and their knowledge and appreciation of the richness and diversity of other cultures. In its well-resourced library the school has a good collection of books from other cultures. The school welcomes a wide range of visitors such as steel bands, African and Mexican dance and music groups and visitors from Soweto. It makes effective use of the families of ethnic children to celebrate the diversity in society.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS CHILDREN?

40. Since the last inspection report the school has improved its support for ensuring children's welfare. This aspect is now very good and is a strength of the school. Staff know and understand their children well. They know the procedures to be followed to ensure that children are well protected and the level of welfare is very good. The school's policy for health and safety ensures that effective measures are in place to promote all related matters of health, safety and security to a very high standard. Parents appreciate the way all staff care for their children and that their children are happy in school.
41. Procedures for the monitoring of children's academic performance and personal development are good. Through the programme for personal social and health education the school has established very strong personal support and guidance for children and a good example was seen of the support the school provides for children in crisis. Staff work hard to ensure that everyone in the school community is valued. In the best lessons, there is an effective range of strategies to promote good behaviour in children and all staff adhere to the school's discipline policy. This effective support makes a positive contribution to children's well being. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are well established. The awarding of certificates encourages the regular attendance of children. The school has good links with outside agencies.
42. Personal development is supported well through teachers' knowledge of the children. The school encourages children to express their views about their life in the school through questionnaires. Children's involvement in the school council and their role as monitors and helpers further enriches their opportunities for personal development.
43. Children with special educational needs are cared for well. Those with behavioural difficulties are closely monitored both in the classroom and around the school. Any possible confrontational difficulties are quickly dealt with. All staff know any special information regarding health matters. Records are kept well and provide information about any problems that occur.
44. There are good systems for assessing children's attainment including comprehensive details about the performance in national and internal tests. These are better in literacy and numeracy because there is more information available. In these two subjects there has been an impact from its use. In English for example, writing has had a close focus this year because previous results indicated poorer performance. All children, but particularly in Year 6 are working at a higher level than was previously the case. The school has worked hard to analyse why children do not perform as well in national tests when measured against similar types of schools. Whilst

the evidence is not conclusive, the range of assessment data is providing teachers with a variety of ways in which they can target individual help.

45. In other subjects, different assessment systems are being trialled. The best of these are in history and geography. Here teachers are able to define the skills that have been learnt with direct references to specific teaching. For instance, children who have studied Florence Nightingale are considered to have learnt at a high level if they can talk confidently about what happened in her life and relate this to other times. The school has made a good start at ensuring all subjects are assessed. This is still at an early stage and, as yet, does not provide sufficient information that can be used to plan lessons at the correct level in all subjects. Despite this, the use of assessment is sound overall.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

46. The school has maintained its very good relationship with parents, who have a very positive view of the school. This very good relationship is a strength. Of the questionnaires returned as a result of the parental survey, 97 per cent of parents felt they could consult the school on any issue, and all parents confirmed that their children were happy in school and that the school expected their children to work hard and achieve their best.
47. The school has good links with parents to consolidate and extend children's learning. Several parents and grandparents help in classes and are much appreciated. Parents are keen to be involved in the life of the school; they are very appreciative of the new building and of the care given to their children.
48. The quality of information for parents is very good. Home/school agreements are in place. Reports on children's progress give a clear indication of what they have done and need to do next to improve. Marking of work, especially in English, is clear and helpful. Parents are kept well informed about all aspects of school life through regular newsletters. They appreciate the opportunities available to them to talk to teachers informally and at termly parents' evenings. They find office staff courteous and friendly. The school's prospectus and governors' annual report to parents (in the friendly format of a newspaper) give a clear indication of the life of the school.
49. Reviews for children with special educational needs are held in accordance with regulations. Parents are rightly pleased with the support they receive and are kept fully informed about their children's progress. The recently revised national code of practice has been installed and parents are being given information about the implications of any new regulations.
50. Parental contribution to children's learning at home and school is sound overall. The school appreciates the support of the very active parents' association which raises funds and provides many extras to support children's life in school. Parents were fundamental in raising the money for the outside changing area which is used by children for games and provides a welcome shelter for parents when waiting for their children when the weather is poor. They organise many events, both social and fund-raising, which enhance the experiences of children in school. Recently, at the very popular Queen's Golden Jubilee celebrations they sponsored an exciting balloon race and children are now tracking the distances these balloons have travelled as part of their geography learning. Through these many activities the association helps place the school firmly as a hub of parish life.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

51. Although the current headteacher was in post at the time of the last inspection there have since been considerable changes in key staff in the school. In the last inspection the headteacher was praised for his leadership as he was committed to improving standards. He is still ambitious for the children in school to do well. He is supported by a new deputy who has already made an impact by reviewing curriculum planning and whose thoughtful evaluations of what needs to be done to raise standards complement the headteacher's philosophy to provide a broad and relevant education that helps children become good citizens.
52. The school is making effective use of performance management strategies by focusing on the quality of classroom teaching and its impact on children's learning. This is resulting in more monitoring of what is happening in classrooms by the headteacher as staff are observed teaching and provided with feedback on their performance. This is an improvement since the previous inspection where this was judged to lack structure and cohesion. It is very successful in the Foundation Stage where the co-ordinator has many opportunities to evaluate the quality of learning because of her teaching commitment in there. However, there are still some aspects that need further attention. Some staff are unclear about the management structure in school and their role in it. This is because key staff are involved when it is considered appropriate for the task in hand and the fluid arrangements make it difficult to maintain long-term momentum. The management structure needs organising so that co-ordinators are supported in their monitoring role and are given opportunities to view other classes working in the same way that the infant co-ordinator is able to do when her reception children attend part-time. There also needs to be more sharing of good practice so that everyone benefits and all teaching is raised to the highest level in school. Procedures for the school's own evaluation of its effectiveness should be more rigorous in order to ensure that the improvements in children's attainment from last year to this are maintained and standards do not fluctuate as much as they have in the past.
53. The supportive governing body fulfils its statutory duties and takes a keen interest in school. Every governor has responsibility for a curriculum subject and committees effectively filter information and raise any issues that require full governing body attention. Governors have taken part in a useful local authority exercise called *Body Building* which helped them to clarify their roles and responsibilities. This is an indication of their commitment to the school. They were closely involved in the planning of the new school building and are currently engaged in a *Travel to School* project, which encourages different ways of travelling to and from school other than by car. Governors receive detailed information from the headteacher on the work of the school and are well aware of the need to raise standards.
54. The school's development plan is produced through good consultation with governors and staff. All subject co-ordinators have an input, highlighting the action they want to take to improve provision in their subject. The plan identifies deadlines, training and funding needs for each subject and area for development but, because it is all inclusive, it is not clear enough about what are the most important goals for the coming year. Although the headteacher is clear about priorities, governors and teachers sometimes have different views about what takes precedence. The school's development plan needs to identify more clearly the hierarchy in the targets set so that everyone is sure about the top priority and it also needs to have more focus on raising standards generally over a longer period of time to avoid the fluctuations in performance which occur at present. The school has proved that where an issue such as improving children's writing skills has been addressed through a whole school approach, the action taken to meet that particular target can be very effective.

55. The school makes good use of its funds to support children's learning. Grants for specific purposes such as special educational needs, the implementation of the literacy and numeracy hours and support for groups of children to boost their attainment are used appropriately. Additional support staff and classroom assistants make a valuable contribution to the work in school and are helping to improve standards. The governing body keeps a close watch on spending and a large sum of money has been saved over the years which is earmarked for replacing outdated information and communication technology equipment for children's use. There is a rolling programme for the maintenance of the new school.
56. The new purpose-built accommodation is very attractive and is in an enviable location. The building and its extensive surroundings contribute positively to the ethos and atmosphere as it enhances the nature of the provision. The school is very well resourced with high quality materials and equipment. Children are encouraged to look after their school and keep it immaculate. There are sufficient teachers and support staff to deliver the National Curriculum.
57. The leadership of the school is instrumental in promoting the values of the school in all its activities. Values such as respect, honesty, interdependence and thoughtfulness are given a high priority as seen in the rewards systems. These are not just for academic achievement but also for good behaviour, helping others and sporting prowess. Parents are happy with the values promoted by the school and the ways in which children are encouraged to do their best and helped to become more mature as they grow older is a significant factor in their very good development in the spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of their education.
58. The management of the provision for special educational needs and English as an additional language is good. The special needs co-ordinator provides good support for teachers. At present, this post is temporarily held by the headteacher who has maintained standards until the new appointment begins in September. Comprehensive records are being kept of all children with particular difficulties. The new national stages of special needs have been incorporated into these records and the draft policy is about to be ratified by the governing body. The governor for special educational needs provides valuable support and expertise as she has experience in this field. Children learning English are integrated well and every effort is made to include them in the full range of classroom activities. The very good progress they make, which helps them to achieve as well as their peers, enables direct support to be withdrawn in due course.
59. The school applies the principles of *best value* to its decisions on purchases, staffing and new developments and compares its results with national and local schools. The leadership and management are well aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses and there is a positive commitment on the part of all concerned to improve the quality of education. The school provides sound value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

60. The school should:
- Raise standards further in English, mathematics and science by:
 - (i) ensuring equality of opportunity for children in split-year groups through joint planning of lessons to ensure that work is of a similar quality;
 - (ii) raising standards of all teaching to that of the highest level in the school by enabling teachers to observe the best practice in action by colleagues;

- (iii) ensuring that the subject co-ordinators have better opportunities and the necessary skills to monitor standards in their subject.

(see paragraphs: 21, 22, 52, 80, 9, 97, 117)

- Define more clearly a realistic hierarchy of priorities in the school's development plan over a longer period of time to help guide the school towards its commitment to improvement.

(see paragraph: 54, 112.)

- Define more clearly a management structure that is understood by all staff, supports co-ordinators and shares good practice.

(see paragraphs: 52, 97, 107)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

57

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

25

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	10	30	15	0	0	0
Percentage	4	18	52	26	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	N/A	301
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A	30

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N/A	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	N/A	64

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	14

Pupil mobility in the last school year

No of pupils

Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	31
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	8

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.1
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.8
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2001	22	18

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17	15	17
	Girls	16	16	17
	Total	33	31	34
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	83 (73)	78 (71)	85 (80)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17	17	17
	Girls	16	16	16
	Total	33	33	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	83 (78)	83 (78)	83 (85)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2001	20	16

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	13	15
	Girls	9	11	14
	Total	20	24	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	56 (85)	67 (85)	81 (96)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	13	18
	Girls	10	11	14
	Total	21	24	32
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	58 (85)	67 (88)	89 (94)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	2
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	285
Any other minority ethnic group	13

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	12
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23
Average class size	27

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	133

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/02
	£
Total income	543,397
Total expenditure	524,154
Expenditure per pupil	1,932
Balance brought forward from previous year	45,000
Balance carried forward to next year	2,936

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4.6
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	5
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	289
Number of questionnaires returned	92

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	74	26	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	68	30	1	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	55	41	1	1	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	43	46	10	0	1
The teaching is good.	74	23	1	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	50	43	7	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	82	15	1	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	72	28	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	37	57	4	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	73	24	1	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	59	39	1	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	46	35	8	2	10

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

61. Children enter the reception classes in September following their fourth birthday and attend school part-time until January when they come all day. Assessments, undertaken soon after they start school, show that abilities vary from year to year but that the current reception children are average for Dorset, overall, although about a third of them are below average. This is a significant proportion and the school does well in helping them to catch up to others by the time the end of the reception year.
62. The previous inspection judged standards to be in line with those typical for five year olds and their progress to be sound. Standards have improved as the evidence from this inspection shows that not only are nearly all children reaching the national goals for the age-group in all areas of learning but many are exceeding them in communication, language and literacy and personal, social and emotional development. Progress is good as shown by the way the slower learners reach the recommended goals and the faster learners exceed them. By the end of the reception year, nearly all children have reached the early learning goals in the Foundation Stage curriculum and they have begun the National Curriculum. This is because of the very good teaching they receive in all areas of learning and the high quality of provision in the two classes in the Foundation Stage unit. Teamwork is excellent and helps to ensure equality of opportunity for all children.
63. Outdoor facilities are very good and are used very effectively across many areas of learning. A good example of this was where a whale was drawn on the playground to give children an impression of its size.

Personal, social and emotional development

64. The personal development of children is a strength and standards are good. The well-organised classrooms and labelling help children to put away equipment they have used and they voluntarily sweep up and tidy the classroom because of effective training. Children understand the routines and abide by the rules without a fuss as seen by a child who wanted to play with the ship but found an alternative activity until his turn was due. Teachers encourage children to make choices of activities and this helps to develop their confidence. Children talk happily to adults and one another and they show curiosity about the world around them. Their behaviour is very good; they are polite and work amicably together. Attention spans are better than expected for children of this age because teachers provide interesting tasks and activities that appeal to children and this makes them enthusiastic about learning. Teachers and support staff are good role models and children can talk about good and bad behaviour and when it is necessary to say sorry.

Communication, language and literacy

65. Language and literacy are also strengths in the Foundation Stage and standards are good. Teachers' plans are based on careful and detailed assessments of what children can do and what they need to learn next and work is matched appropriately to children's needs. As teachers have a very good understanding of how young children learn they are able to provide stimulating activities which children enjoy but which also ensure they make good progress. Children are confident speakers and they listen keenly to instructions and stories. Almost all

children have begun to read and some are very competent as seen when one child read a story about a fish to the whole class. They are extending their vocabulary because of the wide range of opportunities provided for interacting with others; for example, in the role-play area designated as a sea life research centre and in the game where they had to give instructions to a partner. Most children are writing short sentences with the help of staff and some are independently using word banks and spelling familiar words accurately. Their printing is legible and letters are correctly formed. Children with English as an additional language have made very good progress and are taking a full part in language activities. The reception classes have begun the National Literacy Strategy.

Mathematical development

66. Almost all children reach standards typical for the age group in mathematics with learning about shapes a particular strength. Teachers are very knowledgeable about teaching basic skills and this results in good progress in the development of mathematical language and an understanding of patterns in numbers. Imaginative, enthusiastic teaching conducted at a brisk pace ensures children work productively. There is an appropriate balance between direct teaching of concepts and opportunities to reinforce these through play activities. An example of this is when children were seen learning about the attributes of common shapes with teachers and then playing a game with a partner where they had to describe shapes and help their partner to position them in a certain way by giving precise instructions. Plenary sessions are used effectively to check what children have learned as seen when a teacher realised there was confusion between pentagon and hexagon shapes and reminded the class of their attributes. Most children add to ten in practical ways (by counting spots on fish) and some can identify what needs to be added to a given number to make ten. Other adults in the classes are fully involved and their presence means that children have ready access to help when needed.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

67. Children's growing understanding of the world in which they live is developed through a theme which incorporates science, information and communication technology, geography, history and religious education. The theme during the inspection was *The Sea* and children had made a visit to a sea life centre to stimulate interest and encourage them to use all their senses. They are knowledgeable about sea creatures such as whales and squids because teachers make a lot of effort to provide practical activities which help children to learn. A life sized whale was drawn in chalk on the playground into which children could stand as a result of a Bible story about Jonah; real squid were examined and then drawn from observation; computer games linked with the theme as children moved creatures into a fish tank or drew fish using a mouse to control cursors and icons. Vocabulary specific to subjects is extended as children describe what capsizes, tentacles, suckers and whirlpool mean. Children are familiar with the work that people in the community do such as doctors and estate agents. They take photographs with a digital camera, draw plans of the classroom and simple maps of a walk round school. When engaged in role-play, as seen in a *cafe*, they wear dressing up clothes and use dolls that reflect the multicultural nature of society. Their progress in this area of learning is good as they reach standards typical for their age group.

Physical development

68. The physical area of learning includes the use of small equipment and tools and the development of movements of the body. Children reach the expected standards in the use of tools and in one physical education lesson in the school's hall they exceeded them. Children know how to use

tools such as scissors, glue and pencils safely because they have been taught successfully to handle them properly. Their pencil control is sufficiently well developed to enable them to print legibly and produce pictures of recognisable objects. They can fix items together in construction work, make sand castles and handle small rods effectively in fishing games. In lessons where they exercise their bodies they can travel in various ways, showing good control of their movements and an awareness of sharing space with others. They know that the body benefits from warm up and cool down sessions and that it is good to increase the heart rate when exercising. They are developing good ball skills as they roll, bounce and throw balls to partners. Teachers make excellent use of demonstrations and praise to build children's confidence and encourage them to do better. They teach the techniques required to raise standards this helps children improve.

Creative development

69. Teachers provide a wide range of activities to promote creativity and children experience many opportunities for painting, collage, drawing and sticking. Artwork can be two or three-dimensional and children work on their own or produce group and class pictures. They know how to mix colours and are well trained in paint techniques; they know that small brushes are for detail and large ones for colour washes and background. Their illustrations are detailed (horses had saddles and manes) because they have been taught to observe carefully by staff. Children make music together and they sing in tune and can hold a rhythm by clapping. Teachers are skilled at seizing opportunities to link creative work across all the areas of learning where appropriate and this makes the learning relevant. Progress is good and standards are typical for the age group.
70. The dynamic co-ordinator for the Foundation Stage is very pro-active in developing the teaching and learning in the unit. She has a direct influence on the quality of education because she teaches one of the classes. The excellent teamwork ensures that all the adults who work together share the same approach and this leads to consistency. There are no significant weaknesses in provision for the Foundation Stage and children benefit from the very good teaching which is never less than good and is more often very good or excellent.

ENGLISH

71. By the end of the junior and infant stages attainment in speaking and listening, reading and writing is average for children aged seven and eleven. This is in line with the findings of the previous inspection and an improvement on the results of the 2001 National Curriculum tests at the infant and junior stages and teacher assessments in speaking and listening at the infant stage. In this year's National Curriculum tests 75 per cent of eleven year olds reached level 4 or above. A significant factor in the improvement in standards since the 2001 National Curriculum tests is the overall good and sometimes very good and excellent quality of teaching, which leads to the correspondingly overall good quality of learning. A further important factor is the good use the school has made of its thorough assessment procedures in order to identify areas for improvement for the whole school, groups and individuals. For example, writing was identified as an area for improvement for the whole school. Targets for improvement in writing were set for each year group so that, for example, the purpose and organisation of writing in Year 2 became a focus for teaching and learning. In Year 5 a clear target reminded a pupil to develop the use of compound and complex sentences. Children make sound progress.

72. The school has made effective use of the guidelines of the National Literacy Strategy in order to address its priorities in raising attainment. Teachers also give children many opportunities to use their language skills in other subjects of the curriculum so that their English skills are improved along with their understanding of the other subjects. For example, in Year 2 children produced a wanted poster with clear descriptions of the character and appearance of Boudicca in their work in history. Children in Year 1 wrote clear descriptions about Jewish customs in religious education. In Year 4 geographical work children produced well-considered persuasive writing about care for the environment. Children in Year 5 discussed issues concerning the uses of drugs and medicines in work linked to science and personal and health education.
73. As they move through the school, teachers provide many opportunities for children to use their speaking and listening skills throughout all the subjects of the curriculum. For example, in Year 3, children listened carefully to the teacher so that their dramatic representation of life in Saxon times was improved. In Year 2, children explained their ideas clearly when they helped their partners to reflect on how well they controlled and passed the ball in physical education. Relationships between teachers and children and between children are, generally, very good. This gives children the confidence to contribute to class and group discussions because they know that their efforts will be valued. This enhances their speaking and listening skills. For example, in Year 2, children confidently described different forms of communication in well-organised sentences. In the Year 5/6 class children's understanding of self esteem was deepened when they were given well planned opportunities to talk about the positive characteristics of their peers. Children, generally, behave well and noise levels are low enough to be conducive to good listening, resulting in children having many opportunities to increase their listening skills. This was apparent in Year 6 when children listened carefully to poetry readings and discussed knowledgeably with each other and the teacher the contrasting styles of Hughes and Wordsworth. Most children speak confidently to visitors about their work, although lower achieving children express their ideas less clearly and more briefly. For example, higher achieving children in Year 4 used examples from their work when clearly explaining the use of syllables and rhythm in their poetry writing. However, lower achieving older children generally used simple phrases or sentences when describing the books they like to read.
74. The school has a good selection of accessible fiction and non-fiction books and uses these effectively to develop children's reading skills. There is a good selection of stories and poems from countries around the world so that children extend their range of experience and learn to appreciate other cultures. Books are also selected because they deal sensitively with social issues such as prejudice so that children's personal development is enhanced. Because teachers have a good understanding of how to teach basic skills, most children develop sound foundations in their reading skills by the end of the infant stage. For example, most children have a secure understanding of how to use a range of strategies such as using phonics and context and the clues in the accompanying pictures when meeting new or unfamiliar words. Teachers guide children to choose books which are suited to their abilities, so that, for example, although lower achieving children read more hesitantly, they generally understand the main ideas of their stories. More able children read accurately and fluently and use expression to bring increased meaning to their work. They explain their preferences clearly and describe plot and characters in detail. These children confidently locate reference books in the library and use index, contents and glossaries in order to find information. Children are encouraged to read at home and classes are rewarded for their efforts in this. Careful records are kept of their progress and this ensures continuity in their learning.
75. As they move through the school most children, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, make sound progress in their reading. This is enhanced

by teachers' high expectations. For example, in the excellent teaching seen in the Years 5/6 class, children were challenged to use their inferential and deductive skills in their appreciation and understanding of poetry by Ted Hughes. This led to deepening insights which enhanced their oral presentation. Higher achieving children in Year 6 describe their preferences and show a thorough understanding of crucial features and characters in texts. They use skimming and scanning techniques efficiently in order to locate information. Lower achieving children read less fluently and are less confident in their research skills. Because the school has a clearly organised library system and a knowledgeable librarian, most children are familiar with the schools computerised system for the loan of books and confidently use the library in order to locate books for reference and pleasure.

76. The school has worked hard to improve the quality of writing and this has led to improving standards. For example, in the infant stage and in some junior classes teachers make effective use of the *First of the Month* books where children's writing is regularly assessed and areas for improvement are clearly indicated. This helps children to know clearly what they need to do in order to improve and complements the use of targets for improvement. The school has rightly identified the need to introduce this system to all classes. Teachers ensure that children regularly practise handwriting skills so that by the end of Year 2 higher achieving children's writing is usually legibly formed, consistently positioned and joined. Although the handwriting of lower achieving children is less consistently sized and positioned it is mostly clearly formed. Teachers have high expectations and children are reminded to maintain high standards of presentation through their targets and in references made by teachers when marking work and, by Year 6, most children develop sound handwriting skills, although the work of lower achieving children is generally less well presented.
77. A significant feature in the improving standards of children's writing is the marking of their work. Teachers provide comments which are supportive and help children to understand what they need to do in order to improve. For example, in Year 2 the teacher complimented a child on the choice of adjectives in a piece of writing and suggested that handwriting should be made bigger. In Year 5, the teacher recognised the efforts made to structure piece of narrative writing and in Year 4, the teacher advised a child to begin instructional writing with a verb. Children are also given opportunities to evaluate their progress towards the targets teachers set for them. For example, in Year 6, a higher achieving child indicated that improvements had been made in the quality of writing about the feelings and personality of the characters in stories but that further progress was needed to ensure that unnecessary information was excluded. This gives children a clear understanding of their own learning and helps them to improve.
78. Teachers ensure that all children write for a wide range of audiences and purposes. For example, in Year 1 children wrote thoughtful poems about stillness and in Year 2 they wrote clear instructions and imaginative stories. In Year 4 children produced thoughtful stories with themes such as revenge and children in Year 5 produced well considered persuasive writing about a proposed by pass. In Year 6 children produced interesting book reviews and detailed factual writing about the Antarctic. Because teachers usually set a good example and create an enthusiasm for words, children develop their skills in creating suspense and tension and in their use of words imaginatively and for effect. However, the vocabularies of lower achieving children are more limited and their story structures are generally weaker. Because teachers, generally, have good subject knowledge and are aware of individual and year group targets for improvement, most children improve the punctuation and structure of their work as they move through the school. For example in Year 2 most children use capital letters and full stops accurately and begin to organise the structure of their stories effectively. By Year 6 most children use speech marks, commas, paragraphs and complex sentences and carefully develop

the emotions and feelings of their characters. Teachers provide children with regular opportunities to practise their spelling and to learn about spelling patterns. However, throughout the school there are inconsistencies in the spelling of some children when they write independently.

79. Teachers usually plan work which is well suited to children's abilities so that they are challenged to improve at their own level. For example, in a Year 3/4 class, the teacher challenged higher achieving children to continue a shared poem with a different focus in every couplet. Average children wrote action poems with couplets and lower achieving children were supported in writing simple haiku. On occasions when activities are not planned in this way, as, for example, in work with younger children linked to a visit, children were not sufficiently challenged and their progress was more limited. Teachers generally plan work which is lively and interesting so that children become engaged in their tasks and sustain their concentration. In Year 4, for example, because the teacher performed a rap poem in dramatic way, children were eager to extend their understanding. Teachers manage classes well and ensure that most children behave well and work hard. Teachers generally organise children and resources, including the use of information and communication technology, efficiently so that lessons proceed at an appropriately brisk pace and children work hard. For example, in the very good teaching in Year 5, the teacher had all the resources needed ready on children's tables and set clear time targets for the completion of tasks, so that they worked hard and increased their knowledge and understanding of persuasive writing. In Year 6, the teacher's knowledge and infectious enthusiasm for poetry encouraged children to deepen their understanding of how poems are linked to each other when they share common features.
80. The co-ordinator is very knowledgeable and works hard to organise the subject, support staff and ensure that assessment is used effectively in order to plan future work. However, he has limited opportunities to check important aspects of the subject such as teaching and learning and the recording of children's progress, in order to achieve a more cohesive approach to the subject to raise standards.

MATHEMATICS

81. Since the previous inspection standards in mathematics have fallen but are now beginning to rise. Assessment is now in place and children's progress is tracked more carefully. Targets are set each September to help children improve.
82. The findings from this inspection show that standards of work at ages seven and eleven are average for the age groups. This is an improvement on the school's results last year. The National Curriculum test for seven year olds this year shows that the majority of children in Year 2 attained the expected level (level 2); no children achieved below level 1 and an additional child achieved level 3. Eighty percent of Year 6 children this year have achieved level 4 or above and 25 per cent reached level 5. The current Year 6 has less children with special educational needs than last year and pupil mobility is not such a significant factor and so good improvement has been made in attainment.
83. Children in Year 2 have a good understanding of number and their place value up to 100. All are confident to double numbers or add 5 or 10 at an appropriate level; the higher attainers working with numbers up to 999. The majority of children know the two, five and ten times tables and respond promptly to any questions asked on the tables. Most children can draw a square and divide it into quarters, although the lowest attaining children are not secure with this.

When set a task of sharing or finding a quarter of a number the higher attaining children soon recognise the pattern: the four times table. Other areas covered include work on two- and three-dimensional shapes, where children describe the shapes in terms of faces, edges or corners and lines of symmetry. They can estimate and then check their answers by measuring accurately either using non-standard measures, such as a span or cubes or standard measurements such as centimetres. Children have drawn graphs to show data and successfully used them for information. They are learning to solve simple money problems and using both analogue and digital methods to tell the time. All children, including those with special educational needs, are taught the relevant vocabulary such as heavier, lighter, longer and shorter and are confident to explain what they are doing and why.

84. Children in Year 6 are becoming more secure in their knowledge of thousands, hundreds, tens and units and in using multiplication tables. They explore a variety of methods of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division to solve problems. During lessons, children demonstrate their knowledge of counting in eights both forwards and backwards, although they find backwards more difficult. They recognise patterns in numbers such as doubling and halving; the majority being able to double a fraction such as $\frac{3}{7}$ to make $\frac{6}{14}$. They are beginning to understand how to find a percentage of any given number. The higher attainers can easily work out 47 per cent of 428 without using a calculator. Children are also successful in understanding how to find an area or perimeter of a shape and how to draw and measure angles accurately. Shape, symmetry, tessellation and accurate drawing are well understood. They are confident to solve money problems and to work out decimals using all four concepts.
85. The work of lower attaining children from split age classes can be different in approach and coverage and sometimes work is not always well matched to their needs, particularly where the lower attaining children and the higher attaining children have similar tasks.
86. Children make sound progress across the school with children for whom English is an additional language making very good progress. Those in Years 3 to 6 speak English very well so no longer have support. Children with special educational needs, generally, make good progress as work is usually carefully matched to their needs and they receive additional support from learning assistants.
87. Children enjoy mathematics, particularly the mental sessions at the start of each lesson. They are well motivated and keen to succeed, especially when lessons move at a good pace and the work set is appropriately challenging. Most remain on task with little or no adult intervention. They help one another, share resources and collaborate well. They are confident to explain how they found their answers even if they are incorrect. The majority of children are well behaved but there are times when children are not as motivated because the task is not well matched to their needs. Presentation of work is usually neat.
88. The quality of teaching overall is good as it in three-quarters of lessons seen it was good or very good. In many lessons, work is planned well with appropriate tasks and good pace. However, although work is usually well matched to children's needs and abilities this is not always so. In some lessons seen there was no extension work for the higher attainers and some tasks made few demands of the children. The match of task to children's abilities needs to be a consistent feature of every lesson. Teachers are knowledgeable and enthusiastic. This creates a good working atmosphere and motivates children to succeed. Very good relationships give children confidence to explain their working out and why, even when they are incorrect or unsure. Questioning is used effectively to extend or reinforce children's knowledge and understanding. Good use is made of the plenary session at the end of each lesson, either to recap some

difficulty encountered during the lesson or for more quick-fire questions to reinforce learning. The learning assistants provide good support during group work sessions and children benefit from their input. The marking of work by teachers is, generally, helpful to children.

89. The National Numeracy Strategy has been successfully implemented and teachers have clear ideas of effective ways of teaching the various elements. The benefits of the improved mental recall and systematic development of knowledge, understanding and vocabulary can be seen in the children's confidence. The guidance provided by the numeracy strategy is now supporting teachers in their planning and is leading to better-defined learning objectives. Teachers in Years 4 and 6 are piloting the new national planning system.
90. The co-ordinator has monitored planning and observed lessons in the past but as mathematics is not currently a priority has had little opportunity to continue to do so. As there is a commitment to raising standards in mathematics further the role should be developed so that planning is monitored regularly, especially in the split-class year groups to ensure equality in provision, and the co-ordinator has an overview of standards across the school so identified weaknesses can be rectified.

SCIENCE

91. At the time of the last inspection, attainment in science was deemed to be above average at ages seven and eleven. The school's results in the 2001 national tests show that attainment was well below the national average at age eleven. This is accounted for by the increased numbers of children with special educational needs in Year 6, a significant number of children who joined the school from elsewhere and a change of teacher halfway through the final year. This inspection shows that standards are recovering as the current seven and eleven year olds are, generally, reaching standards that are average and they are making sound progress in the subject. Ninety-three per cent of eleven year olds reached level 4 or above.
92. By age seven, children learn about healthy eating and the care of teeth. A scrutiny of their work shows that they can collect data on the food they eat at home in order to group things such as a scotch egg, yoghurt and hamburger under headings such as meat or fish. Standards of presentation are sound, overall, with the higher attaining children able to present diagrams, charts and supporting notes to a good standard. The lower attainers find it harder to organise their work and their spelling and handwriting is not as accurate. Children make steady progress in their ability to carry out, and report on, experiments. They gain more insight into the characteristics of humans and animals as seen in Year 2 work where they compared babies with themselves. Discussions with children revealed that they know about camouflage, what plants and animals need to survive, what happens when water freezes and how heat changes ingredients in baking.
93. By age eleven, children learn about the human skeleton and can name the main bones and their location in the body. They have studied creatures such as woodlice and can describe their features. They have extended the vocabulary specific to the subject and know that woodlice are *isopods* because of their legs. A strength in science in the juniors is the investigative work carried out in Years 5 and 6. Children can select suitable experiments independently and they understand the need for fair testing. The school's environmental area serves as a good resource and stimulates learning about habitats as seen in Year 5 where children used a wide range of equipment such as nets, trays and viewers to collect and observe the mini-beasts found. They were able to categorise them according to their characteristics. Children use

information technology in science lessons and a good example was seen in a Year 3/4 class where children used a mouse and cursor in a computer aided presentation to the whole class.

94. Only one lesson was seen in the infant classes, on forces, and the good teaching led to good learning by children. An introductory video on pushing and pulling set the scene for further work on this topic and the teacher posed a question that made children think: *How can I push or pull using two straws and a two balls?* Teaching in the junior classes is sound, overall; in a Year 3/4 class it was good and in a Year 5/6 class it was very good. The good teaching is characterised by brisk pace, high levels of confidence and subject knowledge, imaginative ideas, explicit lesson planning and an ability to create opportunities for genuine scientific investigation. A good example of teaching facts was found in the subject co-ordinator's mixed Year 3/4 class. This was a well-prepared lesson about the human skeleton, the key objective of which was to teach the names and location of the main bones. The teacher used an effective computer aided presentation through a projector and his quiet but purposeful style enabled most children to make good progress in their learning. Work was adapted to meet the needs of various abilities and the lesson was summarised in a short but focused plenary that ensured everyone understood what had been learned. In the very good teaching in the Year 5/6 class a motivating factor was the rapid fire questions directed at particular children, which helped to keep all the class involved. Marking of children's work that is constructive and gives children advice on how to improve helps to raise standards; it is less helpful when work is merely ticked. There are some weaknesses in teaching where a lack of cohesion in lesson planning results in some children in the same year group having better experiences than others. The school has plans to remedy this.
95. Boys and girls work together well in lessons with no significant difference in progress or attainment. Attitudes and behaviour are very good and children try hard to do their best. Children with special educational needs are supported effectively and they take a full part in lessons. Every effort is made to include all children at a level relevant to their ability.
96. The science co-ordinator is well qualified and experienced in the subject but, although his provision of good resources and scrutiny of teacher's plans and children's work for the science portfolio are useful, his role in developing standards in the school is limited. Science has not been a high priority in the school development plan and there has been limited opportunity to influence the work of others by identifying good practice in science teaching through classroom observation. A new two-year rolling programme of teaching units using a nationally recommended scheme of work is to be introduced at the start of the next school year. This should provide children, especially those in split age-group classes, with more equal access to the curriculum by encouraging teachers to plan together.
97. In order to create and maintain a drive for higher standards in the subject, science needs to receive a higher priority in the school's improvement planning so that a programme of professional development is introduced in order to raise the quality of science teaching throughout the school. It is vital that the good practice, which does exist, is shared among those with less confidence in teaching the subject, through joint planning and the opportunity to see examples of good teaching.

ART AND DESIGN

98. Children achieve standards above those typically found nationally at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 because they are given a wide range of opportunities to develop their skills. Hence, the

progress that children make, including those with special educational needs, is good and they achieve well over the longer term. The school has developed a good curriculum to ensure that a broad balance is given to addressing many different media. The subject was reported on positively at the time of the last inspection although there were some deficiencies in the longer term planning. These have been addressed well and the subject has continued to improve. Few lessons were seen during this inspection and evidence is based on an analysis of work, discussions with children and teachers and from displays.

99. There is a mixed level of attainment when children enter the school but because of the good progress that is made, children at the end of Year 2 are confident in drawing, painting and using modelling materials. All children keep detailed sketchbooks that are used well to help experiment and investigate. Some of these designs are linked to design and technology work. There are some very good charcoal pictures of carnations on display produced by Year 1 and children are already showing some understanding of how to use tone to add depth.
100. Children in Years 3 to 6 continue to build well on the work in the infants. The wide range includes Viking helmets, different sketches of movement and vehicle designs. Children in Year 6 have demonstrated the good progress they have made in their drawings of trainers. Many of them have tried to show texture by blending the pencil lines and there is good attention to detail. In their lesson, design has been incorporated by looking at packaging and at ways that it can be used to influence the buyer.
101. Teachers use their knowledge well to plan lessons that will incorporate new skills, time for experimentation and a real life situation. In a Year 3 class, the work was associated with a history topic on the Greeks. The designs for vases showed empathy with the shape and particular colours that were used at that time and the finished products were of a good standard. As so few lessons were seen it is not possible to grade the quality of teaching although the evidence points to good learning. The marking of work and the comments in books suggests that there are high expectations about what should be achieved and the basic skills are taught systematically. Children put in a great deal of effort and the sketchbooks are generally kept to a high standard. Some computer work takes place through the use of painting and drawing packages. These are more in evidence in younger classes. It is an area that needs some further development although design work in presentation material has improved.
102. The planning of the subject has improved since the last inspection. The need to promote new skills is balanced with practical work. Often this is linked to other subjects and this ensures that children understand the relevance of what they are doing. The co-ordinator has been instrumental in the improvement. She has undertaken thorough reviews over a period of time and has constructed a well-organised portfolio that enables all teachers, especially those who are inexperienced, to establish an understanding of what should be expected. Resources are adequate and are enhanced by visits and visitors. A sculptor in residence has recently helped to improve the environment. He has worked with the children to make outdoor sculptures in a grassed area of the school grounds. The children are rightly proud of the achievement.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

103. Standards are above those expected nationally at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. There is a good profile to the subject within the school and much evidence on display. Children enjoy the work they are doing because the teachers are enthusiastic about what they offer. The subject

was spoken of well at the last inspection and the school has managed to maintain good improvement.

104. Children in Years 1 and 2 have been given the opportunity to make finger puppets using cardboard engineering. They have developed shadow puppets using fasteners from designs that they made prior to their work. Their good standard is shown in the way that they understand how they only need to draw detailed outlines because a light shines behind each model whereas their finger puppets had to be detailed all over. There is a good balance of work that develops skills and understanding. There is good clear progress made during these years.
105. Children in Years 3 to 6 have been given many opportunities to develop their skills. These include designing packaging, boxes and shields. They have been able to work on controllable vehicles and have made lighthouses using batteries. They have designed and made their own pizzas and have explained why these were tasty or not and how they might be improved. There is a good balance across all strands of the subject including planning, designing, making and evaluating. An example of this was in the work on monsters. There was an explanation of the design, the method used and a drawing of the finished product. In this way children during these years are able to see how other subjects link together and also the specific skills that are being used in design and technology.
106. Too few lessons were seen during the inspection to make an overall judgement about teaching although from the evidence provided by the school and discussions it is clear that good progress is made. Children are enthusiastic about their work and talk freely about what they have done. They show good understanding about the decisions they take for working in a particular way. In the lessons seen in Year 5 the children were making fairground models. Prior to this session the class had looked at photographs and models with rotating parts to see how they worked. During this practical lesson they then experimented with different types of pulleys linked to battery motors. The teacher encouraged all levels of ability to improve. Those with some technical skill were encouraged to try and change a rotary motion into a linear motion and those with lesser ability were being encouraged to look more closely at the way they had built their models. By the end, a number of children could talk about how they were going to improve what they had done and reassemble the whole fairground ride in light of their discoveries. Time is used well. Teachers plan their work in blocks to enable a less hurried approach to the subject. This helps children value what they are doing and to gain a lot more from it. The few lessons and the scrutiny of work seen indicate that children put in a good level of effort and concentrate and work well together.
107. The experienced and focused co-ordinator has a clear view about where improvement is needed. This includes more use of information and communication technology and a better system of assessment. She has been able to monitor planning and work but has little knowledge about classroom practice because she has not monitored many lessons. Hence, she is not sure about the quality of the methods used on a day-to-day basis. Resources are adequate and have recently been enhanced by the purchase of technical play models that can be programmed by computer. Some children are now benefiting from good computer skills that are helping enhance their work in design and technology.

GEOGRAPHY

108. The previous inspection judged standards in geography to be typical of those expected for seven and eleven year olds. There was limited opportunity to see lessons in the subject during this

inspection but from those seen, scrutiny of children's work and discussions with children in Years 2 and 6, there is evidence to show that standards have been maintained as they are similar.

109. In geography, only one lesson was seen in the infants and this was in Year 1. The teaching was good and resulted in good learning. The teacher made sure children settled quickly to their tasks and used the plenary effectively to evaluate the learning that had taken place about the Arctic. Discussions with children showed that they know where they live and that their town is in England. They can talk about the differences between their small town and London. They know that maps are useful to find places. They have learned about other countries from *Barnaby Bear* who makes visits to various places with children on their holidays. Good use is made of the local environment in making comparisons with places worldwide. A study of Sherborne and Penarth uses high quality aerial and ground level photographs alongside maps in Year 2.
110. The teaching in the juniors is never less than sound; in one lesson in Year 4 it was good and in a Year 5/6 class it was very good. In Year 3 the children make a comparison of Sherborne and a Mexican town, Tocuaro. The children compare the weather, seasons, children's activities and daily life. Progression in map work skills is a strength and children's understanding is good; starting with a map of their home-to-school journey and finishing with a plan of an object in the classroom. In an inspiring lesson, a teacher in a split age-group class used the topic of landfill to discuss how decisions taken locally may affect people's lives. The teacher led an exciting discussion on the recycling of rubbish using video clips, talk and a written task. His excellent relationships with the children enabled them to join in the totally inclusive discussion. They settled well to the written task and produced some very good, well-illustrated work.
111. The school's portfolio of geography work shows that there is sound progression in the development of skills and understanding and a good range of work with maps, charts, diagrams and plans. Good links have been developed with a Ghanaian school in an attempt not only to further children's knowledge of places but also to engender a sense of caring for others in less fortunate circumstances, by raising funds activities for the children who attend a primary school in Bolgatanga.
112. The subject co-ordinator is a suitably qualified and widely experienced teacher with a firm grasp of how the subject should develop. The raising of standards is regarded as a priority. The new rolling programme of geography plans, with better coverage and continuity of teaching across year groups, is seen as a big step in the planned improvement. A process for monitoring children's work is in place. The co-ordinator now wishes to observe lessons and has the confidence and capacity to improve standards in the subject if provided with the opportunity. The school now needs to ensure that the subject fits into the school's longer-term plan of priorities and that a clear and purposeful programme of development is established.

HISTORY

113. The previous inspection judged standards in history to be typical of those expected for seven and eleven year olds. There was no opportunity to see lessons in the subject during this inspection but from scrutiny of children's work and discussions with children in Years 2 and 6, there is evidence to show that standards have been maintained as they are similar and progress is sound. As it was not possible to see any lessons, a judgement on the quality of teaching cannot be made.

114. Seven year olds enjoyed talking about the work they had covered in the past, particularly the study of old and new toys, many of which they had brought in to school. They have examined artefacts from the Dorset Museum Service, such as a stone axe head, before trying to identify their uses. An example of the best of the work seen in the infants was a study of castles, which made strong links with the geography curriculum. Studies of the reasons for choosing the site of a castle and the roles of those who lived in it were successful in bringing alive mediaeval times.
115. Year 6 children were able to discuss their visit to Nothe Fort in Weymouth to experience life in wartime Britain wearing clothes of the forties. In the juniors, the problems of planning for split age-group classes was highlighted in that one mixed age-group class of Years 3 and 4 children were required to cover Romans, Aztecs, the local history of Sherborne, Vikings, Ancient Greece and the Anglo-Saxons in twelve months. The best work seen was in Year 4 in a challenging study about the influence of John Lennon on recent generations. Children were able to describe in some detail, members of the Beatles and their songs. This had inspired one child to produce a joint piece of work with a parent on the life and times of the music group.
116. Coverage of the curriculum is very wide with no obvious chronological progression owing to the fact that teachers have planned a curriculum designed to develop key skills in contrast to planning the content of history according to the units of the nationally recommended scheme of work. The long-term plan is to be changed from September 2002 into a rolling two-year cycle of topics to ensure children in split age-group classes do not repeat work. The co-ordinator views this as a key development in raising standards during the next few years by ensuring consistency of planning across the same age groups.
117. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and suitably qualified but has limited experience in co-ordinating the subject particularly at a time when history has not been a priority in the school's four-year review cycle. Assessments are carried out at the end of units of work and the co-ordinator has produced a useful checklist for guidance in evaluating children's work. There needs to be opportunities for the co-ordinator to monitor more rigorously the quality of teaching and learning in classes.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

118. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6 children's attainment is in line with that expected nationally. On entry to the reception class children have a wide range of skills. Some are able to use a mouse confidently whilst others are very inexperienced. Sound progress is made through Years 1 and 2. By the end of Year 2 most children are confident about using computers and other types of electrical devices. They can use a keyboard, work through programs and use the computer to aid them with other subjects. They are beginning to understand how programming a robot can make it follow instructions along a route. In a Year 1/2 class, the children were given cards to work out a route. They managed to perform this as human robots and then transfer this knowledge when using an electrical robot on the ground. Their understanding was at a level that is expected for their age. They could make it turn left and right, move forward and complete a simple route. All children, including those in Year 2, were not able to build this program up so that the robot performed multiple directions.
119. Children in Years 3 to 6 make suitable progress from the early gains they make in the infants. By Year 6 children were seen making their own presentations about various topics. They were able to plan slides, include graphics obtained from the Internet and to add their own words. To

help them make the presentation successful they were taking account of putting dark colours over light backgrounds and animating the words with sound and movement. Children in Year 3 are able to build up a sequence of instructions to move a pointer on a screen. Progress through these years in sound and children achieve what is expected of them over time. This has not always been the case. At the time of the last inspection there were some shortcomings in the provision of information and communication technology because some of the computers were old and unreliable. This weakness has been addressed well.

120. Teaching through all classes is sound. Teachers have suitable subject knowledge and are able to teach at the level expected. They are able to answer most questions, some of which are of a technical nature. There is a level of confidence that has improved since the last inspection, partly due to training through the New Opportunities Funding (NOF). Lessons are conducted at a good pace and children are enthusiastic and interested learners. They concentrate hard and become involved in what they are doing. Even the youngest children share the resources well and learn from each other. Teachers do not always encourage pairs to take turns. As a result, some less confident or shy children do not always get to operate the keyboard for a long enough time. Children with special educational needs get good support from teachers, learning assistants and their friends. This ensures that they also have good access to all the possibilities in the lesson.
121. Teachers have become more adept at incorporating computer work within other subjects. In a Year 3/4 science lesson the teacher used a program to help the class learn parts of the body. This also included the use of a projector. There were benefits both in learning about how ICT can help us in everyday life but also in consolidating the learning of difficult names of bones. In a geography lesson, the children were finding out information from the Internet to help in their research. This involved contrasting an area around Weymouth and Sherborne. They had also learnt about how they needed high quality presentations if they were to attract people to an area. All these instances show how teachers are now using ICT as a tool for learning as required by the new nationally agreed guidelines for the subject.
122. The school has a suitable number of laptop computers that are moved between each class. There are some technical difficulties but teachers cope with these well. There is a small range of other equipment but as yet not enough emphasis is placed on developing computers programs for use as sensors as in temperature measurement in science, for example. Funding for the subject has been allocated to upgrade the equipment on a rolling programme although the skilled co-ordinator has not yet fully finalised the plan. He is newly appointed and has conducted an audit of the subject. This has involved looking at planning but has not yet extended to monitoring the quality of teaching and especially how teachers use questioning techniques. The money from the National grid for Learning (NGfL) has provided the school with better resources and has helped to improve the provision.

MUSIC

123. Standards in music have been maintained and remain very similar to those in the previous inspection. However, there is now no evidence of unsatisfactory behaviour or undemanding tasks as highlighted in that report. Findings from this inspection show that standards at ages seven and eleven are typical for the age groups.
124. By the end of Year 2, children are accurately copying rhyme patterns, both slow and fast. They sing enthusiastically and sustain a simple two-part song, like an echo, unaccompanied. The sound is very pleasant as it is in tune and the words are clear. Children know the names of

percussion instruments and how to play them correctly. In a Year 1 lesson, children put sound effects to the story *Peace at Last*. This was recorded and discussed for ways of improving the effects. The book came to life with the sound effects chosen by the children.

125. By the end of Year 6, children showed they are familiar with the instruments of the orchestra, although, initially, they struggled to recall the families. They can record their compositions using graphic scores and write down their feelings about pieces of music they have listened to. For example, when describing the *War of the Worlds* children described it as *mysterious and strange* or that *the sound effects of unscrewing the capsule were very good*. Another child felt the *Pastoral Symphony* was very peaceful and relaxing. Children are encouraged to use appropriate vocabulary for dynamics such as *piano* meaning soft or *forte* meaning loud. To devise a rhythm accompaniment for a sea shanty was quite a challenge and not all children were accurate when writing down their chosen rhythms. The singing heard during assemblies, hymn practice and choir rehearsal was good; tuneful with clear words and a pleasant sound. In a Year 5 lesson, children confidently explore composing music on tuned percussion instruments, xylophone or glockenspiel and adding untuned percussion such as drums, tambourines and maracas. The compositions are based on the pentatonic scale and the results are effective and varied.
126. The progress of children across the school is at least sound and good in relation to singing. Children develop an all round appreciation of music and relevant skills to enable them to enjoy and understand music and its elements such as timbre, pitch, rhythm, tempo.
127. Children enjoy their music lessons. This was particularly evident during an infant hymn practice, a choir practice and a Year 5 music lesson where the enthusiasm of the teachers motivated children to sing and play well. They listen carefully and respond to teachers' questions. All children participate and in most lessons remain well focused on the task. They have sufficient confidence to clap, on their own, rhymes for the class to follow and to play their compositions. The older children work very well together in small groups, collaborating as they compose their music.
128. The quality of teaching is good overall. It is never less than sound and in most lessons seen it was good or very good. Teachers' expertise in music is used effectively as those with most knowledge take lessons where class teachers feel less secure. All teachers have very good relationships with the children and this gives children confidence to respond and demonstrate what they can do. Where teaching is good or very good, teachers' knowledge, expertise and enthusiasm motivate children to succeed and achieve higher standards. Questions are used effectively to extend children's knowledge and understanding. Lessons are planned carefully with a range of activities and the good pace sustains children's interest. Junior children record their work in a special book that is used as they move from class to class; this provides a good record to show what they have done when they leave school.
129. There is a knowledgeable and enthusiastic co-ordinator in place who has reviewed the policy and is evaluating the present scheme of work to give more guidance about activities. The use of the expertise of individual teachers has a positive effect on children's learning. Children have the opportunity to perform in school productions at Easter and Christmas. They also sing carols in the community for senior citizens and in the town. There are recorder clubs for both beginners and more experienced players. The music curriculum is enriched by the various musical groups that have visited the school. These range from the local town brass band to Samba and the jazz band from the secondary school. All these help to enhance the children's musical understanding and enjoyment. Instrumental tuition is available for violin, keyboard,

brass, flute, clarinet and saxophone if parents contribute towards the cost. The school is used as a venue for the local primary school's orchestra, who meet once a month.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

130. During the inspection it was possible to see only a limited number of lessons. However, evidence from the one lesson seen in the infant stage and the lessons seen in the junior stage indicates that in the aspect of physical education seen during the inspection, games, standards are higher than would normally be expected for children aged seven and eleven. Evidence from teachers' planning and discussions with teachers indicates that the subject meets statutory requirements for the National Curriculum.
131. In the lesson seen in Year 2 and the lessons seen in the junior stage the quality of teaching was good and the quality of children's learning was correspondingly good. In Year 2 the teacher ensured that children warmed up and cooled down thoroughly so that they were well prepared to begin and cease rigorous activity. The importance of this and the links with healthy life styles were further enhanced when children were given the opportunity to measure their pulse rates before and after exercise. Because the teacher showed good observational skills she was able to analyse children's performance in order to provide opportunities for them to reflect on how they might improve it. This was further enhanced when children were given the opportunity to comment on each other's performance in order to consider how they might improve their ball control and the accuracy of their sending skills. This helped them to achieve high standards in their ball control and co-ordination.
132. In the lessons seen in the junior stage the quality of teaching was good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and explain skills clearly. Children in Years 3/4, for example, were helped to improve their striking skills when the teacher carefully explained how to position themselves and where to hold the bat. In Year 5, the teacher interacted well with children, moving from group to group, encouraging and advising them on how they might improve their skills. Children and equipment are carefully organised so that lessons run smoothly and children work hard. However, sometimes, teachers did not sufficiently ensure that children used their time efficiently, when waiting to use the ball holders for example. This resulted in lost opportunities to develop their skills. Because the warm up sessions concentrated on those parts of the body particularly used in striking and throwing, children were well prepared for their activities. Teachers have high expectations of children's involvement in their rounders games and control them well. This helps to develop good sporting attitudes and good behaviour. For example, children in Year 5 were eager to take part and reacted well when they were judged to be out. They readily applauded the achievements of others. Relationships are very good. Because children know that teachers respect and value their efforts they are confident to work hard in developing their skills. Children collaborate well, practising skills in small groups, sharing equipment and working together as a team.
133. Although it was not possible to see any swimming lessons during the inspection, evidence from talking to teachers and scrutinising documents indicates that they achieve high standards. The school also provides a wide range of outdoor activities during the residential visits. These help to develop children's self-esteem and their skills in working and living together. A real strength of the school is its provision for extra-curricular sporting activities. Teachers, supported by parents, work very hard and enthusiastically to ensure that children have access to a wide range of activities such as, football, rugby, netball, gymnastics, country dancing, athletics and swimming. The majority of children in the junior stage take advantage of these opportunities and there is a strong sporting ethos in the school. The school participates very successfully in

competitive sport with other schools; some children reach very high standards and are selected to compete at local, area and county level.

134. The subject is effectively co-ordinated. The co-ordinator organises the subject well. He is very knowledgeable and provides good support for staff and children. He monitors teaching and learning efficiently and plays a significant role in the development of the school's strong sporting ethos. The school makes good use of its well-planned accommodation and playing fields and its good range of resources.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

135. The last inspection judged standards in religious education to be at the levels expected in the Dorset Locally Agreed Syllabus at ages seven and eleven and progress was sound. This inspection findings are similar so standards have been maintained. There is an improvement in the detail in the scheme of work which aids lesson planning and children's development in the subject is assessed as shown in the annual reports to parents. This has led to improved progress which is, generally, good.
136. Seven year olds are learning Bible stories and celebrating major Christian festivals such as Christmas and Easter. They are introduced to Judaism and compare similarities and differences between the stories and traditions associated with both faiths. Children are encouraged to think about aspects such as where God might live and they explain in simple terms what they believe heaven is like. They are beginning to appreciate the necessity for rules in their classrooms and relate these to the Ten Commandments. Teachers ask questions that demand thoughtful responses such as *What rules can help people live in harmony?*
137. By age eleven, children have learned about other world religions such as Islam, Sikhism and Hinduism, as well as deepening their understanding of Christianity. They know about the major festivals celebrated in these faiths and can explain the significance of the symbols used in religion. Concepts such as loss, suffering and death are developed through lessons which address funeral practices and children are encouraged by teachers to explore their own feelings about loss. A strength of religious education is children's growing understanding that, although practices may be different, world faiths often promote similar fundamental values.
138. Teaching in religious education is never less than sound and in half the lessons seen it was good. Teachers follow the scheme of work in the locally agreed syllabus for the various year groups and lesson plans are detailed with clear identification of what children are expected to learn. Teachers go to a lot of trouble to extend their knowledge of other religions and carry out their own research in preparation for lessons. The issues they explore with children are challenging and encourage them to think about what it means to have a faith and how it affects the lives and behaviour of those who belong to a religious group. Children particularly enjoy the practical tasks that teachers provide, as seen in a Year 3/4 lesson on symbols in Sikhism and the examination of obituary notices in Year 6, and this helps to motivate them hold their interest. The very good relationships between children and teachers mean that children are confident in expressing their thoughts and feelings because they know they are valued. Class control is usually good, especially in those lessons where teachers have effective strategies such as timed tasks and a brisk pace that ensure children are kept busy with their learning.
139. Circle time, which is an integral part of class assemblies in which children sit together to discuss an issue, is used very effectively to address matters that have arisen in behaviour, such as teasing, and to raise children's self-esteem. Sympathetic questioning by teachers helps children

to confront the consequences of their actions and the opportunity to explore feelings helps them to cope with daily life. Teachers are careful to include all children in these sessions and boys and girls are comfortable expressing their opinions as seen in a session where children highlighted good characteristics about themselves and others.

140. The daily acts of worship meet statutory requirements and make a positive contribution to religious education as they are often based on religious stories and address issues such as forgiveness, responsibility for the environment and the concept of Christ as the light of the world.
141. The co-ordinator for religious education has only just taken over the role but has already made an impact by reviewing the policy, seeking the advice of outside experts, and auditing resources. This has resulted in closer attention paid to the agreed syllabus, better progress as children move through the year groups and improved resources, especially for faiths other than Christianity.