

INSPECTION REPORT

**DOWNTON CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

Downton, near Salisbury

LEA area: Wiltshire

Unique reference number: 126475

Headteacher: Gill Harwood

Reporting inspector: Raymond Jardine
7428

Dates of inspection: 13 – 16 January 2003

Inspection number: 251694

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 aided

Age range of pupils: 4 - 11

Gender of pupils: mixed

School address: Gravel Close
Downton
Salisbury

Postcode: SP5 3LZ

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Janet McGee

Date of previous inspection: 9 – 12 March 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Team members | | | Subject responsibilities | Aspect responsibilities |
|--------------|-----------------|----------------------|---|--|
| 7428 | Raymond Jardine | Registered inspector | Science Design and technology Information and communication technology Equal opportunities | What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further? |
| 9837 | Roy Walsh | Lay inspector | | Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school work in partnership with parents? |
| 31819 | Shirley Duggins | Team inspector | Foundation Stage Mathematics Art Music | How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? |
| 3942 | Keith Sanderson | Team inspector | English Geography History Physical education Special educational needs | How well does the school care for its pupils? |

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Downton Primary is a voluntary-aided Church of England school situated in the village of Downton, south of Salisbury. It is about the same size as primary schools nationally. Of the 227 pupils on roll, there are more girls than boys and in some classes the difference is quite marked. Most pupils come from the parish of Downton, that includes the villages of Charlton-All-Saints and Standlynch, but a significant proportion come from further afield. There is little ethnic diversity in the area, almost all pupils are of white UK heritage and none have English as an additional language. There are a small number of travellers' children from a nearby site at Lode Hill. Only seven pupils (three per cent) are eligible for free school meals, which is below the national average. There are 25 pupils on the register of special educational needs (11 per cent), well below the national average. Of these, 12 receive additional support through outside agencies and they include two pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Need. Their needs vary and include dyslexic tendencies, medical, moderate learning, speech and communication difficulties. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is broad in range and about average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very effective school with many strengths and few weaknesses. It provides very well for pupils' personal development, and the climate for learning is very good. As a result, pupils are happy and keen to learn, and they achieve very well in many subjects. The teaching is good and much is very good. Lessons are challenging and planned well, and pupils' individual needs and aptitudes are supported. The staff are very strongly committed and involved in the school's management and direction under the excellent leadership of its headteacher. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils like school and have excellent relationships and attitudes. Their behaviour is very good.
- Pupils achieve very well in mathematics, science, information and communication technology, history, and music. Their reading, speaking and listening skills are very good.
- Teachers plan stimulating and challenging lessons where pupils are encouraged to speculate, explain and solve problems and as a result their learning is often very good.
- Very good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs and the gifted and talented so that they are fully integrated into school life.
- The curriculum is very good and includes an excellent range of extra-curricular activities, clubs and visits.
- The headteacher's excellent leadership and vision have inspired close teamwork and a strong commitment to improvement throughout the school.

What could be improved

- Pupils' writing is not as well developed as other aspects of their literacy because they have too few opportunities to write extended prose in different styles and contexts.
(This is a priority in the school's development plan.)

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in March 1998 shortly after the current headteacher was appointed. Since then the key issues identified have been addressed very well and the school has made very good progress. It has developed very effective systems for monitoring its performance, particularly standards and teaching quality, and staff training is now matched well to school priorities. Teaching assistants are effective and work closely with teachers. The school also makes much better use of assessment information to guide teaching and its planning. The standards of seven-year-olds have risen, especially in mathematics, and there have also been substantial improvements in science and in information and communication technology throughout the school. The headteacher's vision and leadership that have transformed the school's climate for both staff and pupils are major factors in these successes. All staff

are now closely involved in the school's management and development, they work closely and their capacity and commitment to improve further are strong.

STANDARDS

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

| Performance in: | compared with | | | |
|-----------------|---------------|------|------|-----------------|
| | all schools | | | similar schools |
| | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2002 |
| English | A | D | C | D |
| Mathematics | A | D | B | D |
| Science | C | B | A | A |

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

The table shows that in 2002 the standards of eleven-year-olds were well above the national average in science, above in mathematics and broadly in line in English. This represents a good recovery from the dip in standards of the previous year, when the school was subject to serious flooding. The improvements in 2002 were also achieved despite a period of major new building and refurbishment of existing buildings that caused considerable disruption to classes and routines. Science has improved substantially in the past three years. Comparisons with schools in similar socio-economic circumstances show that standards were below average in English and mathematics but well above in science. However, when compared to those in schools with similar standards at the age of seven, pupils made at least the progress expected in English and mathematics, while their progress in science was very good. More-able pupils achieved well in all these subjects. The school fell short of its target in English but exceeded it in mathematics and science in 2002. The 2002 tests for seven-year-olds show standards well above those nationally in reading, writing and mathematics, an improvement since the previous year. Standards were also well above similar schools in reading and above in writing and mathematics. More-able pupils achieved particularly well in reading and writing. Standards in mathematics have improved substantially over the past three years.

Inspection findings confirm that standards continue to rise. Pupils in Year 6 achieve above the national average in English, and well above in their reading. They are well above average in mathematics and science. Seven-year-olds attain standards above the national average in writing and mathematics and well above in reading. Pupils achieve well throughout the school, and in some subjects very well. For example, by the age of eleven, pupils achieve standards well above the expected levels in music, history and most aspects of information and communication technology. Pupils with special educational needs and those from socially disadvantaged backgrounds make good progress, and those who are gifted and talented very good.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|--|
| Attitudes to the school | Excellent. Pupils enjoy being at school and are keen to take part in all that the school offers them. |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms | Very good. Pupils understand the high standards expected of them and behave very well in class and around the school. Incidents of unacceptable behaviour are rare and addressed very effectively. The unacceptable behaviour of a very small number of boys last year gave rise to a larger number of exclusions. |
| Personal development and relationships | Very good. Pupils take responsibility and show initiative both within class and around the school; relationships are excellent. |

| | |
|------------|---|
| Attendance | Satisfactory. Morning registration is orderly and purposeful. Unauthorised absences are well below average. |
|------------|---|

TEACHING AND LEARNING

| Teaching of pupils in: | Reception | Years 1 – 2 | Years 3 – 6 |
|------------------------|-----------|-------------|-------------|
| Quality of teaching | Good | Good | Very good |

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

Teaching and learning are good, much is very good and there is some that is excellent. There is none that is unsatisfactory. The teaching of literacy and numeracy throughout the school is good. The National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy have been fully implemented and are being adapted and improved in the light of the school's monitoring of their effect on standards. Lessons are stimulating and most are very challenging. The climate in lessons is encouraging, secure and focussed on everyone learning together. Teachers plan them carefully around clear learning intentions. Lessons are well structured and feature very-well-conducted class discussions and mental and oral practice. However, the closing plenary sequence is sometimes less effective or overlooked. Relationships are excellent throughout and lessons very inclusive of pupils with different aptitudes and social backgrounds. Teachers expect pupils to think for themselves and encourage them to speculate and reason, solve problems and make decisions. Gifted and talented pupils in particular learn very well within this climate. Subjects are normally taught by teams of specialist teachers throughout the school, and their enthusiasm and very good subject knowledge have a very positive impact on pupils' learning.

Teachers meet the particular needs of pupils well. They use their assessments to adapt the level of demand of tasks and activities to pupils' abilities, sometimes grouping them by ability in lessons or forming sets in Years 5 and 6 for English and mathematics. Occasionally, less able pupils can flounder until spotted by their teacher. However, where teaching assistants are available in lessons they are very effective in helping pupils with special educational needs to learn. Homework is regularly and appropriately set. Marking is good.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect | Comment |
|---|--|
| The quality and range of the curriculum | Very good. The curriculum is broad, balanced and enriched by an excellent range of extra-curricular activities, clubs and visits. Music provision is excellent and older pupils can take additional languages |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs | Very good. Teaching assistants support these pupils very well so that they are fully involved in lessons and make good progress. The co-ordinator of special educational needs is very effective, liaising with outside agencies and parents to help alleviate potential barriers to learning. |
| Provision for pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | Very good. Pupils' social development is excellent. They acquire a very good understanding of their social and moral obligations towards others. Provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development is good. They learn about and respect the values, beliefs and customs of their own and other cultures. |
| How well the school cares for its pupils | Well. Pupils' personal development and welfare are supported very well. Incidents of oppressive behaviour are rare and dealt with promptly. The school closely monitors and promotes good behaviour. Arrangements for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are good throughout and used effectively to guide planning and teaching. |

The school works hard to involve parents in its life and they respond well in many ways: by helping children within the school and at home, raising additional funds and attending school events. They are kept well informed of the school's work, the curriculum and their children's progress.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect | Comment |
|---|--|
| Leadership and management provided by the headteacher and other key staff | Very good. The school's climate has been transformed and staff are strongly committed to improve and succeed as a result of the headteacher's excellent leadership and vision. The deputy headteacher and other key staff working closely as a team lead and manage the school very well. |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities | Very well. The governing body is led very well, committee structures ensure that its work is efficient and governors know the school's strengths and weaknesses. They challenge constructively what it does and are closely involved in monitoring its performance and shaping its direction. |
| The school's evaluation of its performance | Very good. The school rigorously evaluates pupils' achievements and its provision, particularly teaching. Arrangements for managing and developing the staff's performance are closely linked to school priorities, and the school's development plan contains appropriate targets and strategies for improvement. |
| The strategic use of resources | Very good. Resources are carefully directed to appropriate priorities, and specific funds are used effectively for their designated purpose. The school's budget is very well managed and contingencies are planned for. |

Teachers and support staff are adequate in number and well qualified with a very good breadth of expertise between them. Resources for most subjects are good, although the library is under-stocked with books. Plans are currently in place to refurbish it. The accommodation has recently been almost completely refurbished and new additions have been added. It is now good. The school applies the principles of best value very well, by comparing its standards rigorously and challenging the quality of its provision, especially teaching. It seeks good value in its purchases and consults about its development widely both within the school and in the wider community.

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 like coming to school and behave well • The teaching is good and pupils are provided with stimulating activities • Children are expected to work hard and they make good progress • The school helps their children become mature and responsible • The school is well led and managed • A good range of extra-curricular activities is offered | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some parents would like more information about how their children are getting on • A small minority would like the school to work more closely with parents |

Inspectors agree with parents' very positive views of the school. The school works hard to involve parents in school life and provides them with a wealth of information. Written reports and meetings provide parents with good information and opportunities to find out more about their children's progress.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The school is popular and over-subscribed. The socio-economic circumstances of the majority of families are above average, but a minority experience quite extreme social deprivation. While the proportion of pupils on the register of special educational needs is below average, their needs are wide ranging; some are quite severe and include severe emotional and behavioural difficulties, and medical and physical disabilities. Most pupils benefit from pre-school education. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school in their reception year is wide ranging but overall about average.
2. Pupils' standards in the national tests for seven-year-olds in 2002 were well above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. They were well above those of similar schools in reading and above in writing and mathematics. These results represent a substantial improvement since the previous year, when there was a dip. Girls have achieved better than boys in both reading and writing in recent years, although the proportions of boys and girls in each year group has also varied substantially so that these variations may not be significant. Mathematics in particular has improved rapidly over the past three years. Pupils achieved well last year in all these subjects and especially in reading.
3. The standards of eleven-year-olds in 2002 were more varied. They were in line with the national average in English, above in mathematics and well above in science. Standards were below those of schools in similar socio-economic circumstances in English and mathematics and well above in science. However, when compared to those in schools that four years previously had similar standards at the age of seven, pupils achieved at least satisfactory standards in English and mathematics, while they achieved very well in science. Pupils' reading was significantly better than their writing. Above average proportions of pupils achieved the higher levels in English and mathematics and they were well above in science compared to those in similar schools. Boys and girls achieved equally well. The school exceeded its targets for mathematics and science but fell a little short of that for English. These results represent a good recovery from the dip experienced in 2001.
4. The dip in standards in 2001 and the subsequent recovery are due to several factors. The school has in the past two years suffered some severe problems arising from flooding and building refurbishment, and parents have commented on how well it managed during some trying times. In the spring of 2001 the whole locality suffered serious flooding that closed the school for over five weeks. At that time some pupils were absent for even longer periods because of the effects of the floods on their homes, and these problems undoubtedly adversely affected standards. For most of the 2002 academic year the school had also to cope with extensive new building works and the refurbishment of existing buildings that was completed in June. This too had an adverse impact on staff morale as classes were re-organised and moved around several times. Even so, the standards of seven-year-olds and eleven-year-olds, especially in science, improved substantially as teachers and support staff worked hard to overcome these problems.
5. Inspection findings confirm that standards are continuing to rise. By the time pupils leave school at the age of eleven they are likely to attain standards well above those nationally in reading, mathematics and science, and above the national average in writing. By the age of seven, pupils are likely to achieve standards at least above the

national average in writing and mathematics, and well above in reading. Almost all pupils in the Foundation Stage are likely to reach the Early Learning Goals in all the areas of learning by the end of the Foundation Stage and in language, communication and literacy, and mathematical, personal, social and emotional development, some are likely to exceed them.

6. Pupils achieve well throughout the school, and in many subjects they achieve very well. There are a number of underlying reasons. Teachers work in specialist teams across the school rather than with a specific year group, and share and build on their best practice. They are enthusiastic and have very good subject knowledge, so that lessons are challenging and often very interesting. Pupils of all social backgrounds and those with disabilities are fully integrated in classes, the climate for learning is very positive and relationships throughout are excellent. Another contributory factor is the very good use made of information and communication technology to help raise standards in most subjects.
7. Pupils' speaking and listening skills develop very well and their standards are above average by the age of seven years and well above by the age of eleven. They listen attentively and express themselves clearly and with growing confidence. Pupils are strongly encouraged to express their ideas and to discuss them in lessons, and teachers also place a strong emphasis on the acquisition of new vocabulary. Standards in reading are well above average. By the age of seven most pupils read a range of texts accurately and discuss plots and characters. They develop their skills further as they mature, and by Year 6 many critically appreciate features of books, discussing themes and characters and looking for meaning beyond the text.
8. Writing standards are above the national average by the ages of seven and eleven, but are not as well developed as other aspects of pupils' literacy. Most seven-year-olds write simple sentences with accurate spelling and more-able pupils write complex sentences with connectives and accurate punctuation. They continue to develop their spelling, grammar and punctuation and a range of styles and purposes for writing in Years 3 to 6. There is a strong focus on teaching effective writing skills in lessons, and the school is working hard to raise standards in this area, but pupils are not practising these skills sufficiently by writing at length, particularly in other subjects.
9. Most pupils develop good numeracy skills as they move through the school, and over a third achieve standards above those expected nationally by the age of eleven. By the age of seven, pupils understand place values involving two-digit numbers and use this knowledge to add and subtract numbers, such as 60 from 80. They can order numbers up to 100, and the more able apply their skills to solve written money problems. They estimate and compare measures of length and use mathematical vocabulary routinely. Pupils are expected to choose efficient mental and written strategies when solving problems and explain them to others. By the age of eleven many are solving problems involving all four operations to two or three decimal places; for example, when calculating mentally 0.042 multiplied by 100 and then divided by 10 and they can round up numbers such as 3.275 to two or one decimal place.
10. Pupils achieve very well in science. By the age of eleven they develop a very good understanding of key concepts across the breadth of the subject. Almost all in Year 6 can plan and carry out a fair test and about half demonstrate higher skills when evaluating their experiments and suggesting improvements to their methods. Pupils also develop very good skills in information and communication technology and apply them very effectively within most subjects. By the time they leave, many pupils can routinely research information from various sources and combine text, images, sound and movement to create imaginative presentations and reports that take account of their intended audience.

11. Pupils achieve well in all other subjects to reach standards above those expected for eleven-year-olds nationally, except in art, where their standards are satisfactory by the age of eleven. Pupils' skills in art develop well by the age of seven but are not built on as consistently as in other subjects in later years. They achieve very well in music, where the school's provision is excellent, and also in history.
12. Pupils with special educational needs, those from socially deprived backgrounds and the children of travellers make good progress. Teachers know these pupils very well and adapt work in most lessons appropriately to meet their needs. Where teaching assistants are available they are very effective and work closely with teachers to both support and assess specific pupils. Their individual education plans are very clear in providing the focus of support and improvement. The school also works very closely with outside agencies, especially those from the local education authority, to help alleviate barriers to learning such as poor attendance and physical disabilities. Staff receive appropriate training to address the needs of those with Statements of Educational Need; for example, to manage challenging and violent behaviour. Gifted and talented pupils achieve very well, especially in Years 3 to 6, because of the strong emphasis placed on pupils applying what they have learned to explain patterns, solve problems and independently research what they do not know. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls seen during the inspection.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

13. Pupils' attitudes to school are excellent. Their behaviour, relationships and personal development are all very good. Average attendance levels are satisfactory.
14. The pupils are eager to be in school and their attitudes to learning are excellent, an improvement since the last inspection, when this aspect was judged to be good. Parents share this view, with 99 per cent of responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire agreeing that children like the school. Diligence and good levels of concentration were observed in all subjects and year groups, including the Foundation Stage, and there is no shortage of enthusiastic pupils willing to contribute to discussions or answer questions in lessons. This level of commitment to learning is also reflected in the standard of work produced. The school provides many extra-curricular activities, which quickly become over-subscribed due to pupils' enthusiasm.
15. Behaviour is very good both in lessons and around the school. Pupils create and sign up to their own classroom rules at the start of the year. They understand the concepts of good and bad behaviour and of applying it to their own circumstances. At lunch and break times some purposeful and energetic play is enjoyed and behaviour is very good. Although a few incidents of aggressive behaviour occur from time to time, staff deal with these quickly and effectively. Break and lunchtimes present good examples of the school's inclusive community, where pupils look after the interests of others. A few pupils across the age range display challenging behaviour, but these are dealt with firmly yet sympathetically. Over the past year it has been necessary to exclude a small number of pupils for serious breaches of the school rules. All these incidents have been well documented and dealt with consistently and fairly. These breaches are exceptions to the norm, where the very good behaviour exhibited across the school contributes in a very positive way to the learning environment.
16. Pupils' personal development is very good. Excellent relationships are apparent across the school, and they are maintained by valuing and respecting pupils' academic ability and their all-round potential and capability. Teachers and support staff have high expectations of pupils, and the latter respond positively to this. Pupils feel well cared for and are confident in approaching staff with any concerns. The well-organised

school council is very effective at representing the views of pupils to the staff. Two representatives from each class are voted onto the council, which meets regularly throughout the year to put forward pupils' views. They have recently influenced catering decisions and are considering how to improve the way new pupils are inducted into school life. Pupils of all ages willingly take on duties in the school, from younger ones taking registers to the office, to older ones supervising the library, helping in school assemblies and controlling pupil movement around the school and in the playground. All take these responsibilities seriously, which helps to support the smooth running of the school.

17. Attendance rates are satisfactory. Morning registration is orderly and purposeful, and creates a good beginning to the school day. Rates of unauthorised absence are low. The school provides a secure and welcoming environment, encouraging good attendance in pupils.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

18. Teaching and learning are good and often very good. Four fifths of lessons are good or better and almost one third are very good or excellent. There are none that are unsatisfactory. This represents an improvement since the last inspection that has come about for a number of reasons. Teaching is closely monitored and supported by several key staff, and teachers share effective practice with colleagues in their teams. Their specialist expertise is deployed in those subjects in which they are most confident and trained, and this shows in their enthusiasm and good subject knowledge. Parents also think the teaching good and strongly support the use of specialist teaching across the school.
19. Teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2 are mainly good, while in Years 3 to 6 they are very good. The teaching of almost all subjects is at least good, the exception being art, where it is satisfactory. Some subjects are taught very well, including music, science, information and communication technology, English, history and physical education.
20. The National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy are fully in place. The teaching of reading is particularly effective. Parents are guided well in ways that they can help their children improve, and a number come in to school regularly to hear pupils read. Literacy lessons are often taught in stimulating contexts that capture pupils' interest and imagination. The school has identified writing as a relative weakness and is making a start on strategies for improving it; for example, through the use of spelling journals. In numeracy, the school's own analysis of test results revealed weaknesses in pupils' mental calculations two years ago that resulted in a focus on this aspect for improvement. Mental and oral warm-up sequences in lessons are now brisk and challenging, and teachers use a variety of effective techniques to ensure that all pupils are involved and their work is checked. Teachers pay close attention to the correct use of mathematical vocabulary and place a strong emphasis on encouraging pupils to explain their methods of calculation and to choose those that are most efficient.
21. Lessons are planned well around clear learning objectives. They are often set in stimulating contexts that capture pupils' interest. Whole-class discussions are very well led and managed. Teachers are careful to include pupils of all abilities and social backgrounds in them and teaching assistants guide individual pupils well so that they are fully engaged. A particularly strong feature of lessons is the way teachers use quite open and challenging questions that encourage pupils to recall their learning, speculate, predict and explain. The climate in lessons is secure and friendly, and all responses are valued so that no pupils are afraid to offer their ideas. They are expected to solve problems and make decisions, and they often carry out further research outside lessons. For example, pupils in a Year 5 science lesson deduced

the relationships between some organ systems in the human body as they discussed why the heart needs to pump blood more quickly during exercise, and more-able pupils explained their own research about how thin membranes enable food and oxygen to pass into the blood. Their teachers' excellent questioning skills and very good knowledge of organ systems were major contributory factors in their learning during this sequence.

22. Teaching methods are generally appropriate for the planned learning. The basic skills of the subject are taught very well, partly because specialist teachers have very good knowledge of these and build well on pupils' prior learning. Good examples are seen in most subjects, including music, information and communication technology, and physical education. For example, Year 5 pupils acquired very good passing skills during a hockey lesson as a result of their teacher's demonstration of correct technique and his critical evaluation and feedback to individual pupils as they practised and played. While lessons are generally well structured, the closing plenary sequence in some, including those for literacy and numeracy, is not as effective. Teachers sometimes run out of time or do not engage pupils sufficiently in clarifying what has been learned and any problems and issues encountered.
23. Teachers expect high achievements from their pupils, who in turn respond very well to the challenge of lessons, especially in Years 3 to 6. Gifted and talented pupils in particular flourish as a result of the emphasis placed on explaining patterns, seeking out reasons and researching further what they do not know. Relationships are excellent throughout the school. Pupils are managed very well and sustain interest and concentration throughout lessons. The theme in class discussions is often developed well through challenging group or individual tasks and homework. For example, in a Year 4 literacy class pupils learned about how authors use fine detail in their writing to bring the reader into their imaginary world. They took part in a role-play about Harry Potter's entry to Platform Nine and Three Quarters. Those who are poor readers gained much from the teaching style used, and all pupils were totally absorbed in the activity. They later described and sequenced key events from the view point of a reporter at the scene in preparation for writing their newspaper report on the events.
24. Teachers know their pupils very well and use their assessments to adapt work to their needs in a variety of ways; for example, by setting classes in Years 5 and 6 and by grouping pupils within classes. This was a weakness at the time of the last inspection. Teaching assistants work close with teachers and provide effective support for pupils with special educational needs and those with physical disabilities so that their learning is good. Pupils from a wide range of social backgrounds, such as the children of travellers, are integrated fully with others in lessons and they learn well as a result. However, occasionally, less-able pupils can flounder for a time because the task is too open and demanding and teaching assistants not available. Such situations are usually quickly spotted by the teacher and support is given, but they require more attention to these pupils' likely needs in teachers' plans.
25. Teachers and their assistants use resources, including computers in classrooms, effectively to assist pupils' learning, especially in English and mathematics lessons, and the imaginative use of artefacts helps bring subjects such as history to life. Homework is set appropriately, as the great majority of parents agree. Marking is good. Teachers correct pupils' work thoroughly and provide useful commentaries on ways of improving it. Key points from their marking are subsequently shared with the class; for example, by using good examples to demonstrate what is required.

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

26. The quality and range of the curriculum are very good and meet the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum, including sex and relationships education and drugs awareness. It is very well planned to meet the needs, interests and aptitudes of pupils. Pupils at all levels of attainment can access the full range of subjects. This includes the weekly lessons of French and German provided for pupils in Years 5 and 6. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is well planned in line with the Early Learning Goals.
27. The school has made good progress since the time of the last inspection, when many subject schemes of work did not provide sufficient detail about what is to be taught. There is good improvement in the detail of schemes of work that effectively guide teachers' planning. Art is not as well developed in its planning, but the school recognises the need to develop pupils' art skills and techniques in a more progressive way to help raise standards. At the time of the last inspection monitoring of curriculum provision and outcomes was unsatisfactory. This process is now firmly in place, involving both key-stage leaders and subject leaders. This has a very positive effect on the quality of teaching and learning in the school.
28. The planned curriculum throughout the school is linked well to assessment. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage takes good account of the Early Learning Goals for children of this age. The intended learning steps for all areas of the curriculum are well developed, successfully supporting the good progress these young children make. The curriculum for Years 1 and 2 and for Years 3 to 6 is well planned to meet the special needs and interests of pupils. Very good use is made of specialist teaching for information and communication technology, physical education and music throughout the school and in all subjects in Years 3 to 6. This results in good and often very good achievement by pupils, particularly in music. Music provision in the school is excellent. The teaching by very talented members of staff and peripatetic teachers is successful in encouraging pupils' enjoyment of music. Eighty-seven pupils learn to play musical instruments, with some learning more than one. The range of the curriculum is further extended with provision for French and German for Years 4, 5 and 6. Pupils enjoy these languages, which improve their confidence on entering the next stage of their education.
29. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been very successfully implemented throughout the school and pupils' progress in these subjects is tracked as they pass through the school. Assessment data is used effectively to set older pupils in groups according to their ability. This has a positive effect on their achievements and standards. The school has identified the need to improve further the quality of pupils' writing. Literacy skills are not used so well across other areas of the curriculum, especially extended writing.
30. Provision for special needs is very good. The school complies fully with the Code of Practice. Identification of, and provision for, a range of special needs, some extreme, are high priorities. This is a very inclusive school. Parents and the local authority have a high regard for the school's commitment, efforts and expertise. Individual education plans (IEPs) are good and appropriate targets are identified. Pupils make generally good progress towards targets set for them. Teachers know their pupils very well. The knowledge they have of individual needs and their ability to set targets have a positive impact on pupils' progress. Pupils with special educational needs show generally positive attitudes to their work and, apart from a few extreme cases, they behave well and relationships with adults are very good.

31. The school creates a coherent programme that effectively develops knowledge and understanding appropriate to pupils' needs on personal, social and health matters. Pupils gain much from these sessions when they share things that concern them. Pupils and teachers respect each other, and pupils are encouraged to develop a sense of self-esteem. Visits from the police, firemen, the school nurse and others contribute well to this part of the curriculum. The School Council listens and considers others' opinions and suggestions. This is successful in promoting the value of each individual pupil and developing an understanding of democracy. Relationships between all members of the school community are extremely good and are well supported through the sex and relationships education programme. Pupils communicate well with others and are confident to make decisions and solve problems. The effective drugs-education programme successfully increases pupils' knowledge and understanding of drugs and their effects. The pupils have a good understanding of healthy eating, and the school is working towards the Healthy Schools Award. The school is implementing its race-equality policy and is actively promoting racial tolerance and understanding through its work and within the curriculum.
32. There is an excellent range of extra-curricular activities, such as football, an art club, music, information technology and others, that are very well attended. These clubs vary with the time of year, pupil requests and staff expertise. Visits made from professionals, other experts and visitors very effectively enhance the curriculum for pupils. Very good use is made of visits locally and further afield to enhance pupils' interest in and understanding of their learning.
33. Links with the local community are very good, offering a wide variety of opportunities and experiences that enhance curriculum provision. For example, pupils have worked with an architect and learnt much about structures and bridges in design and technology, used the facilities of a supermarket for food technology, and, during the inspection, the expertise of a spinner and weaver.
34. There are good links with partner institutions and these are being developed further. Visits to the local nursery and playgroup ensure that children are familiar with staff before arriving at school. Reports from the nursery are used to guide early teaching and learning. There are links with the local secondary schools where pupils spend a day to meet their future form tutors, sample lessons and start to get used to the procedures in the school. Good liaison and relationships between staffs ensure that pupil transfers are smooth.
35. Overall, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is very good. It is one of the strengths of the school and has improved since the last inspection.
36. Pupils' spiritual development is good. A Christian ethos pervades the school's values, as demonstrated by the school's mission statement. The impact of other religious beliefs and values on people's lives is taught through religious education, assemblies and visits to local places of worship. There are planned opportunities for pupils to discuss achievements and feelings within personal, social, and health education lessons as well as in other lessons such as history and science. For instance, during a Year 5 history lesson pupils were shown a World War 2 gas mask and suddenly realised the seriousness of the situation to the ordinary people involved. The 'best efforts' assemblies conducted each week by the headteacher allow pupils to celebrate their good work, effort and progress, as well as the help and support given to their peers. Pupils are encouraged to appreciate that people, nature and the arts all provide opportunities for reflection which inform their perspectives on life; this was aptly

demonstrated in a Year 6 science lesson on the functions of the main body organs, when the complexity of these mechanisms was realised by the pupils.

37. Development of pupils' moral education is very good. Staff provide very good role models, valuing and respecting all members of the school, and there is a strong emphasis on providing clear and consistent codes of conduct, so that pupils learn the difference between right and wrong. The school develops opportunities for pupils to consider moral values; for example, caring for others, and this is typified by Year 6 pupils helping and encouraging younger pupils with organised activities at break times. The school is very inclusive in helping and supporting those with physical and mental disabilities and this also enables all pupils to appreciate the difficulties that others face. Considerable funds are raised each year for both local and national charities.
38. The school is rightly proud of the social development of its pupils, which is excellent. Younger pupils are given opportunities to take responsibility in class as helpers or table 'leaders'. Older pupils are given additional responsibilities to help with the smooth running of the school and in directing and guiding younger pupils. Pupils develop very positive attitudes towards one another and to those less fortunate than themselves. The democratically elected School Council provides a focal point for pupils to have their views and opinions put forward to the school's management. Areas they have recently discussed include ways of welcoming new pupils into school and enabling girls to join the football club.
39. Pupils' cultural development is good. They have many opportunities within the curriculum to appreciate the music of different cultures, and visitors to school help to reinforce this understanding; for example, recent visits from a rap dancer and theatre groups. Pupils take part in drama, dance and music clubs, which often culminate in school productions. The musical soiree during the week of the inspection was a great triumph with many pupils providing solo performances as well as a number of 'big band' pieces. All pupils have many opportunities to listen to and take part in music and drama and to visit places of cultural interest; for example, the local cathedral and art gallery. The school recently held an 'International Week' when each class researched a country and shared the results with the rest of the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

40. The school is a caring organisation and the overall provision for the welfare of its pupils is good.
41. Teachers and the support staff know the pupils and their families well and deal sensitively with any problems that may occur. Teaching assistants are committed and enthusiastic, providing valuable support for teachers and pupils. The pastoral care provided by the staff for the pupils is very good. There is an established health-and-safety policy, and regular safety audits and risk assessments take place. Safety concerns are noted and dealt with conscientiously by governors and senior managers, and fire drills take place regularly. The school also promotes health-and-safety awareness in subjects such as physical education, and design and technology. Cycling proficiency training for Year 6 pupils is organised each year and a 'Walking Bus' supervised by parents encourages more pupils to walk to school each morning. First aid and medical procedures are satisfactory.
42. The school's procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are satisfactory. The school records attendance electronically and regularly monitors absence patterns. Parents are made aware of their responsibility to notify the school in the event of their child's absence, and attendance issues feature strongly in the monthly newsletters.

The Education Welfare Officer visits the school when required. Attendance registers are accurately maintained and meet statutory requirements.

43. Child-protection arrangements are good. The designated person is competent and knows the procedures well. Staff are aware of their responsibilities and what they need to do if a concern arises.
44. The school has a clear and effective behaviour policy, which is applied consistently by teachers and support staff. The headteacher and staff provide good role-models in the way they manage and relate to pupils. Their approach is positive and non-confrontational, which works well in minimising potential incidents. Mid-day supervisors are caring and responsive, and ensure that a calm and relaxed atmosphere surrounds lunchtime activities. Pupils are proud of the rewards they obtain for good behaviour, which eventually lead to certificates presented by the headteacher at 'special' assemblies. Sanctions for poor behaviour are graduated and are perceived as fair by pupils.
45. Pupils' annual reports contain enough detail to inform parents of the progress their children are making; they also contain clear targets for future achievement both academic and in terms of personal development. Pupils are given many opportunities to take responsibility, which they exercise well. Representing their class at school council meetings gives members an insight into the democratic process. Year 6 pupils are allocated extra responsibilities as prefects and monitors for whole-school activities; for instance, supervising younger children at lunchtime. Residential visits for older pupils allow them to strengthen their independence and self-confidence. The pupils develop mature and responsible attitudes whilst at Downton, which prepare them well for transfer to secondary education.
46. The school's procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are now good and this represents very good progress since the previous inspection. Alongside compulsory national tests in Years 2 and 6 the school employs a wide range of other assessments such as optional national tests taken in Years 3, 4 and 5. It also uses a range of commercially-produced tests to assess mathematics, reading and pupils' cognitive abilities. In the core subjects of English, maths and science, teachers assess pupils at the end of each unit of work. In addition, there are assessment procedures in place in each of the foundation subjects that give a picture of pupils' attainment and progress. Overall, the school has developed a coherent 'calendar' of assessments, and the information gained is used well in a number of ways. Results are used to help group pupils into 'ability sets' for English and mathematics in Years 5 and 6. Teachers use assessment information to draw up targets for group and individual learning. An analysis of assessment information has led to the school changing and developing its planned curriculum. For example, such analyses showed weaknesses in pupils' mental arithmetic skills two years ago. Steps taken to improve these skills have been successful and results in this area are now much better. Overall, the school is developing its analysis of results well, and gaining useful information about trends and the progress that pupils of different abilities make through the school. It now acknowledges the need to further refine its analysis of information relating to particular groups of pupils and has begun to do so.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

47. Parent's views of the school have improved since the last inspection and are now very good.
48. The parent's meeting was well attended and the response rate to the parents' questionnaire was well above average. Opinions expressed at the meeting, through

the questionnaire and by parents during the inspection show that they strongly support the school's provision for their children. Parents feel that the school is well led and managed, and that their children enjoy coming to school, work hard, and make good progress. They feel that the quality of teaching is good and also that behaviour in and around the school is good. Parents also confirm that the school is helping their children to become mature and responsible, that staff are easy to approach and that there is a wide provision of interesting activities outside lessons. The inspection team's evidence supports these positive views of the school and upholds the view that pupils' attitudes to learning and school are excellent.

49. It was noted that a small number of parents would like a closer liaison with the school and more information on their children's progress. The school is aware of these concerns and has organised a series of open afternoons and evenings, when parents are invited into school to view and comment on their children's work.
50. Since the last inspection the school has worked hard to improve its links with parents and these are now good. Parents views are regularly sought through questionnaires and focus groups; this partnership is fully inclusive and a strong feature of school life.
51. The quality of information provided for parents, including that on pupils' progress, is good. Informative newsletters issued monthly keep parents up-to-date with school activities and forthcoming events. Curriculum evenings are organised throughout the year to explain test results or ways of helping pupils at home; for example, a recent activity has concentrated on spelling. Pupils' annual progress reports are comprehensive and provide a clear picture of pupils' efforts and achievements, as well as general remarks on their attitudes and relationships. Appropriate and realistic targets for improvement are set and parents are given the opportunity to comment. The prospectus is attractively presented, provides a great deal of useful information for parents and has recently been placed on the school's web site. The prospectus, however, has an omission of pupils' absence rates that has been brought to the attention of the headteacher.
52. The impact of parental involvement in the work of the school has also improved since the last inspection and is now very good. The school greatly values the part parents play in their children's education and encourages their interest in all aspects of school life. Parents respond very well and comply willingly with their undertakings in the home-school agreement. Many assist in classes, supervise activities and work in their own time to improve the school facilities; for instance, supervising the daily 'Walking Bus', and redecorating the Year 4 classroom. Home-school reading diaries are well kept and most parents help their children with homework. The well-organised Downton Primary School Association is extremely active and attracts very good support for its fund raising and social events. It has recently provided funding for the new playground markings, which help ensure that break times are enjoyable and purposeful.
53. The majority of parents fully understand the importance of their role in reinforcing the school's education of their children and they are very happy to contribute both to the learning process and to the life of the school. Their support enriches the school's work and greatly benefits pupils' attainment and progress.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

54. The headteacher was appointed at about the time of the last inspection. In addressing the key issues for improvement identified then, she made a number of bold changes that have proved vital to the school's current success and which are testimony to her excellent leadership and vision. Firstly she involved all the staff much more in leading and managing the school, changing management roles from a hierarchical structure to

one that is collegiate and consultative; for example, by enlarging the senior management team to encompass all sections of the school. Secondly, she has built on teachers' enthusiasm for their specialist subjects by organising them into specialist teams, delegated responsibility to them for monitoring and developing their subjects and enabled them to focus on teaching these subjects throughout the school. Thirdly, the breadth and quality of staff expertise were expanded through employing some part-time staff with particular skills. Above all, the headteacher has raised the staff's expectations of what they and their pupils can achieve and she has inspired their full confidence. The result has been a transformation of the school's climate to one where staff and pupils learn together in a secure, happy and very encouraging atmosphere. Parents think highly of the staff and of the headteacher's strong leadership. Throughout the school, teachers, governors and support staff enjoy very good relationships and close teamwork, and their commitment to improving the school further is very strong. There is a widely-held vision throughout the school for developing the school's role in the community further.

55. The school is very inclusive in the way it ensures that the particular needs of pupils of all ages and abilities are addressed. Very good use is made of specialist expertise from outside agencies and from the local education authority. For example, the children of travellers are closely monitored and regular visits are undertaken to support their families, with beneficial effects on their attendance and standards. The school has provided additional funds from its own budget to ensure that pupils with severe disabilities are supported by well qualified and trained teaching assistants. All staff receive training to help with specific learning needs such as safe methods of restraint where there is a risk of violent behaviour from pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The progress of particular groups such as travellers' children is now being monitored and the school is aware that these pupils are currently achieving standards above those expected of pupils with similar prior attainment. The school council also considers matters of inclusion; for example, they recently advised the headteacher on ways of assimilating new pupils into the school's life and discussed the fairest way to admit pupils to school clubs where they are over-subscribed and places limited. The school's race-equality policy is being implemented; for example, an isolated incident of abuse was promptly and sensitively dealt with and involved the parents of those concerned.
56. The senior management team is large for the size of the school, meets weekly and works collectively on issues raised by members' monitoring of their areas and discussions within their own teams. The deputy headteacher provides strong support for the headteacher and is leading developments in the use of assessment to guide the focus for improvements. Patterns in pupils' achievements in a wide range of tests are closely analysed and issues brought to the attention of the management team and governors.
57. Systems for monitoring the school's performance and taking action are very well developed and embedded throughout the school. This area was weak at the time of the last inspection. Teaching is monitored and supported by the headteacher and deputy as well as by team leaders in priority subjects in the school's development plan. Subject leadership is mainly very good. Subject leaders work very closely with their specialist colleagues. For example, the impact of each teaching unit is reviewed and assessed, and teachers share with colleagues what works. Subject leaders monitor pupils' work and look for patterns to see what lessons can be learned. This strongly collegiate subject leadership and teamwork have led to good improvements in many subjects. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been implemented well, especially that for Numeracy. The school's development plan contains appropriate priorities, and resources, including training, are directed carefully to them. Governors are closely involved in drawing up the plan, deciding on the strategic use of

resources within it and monitoring progress in these priorities through their focussed visits and subsequent reports.

58. The governing body has set out an appropriate policy for pupils with special educational needs. The governor with responsibility for special educational needs visits the school regularly to discuss issues with the co-ordinator and headteacher. She is able to judge accurately the quality of provision and keeps the whole governing body fully informed. Governors are consequently well placed to evaluate the effectiveness of their policy. The co-ordinator is experienced and supports colleagues very well. She advises on the drawing up of individual education plans, and the co-ordination of support from a number of outside agencies is very effective. She in turn is very well supported by the headteacher in the management of a wide range of provision for pupils with special educational needs. Specific grants are used well to support this work.
59. The governing body is very effective in carrying out its statutory duties. It is led very well by the chair of governors, who is very committed to the school. She ensures that the six committees work efficiently and that all governors are able to contribute to the school's life and development. Each committee is able to draw on a great deal of expertise and experience from its members. Governors are also very well informed about the school's strengths and weaknesses through regular headteacher reports, presentations by key staff and their regular visits. They form an integral part of the school's self-evaluation and improvement strategy. For example, they are fully involved in evaluating progress in the school's development plan and setting challenging targets in collaboration with the headteacher and key staff. During their visits, governors regularly meet with subject leaders, observe lessons, and report back their findings to the full governing body. Protocols and reporting templates for such visits are now well established so that the relationship between staff and governors is close and founded on trust and respect.
60. The strategic use of resources is very good. The school's budget is closely monitored by a very experienced and skilled finance team. The last auditor's report showed that very satisfactory control procedures are in place and there were very few issues in need of attention. The relatively high carry-over of funds in the last two years was to cover additional costs relating to the new buildings and to anticipate what appeared to be a potential deficit this year. Responsibility for spending decisions is delegated to team leaders throughout the school and they are carefully checked by the school's finance officer to prevent over-spends. Specific grants such as those for pupils' with special educational needs are used effectively for their intended purposes.
61. The school applies the principles of best value very well. Major items of spending are subject to several tenders, and specialist advice is sought in evaluating them; for example, when refurbishing the computer suite this year. The school also manages its own catering, monitors its work, consults pupils on its effectiveness and has taken actions that have improved both quality and participation dramatically in recent years. It compares its academic results rigorously with a range of national benchmarks and there is a culture throughout the school of challenging its practice in teaching methods and in ways of working, under-pinned by a strong commitment to improve. The staff and governors take positive steps to consult parents and the wider community through questionnaires and meetings on issues affecting the school's development. For example, relevant parents were consulted about the needs of their disabled children and their comments were taken account of in planning the refurbishment of the school's accommodation. The governors' annual report to parents is informative and well presented, although it has omissions relating to access to school for disabled pupils and to staff training that has been brought to their attention.

62. The school is very effective in providing a broad and rich education for its pupils, the teaching is good and much of it is very good. The school's socio-economic circumstances are above average and parents contribute much to pupils' education. Spending per pupil is broadly in line with that of other schools in metropolitan, shire and unitary authority primary schools. Taking account of these factors, the school provides good value for money.
63. Arrangements for staff performance management are well developed and linked closely to the school's improvement strategies. For example, teachers have individual development objectives linked partly to school priorities, but they also take account of their individual needs. Teaching quality is monitored and supported throughout the school and the staff's professional development needs are planned for carefully within the school's development plan. This was a weakness at the time of the last inspection. Teachers and support staff are well trained and share a wide range of specialist expertise and experience. Those attending courses disseminate their learning to relevant staff, and the school evaluates the quality of training provided. Teaching assistants work effectively along-side teaching staff and are trained and deployed appropriately. This too was a weakness at the time of the last inspection.
64. Close attention has been paid to the staff's well-being; for example, by providing flexible working hours that take account of their individual needs without compromising those of the school. This has had a beneficial impact on recruitment and retention. Arrangements for the induction of staff new to the school are good. The school has well-established links with an initial-teacher-training institution that are being developed further now that the disruption caused by the school's rebuilding programme is over. The school's secretaries are well qualified and experienced, provide a welcoming first point of contact for parents and visitors, and manage the school's systems and finances very efficiently.
65. The school's accommodation is good and the administration is effective. The school consists of a Victorian school building which has just been refurbished, and a recently completed modern series of classrooms and hall. The two areas, old and new, have been designed to complement each other. The teaching facilities are spacious and there are good recreational facilities which fully meet the needs of the National Curriculum. The layout of the classrooms is used effectively to promote learning, and the displays of pupils' work in the classrooms are of a good standard and reflect current school projects. Communal displays have not yet been fully developed to their full potential following the major building programme. There is a separate modern music and drama studio and a good-sized playground, which has been attractively marked to provide purposeful play activities. Use is also made of the adjacent village Memorial Gardens for football and sporting events. All the accommodation and the external areas are very clean and well maintained by premises staff.
66. Overall, resources to support teaching and learning across the curriculum are good. Resources are good for English, mathematics, science, design and technology, and physical education. They are very good for music and satisfactory for the remaining subjects. Since the last inspection, when there was insufficient up-to-date hardware and software available to support effective teaching of information and communication technology, the school has installed a computer suite that is appropriately resourced. The suite is timetabled to ensure its full use for by all pupils. Pupils' standards have much improved. Class teachers also have the use of laptop computers for management and preparation that are significant in the planning of work for pupils. Internet access is available in the suite and is shortly to be installed in classrooms.
67. The community is used well as a resource, particularly to support design and technology. The school library is undergoing refurbishment following the recent

building at the school. Plans are in hand to replenish the library by upgrading non-fiction books. Resources for the Foundation Stage are adequate. Although some resources have recently been purchased, there remains a lack of variety of resources made specifically for children of this age. Resources throughout the school are well managed and easily accessible for staff and pupils.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

68. In order to raise standards further, the headteacher, staff and governors should:

take steps to improve the quality of pupils' writing throughout the school by providing opportunities for them to write more extensively in different contexts and styles, both within literacy lessons and across other subjects. (8, 20, 29, 87, 91)

(The school has identified improvements to pupils' writing as a priority in the school's development plan)

69. Minor issues raised in the report that the staff and governors may wish to take account of:

- Ensure that teachers' plans take more specific account of the needs of less-able pupils and those with special needs in a few lessons, especially where teaching assistants are not available (24, 107);
- Improve the consistency and quality of plenary sessions in some lessons (22, 99);
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to use sensors and data-loggers in their science investigations (105, 139);
- Develop pupils' skills and understanding of the use of information and communication technology to control devices within design and technology (121, 139);
- Improve further pupils' acquisition of skills and techniques in art (11, 27, 113);
- Ensure that minor omissions in the school's prospectus and annual report to parents are addressed (51, 61).

(Paragraphs in the report referring to all of these issues are provided in brackets)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

56

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

27

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

| | Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactor y | Poor | Very Poor |
|------------|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|--------------------|------|-----------|
| Number | 2 | 15 | 29 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Percentage | 4 | 27 | 52 | 18 | 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) | 0 | 227 |
| Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals | 0 | 7 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

| Special educational needs | Nursery | YR – Y6 |
|---|---------|---------|
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs | 0 | 2 |
| Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register | 0 | 25 |

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

| Pupil mobility in the last school year | No of pupils |
|--|--------------|
| Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission | 6 |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving | 8 |

Attendance

| Authorised absence | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 4.9 |
| National comparative data | 5.4 |

| Unauthorised absence | % |
|-----------------------------|-----|
| School data | 0.1 |
| National comparative data | 0.5 |

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

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

| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| | 2002 | 9 | 14 | 23 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | Reading | Writing | Mathematics |
|---|----------|----------|---------|-------------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | 9 | 7 | 9 |
| | Girls | 14 | 14 | 14 |
| | Total | 23 | 21 | 23 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 100 (86) | 91 (83) | 100 (97) |
| | National | 84 (84) | 86 (86) | 90 (91) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|----------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | 8 | 9 | 9 |
| | Girls | 14 | 14 | 14 |
| | Total | 22 | 23 | 23 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 96 (86) | 100 (97) | 100 (97) |
| | National | 85 (85) | 89 (89) | 89 (89) |

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 |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| | 2002 | 17 | 18 | 35 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | 13 | 13 | 16 |
| | Girls | 14 | 14 | 18 |
| | Total | 27 | 27 | 34 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 77 (76) | 77 (57) | 97 (92) |
| | National | 75 (75) | 73 (71) | 86 (87) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | 14 | 14 | 16 |
| | Girls | 15 | 14 | 18 |
| | Total | 29 | 28 | 34 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 83 (70) | 80 (78) | 97 (81) |
| | National | 73 (72) | 74 (74) | 82 (82) |

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

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

| Categories used in the Annual School Census | No of pupils on roll | Number of fixed period exclusions | Number of permanent exclusions |
|---|----------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| White – British | 222 | 12 | 0 |
| White – Irish | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| White – any other White background | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Mixed – White and Black Caribbean | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Mixed – White and Black African | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Mixed – White and Asian | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Mixed – any other mixed background | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Asian or Asian British - Indian | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Asian or Asian British - Pakistani | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Black or Black British – Caribbean | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Black or Black British – African | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Black or Black British – any other Black background | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Chinese | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Any other ethnic group | 5 | 4 | 0 |
| No ethnic group recorded | 0 | 0 | 0 |

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

| | |
|--|------|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 10 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 22.7 |
| Average class size | 28.4 |

Education support staff: YR – Y6

| | |
|---|-----|
| Total number of education support staff | 9 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 162 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

| | |
|--|----------|
| Financial year | 2001 - 2 |
| | £ |
| Total income | 446474 |
| Total expenditure | 451938 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 2132 |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 31527 |
| Balance carried forward to next year | 26063 |

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 227 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 143 |

Percentage of responses in each category

| | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school. | 64 | 36 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| My child is making good progress in school. | 50 | 46 | 1 | 0 | 2 |
| Behaviour in the school is good. | 56 | 41 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home. | 35 | 53 | 11 | 0 | 1 |
| The teaching is good. | 58 | 38 | 1 | 0 | 3 |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on. | 31 | 49 | 16 | 3 | 1 |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 51 | 44 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best. | 55 | 43 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| The school works closely with parents. | 32 | 54 | 12 | 0 | 2 |
| The school is well led and managed. | 59 | 35 | 2 | 0 | 4 |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible. | 51 | 48 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. | 42 | 47 | 6 | 1 | 5 |

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

70. Children begin school in the September of the school year when they will be five years old and have the option of attending part-time, but most attend full-time. The number of children necessitates the forming of two reception classes mainly on the basis of friendship groups. Most children attend a local nursery or playgroup that feed the school. The school has a professional relationship with these pre-school groups and this helps the transition of children into the school to be smooth and successful. The Foundation Stage education provided in the reception classes is good overall. Children's overall attainment in the Foundation Stage has been maintained since the last inspection with an improvement in children's personal, social and emotional development, mathematical development, and speaking and listening.
71. Teaching is good in all areas of learning. The teachers work well together to devise a programme of activities that promotes children's effective learning. Each child has a 'home base' and teacher. They move between activities in each classroom, where each teacher has a teaching focus. Teachers know all the children very well. Their continual assessment supports the planning of work that is suitable for children's wide range of needs and abilities. Teachers have clear knowledge and understanding of the expectations of the curriculum during and at the end of the Foundation Stage. There is a suitable range of opportunities for play activities to encourage and extend children's learning. However, the expectation of what they are to learn is not always made sufficiently clear to children in structured play activities, resulting in some ineffective learning. Children with special educational needs have full support from all the staff to help them make the expected progress.

Personal, social and emotional development

72. Appropriate procedures for their induction and good relationships with pre-school providers ensure that almost all children enter the reception classes with some measure of confidence. They make good progress and almost all exceed the expectations of the learning goals by the end of the Foundation Stage. Members of staff work very well together and provide good role models for children, treating each other and the children with courtesy and respect. The perceptive use of praise and encouragement gives the children a positive feeling and pride in their achievements.
73. Children have positive attitudes to learning and settle promptly to teacher-directed tasks and those they have chosen themselves. Children are confident and demonstrate a developing independence. They listen and concentrate well on the tasks they are set. They share resources, take turns and support each other. The focus of the teaching helps children to become more independent and self-reliant with a suitable range of planned activities that encourage them to make decisions for themselves and take the initiative in some situations. This is evident in children's role-play activities, where they decide who will be the mother and father with young children and set a morning scene. The opening statement from the 'father' was, 'I wish I could have a decent night's sleep!' Visitors are made very welcome to listen and watch their activities.

Communication, language and literacy

74. Children attain satisfactory standards overall in language and literacy and good standards in speaking and listening. There is a suitably planned focus on developing

children's speaking and listening skills. Throughout the day there are good opportunities to develop these skills as well as drama sessions. During the inspection children had the opportunity to portray a happy and sad person. Improvising with a partner, they produced a short sketch about a happy and sad person and what the happy person could do to help. Good support is given to children with special educational needs.

75. Children recognise some initial letter sounds and match these to pictures and objects. The phonic teaching programme that has been introduced recently is helping children to recognise initial letter sounds and they are beginning to use this knowledge to help them read and write. Good teaching ensures that all opportunities are used effectively to reinforce and extend children's knowledge.
76. Children enjoy books and handle them with care. They talk appropriately about the illustrations and possible outcomes of the story. The most proficient readers use the knowledge of initial letters to build unfamiliar words. They recognise key words and simple punctuation. Teachers ensure that all children have the same opportunity to develop their reading skills whatever their stage of development.
77. Children recognise their own names and are beginning to recognise those of other children. Most children can write their name independently. More-able children produce clear, well-formed letters and are beginning to write simple sentences independently. All try hard to produce some independent writing according to their ability. Teachers encourage children to over-write, copy or try themselves. They strongly encourage children to use their knowledge of initial letter sounds to support their writing and spelling. Most children are on line to attain the learning goals by the end of the Foundation Stage, with a significant minority of children above expectations.

Mathematical development

78. Attainment in the mathematical area of learning is good. The majority of children are secure in their understanding and recognition of numbers to five and they count to ten. Many can count to twenty and a few beyond. Children show a growing security in their knowledge and understanding of number factors that make ten. Through teachers' appropriate use of specific mathematical vocabulary children understand the terms 'add', 'equals', 'total' and 'altogether'. Children are beginning to use mathematical ideas to solve problems given orally by the teacher. They have a growing awareness that numbers can be added in order to arrive at the answer. The most able children are developing the ability to write their own sums to record their practical work based on a story.
79. Work with shapes is good; children recognise common shapes such as squares, circles, triangles and rectangles that they choose and use to make patterns. They are familiar with the terms 'big', 'small', 'more', 'less', 'full' and 'empty'. Teachers prepare a suitable range of practical activities, such as sand-play, to reinforce understanding of these terms. Teaching in this area is mainly good. Where it is good, stimulating activities successfully capture the interest of the children. On occasions, however, children do not have sufficient guidance from the teacher to ensure that the purpose of the activity is effective in taking learning forward. This was apparent when children were cutting and sticking various two-dimensional shapes but unsure of the skills they were trying to practise. Throughout the school day teachers exploit opportunities to develop children's skills, knowledge and understanding. This was evident when the teacher discussed the time on the classroom clock and the position of its hands. Overall, most children are likely to meet the learning goals by the end of the Foundation Stage with a significant minority above expectations.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

80. Children have satisfactory levels of knowledge and understanding of the world around them. They bring their knowledge of their own families and backgrounds into their imaginative play. Children link their knowledge of the locality with road signs that they see in a picture. They make good progress in remembering that red triangular signs give warnings and circular signs show things that cannot be done or are not allowed. Children know about their immediate surroundings and show a sense of location and direction. Teachers plan work that successfully reinforces learning in all areas of the curriculum. In this instance it was shapes and how they can be used to carry meaning.
81. The regular use of the computer suite helps build children's computer skills. Most children can name the parts of the computer such as 'monitor', 'keyboard', 'mouse' and 'printer'. Teachers give very clear step-by-step instructions to children that they follow without hesitation. Most children can use the backspace or delete button to correct their work. They are developing the ability to use the caps lock for capital letters, and follow picture and word instructions to print their own work. All children, including those with special educational needs, make good progress because good support is always at hand from the teacher and class assistant. Teachers plan these sessions well and make the learning intention very clear to children from the start. Good use is made of plenary sessions to reinforce the skills learnt.

Physical development

82. Physical development has improved since the last inspection, when provision and equipment for outdoor play was limited. Outdoor equipment available allows children to demonstrate their sound peddling and pushing skills. They use space wisely with appropriate regard for others. The large moveable toys available are not of sufficient variety to encourage children to make choices and develop the full range of physical movements such as climbing. In the hall, they respond quickly to instructions and move with confidence and appropriate body control. Teachers plan more-challenging activities to promote children's physical development.
83. Fine motor skills are developed well through a wide range of opportunities. Children demonstrate suitable dexterity when they cut, twist, fold, join and build using such tools as scissors, brushes and pencils. They are aware of safety considerations. No evidence was available to judge children's ability to mould malleable materials such as dough. Overall, they are on target to meet the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage.

Creative development

84. Children enjoy exploring the use of different-sized brushes when they paint. They know the routine for keeping the paint blocks clean and take great care. Most children are confident and use careful brush strokes to colour larger areas. The paints on offer are not sufficiently vibrant for children to be attracted or easy for them to explore colour mixing. They draw good representations to support other work and use crayons effectively. Teachers plan suitable activities to develop skills and techniques, with good opportunities for children to be creative.
85. Children enjoy singing; they pitch their voices appropriately and sing tunefully with clear diction. Individuals often break into song when involved in practical activities. Music was not observed during the time of the inspection, but reception children have the

expertise of the music co-ordinator to teach them this subject. A good programme is planned that is likely to develop children's knowledge, understanding and skills above those expected by the end of the Foundation Stage.

ENGLISH

86. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in English are above average at the end of both key stages, with standards in reading well above average throughout, and standards in speaking and listening well above average by the end of Year 6. The recent trend of improvement is being maintained, after the dip in standards of 2001.
87. Across the school, the above-average standards result from good teaching in Years 1 and 2, and very good teaching overall in Years 3 to 6. Strong subject leadership, the pupils' own very good attitudes to their work and the very positive ethos for learning in the school all contribute to these improving standards. The fact that the school offers a rich and varied curriculum increases pupils' interest and enthusiasm, and enhances their progress in such core skills as literacy. The school is fully committed to creating further opportunities to develop pupils' writing skills throughout all areas of the curriculum in order to raise standards in writing, which, whilst good overall, are not yet as strong as reading, speaking and listening.
88. The National Literacy Strategy, along with additional literacy support, and school initiatives related to writing, spelling and handwriting, has been effective in helping to raise standards. Throughout the school the Literacy Hour is purposeful, well planned, and adapted to the needs of the school. Strong, perceptive guidance from the subject leader has resulted in more emphasis being placed on teachers exercising 'intuitive' skills and expertise to provide more vivid programmes of work, tailored to Downton pupils, rather than the fare from commercial programmes of work. There is very good provision for pupils with special educational needs and they make good progress because of the very effective withdrawal teaching in literacy and the support given in the classroom.
89. By the age of seven, pupils have made good progress in developing speaking and listening skills, and standards are above average. Pupils are able to express themselves clearly and take account of other people. They listen attentively to stories, questions and instructions, and respond appropriately. This is clearly illustrated in lessons, when, after whole-class introductory sessions, pupils disperse to their groups and start tasks promptly, knowing exactly what they have to do. The great majority of pupils speak well in classrooms. They confidently raise questions to clarify their understanding; many can answer in complete sentences and can give answers because they are able to put thoughts into words. In one lesson with Year 2 pupils, after a shared reading session about penguins, one pupil, quite unassumingly, told everyone about his experience of swimming with penguins whilst on holiday in South Africa. In the same lesson, when asked to try to describe how penguins gather together in groups on the ice to keep warm, one pupil said, "Oh, that would be a hug of penguins". As pupils move through Years 3 to 6 they maintain very good listening habits and continue to acquire and use an ever-increasing vocabulary. They show good understanding of the conventions of Standard English and are aware when it is appropriate to use them. In discussions pupils offer considered opinions, listen to the opinions of others and develop their thinking further. Year 3 pupils, in considering the sentence 'Blue is the latest fashion in town' were asked by the class teacher, "How is the word 'latest' used here?" There followed a very good discussion of the meanings of words in different contexts. The very good development of speaking and listening skills owes much to the value teachers place on pupils' oral contributions and the emphasis teachers and support staff place on extending pupils' working vocabulary.

90. Standards in reading by Year 2 and Year 6 are well above average. Most pupils read with enjoyment at an appropriate level, and many read fluently. Good progress owes much to the practice of direct teaching of skills and strategies and regular opportunities to talk to the teacher about what is read. By the end of Year 2 many pupils are confident readers, reading a range of texts with accuracy. Pupils are able to discuss the plot and characters in a story and recognise the basic features of fiction and non-fiction. They know the function of 'index' and 'contents'. Whilst not fully understanding the function of a 'glossary' one pupil was able to confidently read 'habitat', 'compound eye' and 'exoskeleton' from the glossary. Pupils read with improving fluency and accuracy and, by the age of eleven, many have developed a critical appreciation of a range of books. They are aware of differences in layout and styles of vocabulary related to writing for different purposes. They have good recall of stories, and higher-attaining pupils enjoy discussing themes and characters in the books they have read. By the end of the key stage a significant number of pupils reach the higher levels of achievement where they can use inference and deduction to look for meaning beyond the text.
91. Standards in writing are above average at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. By the end of Year 2 low-attaining pupils are able to write in simple sentences while the more able write more complex sentences using connectives and punctuation accurately, including speech marks. Spelling is often accurate, with more-able pupils successfully spelling such words as 'knocked' and 'tumbled'. Many are developing a joined script and take care with the presentation of work. Throughout Years 3 to 6, grammar, punctuation and spelling conventions are systematically taught. Pupils receive clear teaching, and as they mature, lessons increasingly focus on elements of writing, with pupils becoming more aware of what they have to do to improve. They are set individual targets such as 'recognise how to manipulate words for their quality of sound and rhyme'. They are introduced to an increasing range of good writing which helps them to become aware of the styles and elements that make it good. Pupils learn about the writings of Shakespeare. Writing about when Macbeth met the witches, one pupil wrote, in his own words, "A streak of fear ran through the warriors from head to toe". The oldest pupils, considering features of a riddle and some of the different methods used by writers to give clues towards solving the riddle, were motivated to write some of their own. One pupil chose 'Death' as the object of his riddle and wrote 'I creep behind you all your life, unseen but you know I am there, I prey on the old and frail, or the young and careless.....' A significant number of pupils are able to produce varied, interesting writing with imaginative, precise choices of words and achieve higher levels of attainment. The school is making considerable efforts to raise standards of writing, already good, to the level of those in reading, speaking and listening. Because the Literacy Hour gives time for skills to be learned, but not time for them to be practised sufficiently, the school provides too few opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills, particularly writing at length, in such areas as history, geography and religious education.
92. Teaching is good overall in Years 1 and 2 and very good in later years. Teachers plan well with tasks that are appropriate for the full range of ability. In this they are aided by the setting arrangements in Years 5 and 6, where work is particularly well targeted. Teachers know their pupils very well because of the school's practice of using specialist teachers across the year groups and the good use made of assessment. Good targets are set for groups and individuals, and lessons reflect these targets. This is because teachers have the knowledge and confidence to tailor programmes of the Literacy Strategy so that they are appropriate for their pupils. Consequently there is some very good teaching of pupils with special educational needs, with valuable support from teaching assistants, and some challenging work offered to the more able. Above all, teachers are knowledgeable and consistently enthusiastic. Lessons are

conducted at a good lively pace and enthusiasms and urgency transfer to pupils. They are well motivated and much is achieved. Teachers use pupils' skills in information and communication technology well in such tasks as word processing, editing and re-drafting. Production of 'The Downton Daily' gives pupils good opportunities to apply these skills.

93. The subject is led and managed very well. The subject leader is experienced and resourceful, and has a clear view of strengths and areas for development, having produced clear action plans for aspects of English. The school is currently re-organising its two libraries in order to increase the provision of good reading materials, both to help pupils with research and to provide a good model for children's writing.

MATHEMATICS

94. In 2002, the school's results in the national tests were well above average in Year 2, a dramatic increase in standards, reversing several years of lower than average achievement. In Year 6, standards were above the national average, illustrating a good recovery from the below-average standards of 2001.
95. Inspection evidence shows that pupils' standards by the time they are seven are above the national average. In Year 2 there are a significant number of pupils who are confident in their mental recall skills. They are very quick to find patterns in numbers that will help them in calculations. Pupils recognise the place value of two-digit numbers and use it to add or subtract a number; for example, when taking 60 away from 80. All pupils make good progress at ordering random numbers to the value of a hundred, including those of lower ability. Most pupils are confident and with reasonable accuracy can estimate objects shorter, taller or about the same as a metre. They are familiar with doubles, halves and quarters. They use tallies to gather information and use analogue clocks for telling the time. Pupils know the criteria for describing a range of two-dimensional shapes. They make good progress in all aspects of mathematics work and demonstrate a secure understanding through clear explanations of the strategies used in their calculations.
96. Pupils throughout Years 3 to 6 achieve very well and are likely to achieve standards well above those nationally by the age of eleven. Teachers use specific mathematical vocabulary accurately and routinely with pupils. This supports pupils well in their understanding of procedures and strategies. The strength of the mathematics is the emphasis given to pupils to explain what they are doing and how they arrive at answers. This has successfully nurtured pupils' understanding and confidence in mathematics. By Year 6, pupils are confident enough to generate questions to try on each other. For example, they use known facts and place value to devise mental sums that include multiplication and division, such as 0.042 multiplied by 100 and divided by 10.
97. Information and communication technology is used effectively to support work in mathematics. Year 5 pupils demonstrate their understanding of and ability to use angle measures in degrees, and identify, estimate and order acute and obtuse angles by programming the floor robot with a sequence of instructions. They draw accurate representations of two-dimensional shapes on the computer screen, showing the ability to calculate angles of turn. Less-able pupils and those with special educational needs achieve well. They have good help from their teachers and support assistants, who have a clear understanding of the intended learning outcome.
98. Throughout the school pupils have very positive attitudes to mathematics. They are confident and behave very well in lessons. This supports their good or better

achievement as they listen attentively and are willing participants. They are sensitive to others' responses and support each other well.

99. The quality of teaching is consistently good. Good use is made of specialist teaching in Years 3 to 6 and setting of pupils within Years 5 and 6 according to their abilities. Teachers are very secure in their knowledge and understanding of mathematics. This is very successful in raising pupils' standards. Lessons are well planned to meet the requirements of the National Numeracy Strategy and work is planned to match pupils' abilities. The lessons begin with purposeful and challenging questioning to prompt pupils to remember what they have learnt previously. Individual pupils are warmly encouraged and targeted so that all feel part of the lessons. Lessons move on smoothly, with teachers sharing their time appropriately to ensure that all pupils know what they are doing. Great care is taken in using precise mathematical vocabulary to make sure that all pupils have a clear understanding of the language being used before moving on. Teachers are ready with more-challenging work for the more able. However, there are occasions when lessons are not concluded with an effective plenary session to assess what has been learnt and what problems have occurred. Marking is used very well to take individual pupils' learning forward and to inform the next lesson. Learning intentions for each lesson are planned carefully and used as an assessment base to inform planning of the next step. Teachers also use a range of tests to assess pupils' attainment. From these teachers identify difficulties in order to help pupils in the following lessons. Targets are set for individual pupils, helping them to improve their achievements. Numeracy is applied across the curriculum sufficiently to enable pupils to apply their knowledge and understanding in a range of situations, for example, to estimate, measure and calculate in science.
100. Good progress has been made since the last inspection. The subject team leaders for mathematics provide very good leadership. The curriculum provision, teaching, learning and standards achieved by pupils are regularly scrutinised and reviewed. Action is taken to ensure that good teaching is maintained and pupils achieve to the best of their ability.

SCIENCE

101. The standards of eleven-year-olds have risen very rapidly over the past three years, from being broadly in line with those nationally in 2000 to well above by summer 2002. When compared to those in schools with similar standards at the age of seven four years previously, pupils achieved very well in 2002 and these very good achievements were equally evident amongst all abilities. Boys and girls achieved equally well. The school exceeded its target for 2002 by some margin.
102. Inspection findings confirm that these very good standards are being maintained in all aspects of science. Standards remain well above average. Almost all pupils are likely to achieve at least the expected levels by the end of Year 6 in 2003 in both their knowledge and understanding of key scientific concepts and in their scientific enquiry skills, and over half of them are likely to achieve the higher levels. Pupils of all abilities are fully involved in lessons throughout, including those with special educational needs and travellers' children, and they achieve well. More able and gifted pupils achieve very well. For example, pupils in Year 6 have a very good knowledge of the planets in the Solar System, having researched information from a range of sources including the Internet. They explain the effect of the apparent motion of the Sun on shadows, using ray diagrams. Pupils also describe ways of altering the flow of electricity in a circuit by altering the number of cells and bulbs, and the more able provide thoughtful explanations for these effects. Almost all pupils are secure in their ability to plan fair tests by Year 6. Most demonstrate higher skills; for example, they understand the

need to repeat measurements and to evaluate their experimental methods, and many suggest improvements to them. A few pupils are considering what repeated measures may tell them about the quality of their data.

103. There are several reasons for these rising and very good standards. A new science team leader was appointed two years ago who has been very influential in shaping developments in the subject. The subject is taught by specialist teams who are very committed and work closely with the team leader, sharing their ideas on ways of improving their teaching. The demand of lessons is also high, particularly in Years 5 and 6. A good example is that of a Year 5 lesson about organs in the human body. Pupils learned about the location, size and function of all the major organs such as the heart, lungs and stomach. In the lesson that followed, the class teacher led an excellent discussion that engaged all pupils in debate about why the heart pumps faster during exercise. His very skilful questioning enabled pupils to make their own connections between the functions of several organs so that many were able to describe the need for more oxygen and digested food to be transported to cells, especially muscles. Some very able pupils told the class of their reading about thin membranes in the lungs that enable gases to be exchanged with the blood and they described the difference between an artery and a vein. In the subsequent investigation, pupils devised strategies for investigating the effects of exercise on heart rate. Many repeated their measures to check their accuracy and discussed how their experiments can be improved.
104. By the age of seven, pupils are reaching above average standards and are achieving well. Pupils in Year 1 describe the features of a variety of materials, and more-able pupils talk about their similarities and differences. By Year 2, pupils consider the effects of heating and cooling materials, and know about some materials that dissolve, comparing them with those that do not. They construct simple electrical circuits and know that a complete loop is required for a bulb to light. In their practical work, pupils acquire good skills by Year 2 when observing and comparing closely, and they record and describe what they find out appropriately; for example, by tabulating their results and talking about them.
105. Pupils enjoy science very much, and their behaviour in lessons is very good and sometimes excellent. Teachers strongly encourage them to speculate and to explain patterns and observations, and they celebrate the often thoughtful responses they receive in lessons. As a result, pupils are enthusiastic and curious to learn more, often researching additional information outside lessons, especially in the junior classes. Teachers provide suitable references, including Internet sites, for pupils to enquire further, and pupils enjoy explaining to their peers what they have found out. They have well-developed skills in information technology and apply them effectively to research and present information in a variety of ways, including graphically and in slide-show presentations. For example, Year 6 pupils prepared teaching materials for younger pupils about the function of particular organs in the body in the form of animated slides that combined text, graphics and sound. Year 4 pupils studying the range of forces used in different toys used spreadsheets to display their findings. However, the use of sensors and data-loggers to gather, process and display data such as light, temperature and sound readings from experiments is under-developed, although training and the increased use of data-loggers are planned for this year.
106. Pupils apply their numeracy skills in a number of contexts to estimate, calculate, measure and display information graphically. However, their written work is often limited to short responses to questions and occasional extended writing, mainly to report experiments or descriptive work such as that about the planets. Opportunities for more-extended writing in a range of styles and for different purposes are too few at present, so that pupils' writing skills are under-used.

107. The quality of teaching and learning is at least good and much is very good. There are particular strengths in teachers' knowledge of the subject, their enthusiasm and their very good questioning skills ensure that lessons are stimulating and demanding. Lessons are planned well around clear learning objectives that are shared with pupils from the outset. Class discussions are sometimes excellent. This is because teachers enjoy excellent relationships with their pupils and manage them very well. Lessons are very inclusive because teachers encourage pupils of all abilities to contribute their ideas within a very secure and positive climate for learning. Occasionally, a few less-able pupils may struggle with their work until a teacher spots them. This occurs where teachers have not anticipated their needs in their planning and where teaching assistants are not available. Marking is good and teachers use their assessments well to guide their teaching; for example, when using examples of pupils' good work in discussion with the class.
108. Good progress has been made since the last inspection. Standards have risen considerably, partly due to teachers' commitment, enthusiasm and teamwork under the very good leadership of the subject leader. Curriculum plans are effective in guiding teaching and under constant review following the teaching of each unit. Pupils are assessed regularly and their individual achievements compared to targets set to ensure that potential underachievement is identified and acted on quickly. The subject leader monitors pupils' achievements and effectively supports teaching quality throughout. The science team show a strong commitment to improve the subject further

ART AND DESIGN

109. Standards in art and design are above expectations by the end of Year 2 and in line with expectations by the end of Year 6. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when standards were in line with expectations at both key stages. The higher standards by the end of Year 2 are due to the quality of experiences, good teaching and the enthusiasm of the co-ordinator.
110. By the end of Year 2, pupils demonstrate good dexterity and an aesthetic approach to their work. This is evident when they weave on a loom or on paper, or try unorthodox weaving using an old picture frame. They are confident to select from a wide range of materials and produce artefacts that are pleasing to the eye. They show genuine interest in carding and spinning skills, and are eager to try. Studying Mexican Indians, pupils use a viewfinder to help them reproduce very detailed and colourful representations of the patterns found on genuine Mexican materials.
111. By the end of Year 6, pupils recognise the work of a range of artists such as Munch, Van Gogh, Matisse, Turner and Clarice Cliff. They use paint to effectively portray moods such as happiness, sadness and anger. Pupils acquire new knowledge and develop ideas well. They apply creative effort to their work, are productive and evaluate the outcomes. Observation skills are encouraged throughout the school, with pupils producing some good examples; for example, bottle shapes drawn by Years 5 and 6. Year 5 pupils produce detailed clay models and slabs depicting people, animals and patterns from nature, showing appropriate manipulative skills.
112. Pupils have positive attitudes to art. They concentrate and behave very well in situations where they move about freely to select their materials, move to another group or investigate pattern in the environment.

113. Very good experiences are provided for pupils, but skills and techniques are not effectively built on as they move through the school. Lessons appear in isolation, with no reference to skills and techniques previously taught. The school has recognised this and, although improvements have been made since the last inspection to the scheme of work and assessment, these areas remain to be effectively addressed. Good use is made of visitors and visits to enhance and enrich curriculum provision. Pupils have opportunities for working with people who are experts in their field, such as the weaver and artists. The school's art club provides effective experiences where pupils demonstrate a range of skills such as calligraphy. They are given the opportunity to participate in out-of-school events such as the Salisbury Festival, where they received awards and they participated in a project on trees that combined art and poetry.
114. Teaching is good in Years 1 and 2. Insufficient lessons were observed in Years 3 to 6 to enable a secure judgement to be made on teaching quality. However, the lesson that was observed demonstrated sound teaching. Significant features of the good lessons were the enthusiasm, knowledge and understanding of the teachers and visitor, which inspired pupils. The lessons in Years 1 and 2 provided a good example in which the teachers and visitor were able to respond to pupils' questions and provide new examples and challenges. This meant that by the end of the lesson every pupil had completed one type of weaving. Pupils with special educational needs are assisted well by teachers and assistants and make good progress.
115. The present child-centred approach to assessment highlights statements for different levels that are not National Curriculum levels and this is in the process of being developed further. There is a satisfactory portfolio that portrays examples of work throughout the school to help guide planning in the subject. These examples need to be combined with other assessment methods to help monitor pupils' progress in knowledge, understanding and skills.
116. The leadership of this subject is sound. The team have a clear view of what is required to support more-effective teaching and to raise pupils' standards. There has been much disruption until recently caused by the school's major building project that has had an adverse effect on standards. Resources are sufficient, of sound quality and easily accessible.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

117. In the week of the inspection, design and technology did not feature in the timetable of lessons because it is taught in blocks at other times of the year. Judgements about teaching quality are therefore not possible. However, a limited range of pupils' work, including photographic evidence relating to every year, was scrutinised, curriculum plans were reviewed and discussions were held with the subject co-ordinator. On the basis of this evidence, pupils' are achieving standards above those expected nationally, by the ages of both seven and eleven. They are achieving well throughout the school because they are provided with a stimulating range of well-planned design projects.
118. The school held a highly successful design and technology week in the autumn term of last year involving all pupils and organised and led by the subject's leader. Evidence of pupils' work completed during that week shows careful attention to cutting, shaping and assembling materials. Pupils are encouraged to evaluate their design ideas as their work develops. Year 1 pupils designed and made a variety of finger puppets such as rabbits and cats. Each was cut and sewn carefully, with facial features added by gluing and sewing so that the finished products were robust and resembled planned

intentions. Year 2 pupils designing a techni-colour dream-coat for Joseph tried out their ideas in two dimensions, using card before refining their ideas to make their finished products to dress a soft toy. Some of these pupils used a computer graphics programme to help design their patterns, and their finished coats were shaped, sewn and finished very well and to a good standard.

119. Teachers encourage pupils to evaluate commercially-produced products and their fitness for purpose before designing their own. For example, pupils in Year 3 produced a variety of designs for their photo frames that took account of the sort of photograph they were likely to contain. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 worked with a visitor from a large architectural design company specialising in bridge construction to learn about types of bridge, the forces to consider in bridge design and how tetrahedral and triangular structures add strength to a bridge and save weight. They subsequently used wooden dowel to construct their own large designs in the school hall. Examples of pupils' work demonstrate good gains in knowledge and skills from these experiences.
120. The curriculum is planned well around a national scheme. Pupils undertake interesting and stimulating design projects that encompass a wide range of materials and skills. Teachers review and assess pupils' work following each unit, and curriculum plans are adjusted in the light of these assessments. For example, some units involving sewing techniques were found to be too far apart in time to enable pupils to build on what they have learned and so adjustments to curriculum plans are being considered to take account of this.
121. Pupils use information and communication technology in the subject in a number of ways; for example, pupils in Year 2 design patterns and colours for fabrics and they sequence a set of instructions for a moving vehicle. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are beginning to develop these skills further to control devices such as traffic-light sequences. However, this control aspect of information and communication technology is not developed as well as other areas of the subject.
122. Satisfactory progress has been made since the last inspection. The subject leader is relatively new to the post but is already showing good leadership skills and a strong commitment to motivating pupils and improving standards further. For example, in response to the major disruption to the school's curriculum for most of last year caused by the school's rebuilding programme, the subject leader worked with a national supermarket chain to enable every class to carry out food technology projects away from the school with materials, specialist expertise and cooking facilities supplied by the supermarket. These projects proved very successful in developing pupils' awareness of food safety and enabled them to explore their own ideas for food products. Resources for the subject are generally adequate.

GEOGRAPHY

123. When the school was last inspected standards were in line with expectations. Inspection evidence now indicates that standards at the end of Year 2 are in line with expectations and that standards at the end of Year 6 are above. This is good progress since the last inspection. Insufficient teaching was observed in Years 1 and 2 to make overall judgements, but teaching seen in Years 3 to 6 was good overall, especially in Years 5 and 6. This is a significant contributory factor in pupils' good achievements.
124. In Years 1 and 2 pupils widen their knowledge and understanding of their local area. Appropriate emphasis on fieldwork enables pupils to develop geographical skills by plotting routes on maps, locating various amenities and exploring the particular characteristics of aerial views. In Year 2 pupils deploy some of these skills to locate

Mexico on a world map. They also use their skills in information and communication technology to research information about the country. In the one lesson seen in Year 2, patient questioning and effective use of photographic evidence enabled pupils to work on from their research findings and build up a picture of daily life in the Mexican village of Tocuaro. Pupils then attempted to compare life there to life in Downton.

125. In Years 3 to 6, pupils widen their knowledge of areas further away from their own locality. They study mountain environments in Britain and Europe such as Snowdonia and the French Alps. Effective teaching using well-chosen resources encourages pupils to look at the 'pluses' and 'minuses' of living in these regions, thus attempting to widen knowledge and understanding of environmental issues. Pupils write about 'tourism and jobs' and 'pollution and congestion', and explore some of the characteristics of this type of land use. The skills of literacy and numeracy feature in the pupils' work. Teachers encourage the use of technical vocabulary such as 'tectonic', 'erosion', 'headland', 'stack' and 'stump', and pupils' research skills are used well. Numeracy skills are used by pupils working with different map scales and comparing distances between places, lengths of rivers and heights of mountains. Pupils observe that 'The United Kingdom's mountains and rivers are small compared to many in Europe'.
126. Pupils in Year 6 are confident when plotting appropriate routes and show good understanding of features of Ordnance Survey maps.
127. The subject leader has thought through how best to use the time available to teach the geography curriculum, and the current strategy is paying dividends. Good assessment procedures, national planning guidelines adapted to the school's needs and very effective use of outside resources such as Seven Sisters Country Park, and Osmington Bay at Weymouth for a residential visit, are all enabling teachers to deliver an interesting and progressive curriculum within which pupils are challenged.

HISTORY

128. Although no lessons were observed in Years 1 and 2, an analysis of pupils' work and teachers' planning indicates that standards are in line with those expected. By the end of Year 6 standards are well above those expected and this represents very good progress since the last inspection. This improved picture in Years 3 to 6 is due to confident, knowledgeable subject leadership and very good teaching where the subject leader teaches all the history.
129. Pupils are involved in a wide range of visits, drama and practical activities that excite their interest and promote understanding. There is a good level of challenge within lessons in Years 3 to 6, so that pupils not only learn facts, but also develop an understanding of historical forces and the reasons why events happened as they did.
130. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 develop a sound understanding of chronology and how things change over time. Good links are made with pupils' own experiences. Questionnaires sent out to family and friends enable pupils to gather information about the toys parents and grandparents played with, and how they differ from toys today. Good use of a range of evidence, including photographs and pictures, enables pupils to consider the games children used to play and to compare them with their own.
131. In Years 3 to 6, pupils develop their knowledge and understanding of the lives of people in the past. For instance, they use role-play and drama to imagine life for pupils in Victorian schools. They explore reasons for the Roman invasion of Britain, and good use of local expertise and resources, such as that of an archaeologist, and local sites

such as Rockbourne Roman Villa, stimulates pupils' interest and enthusiasm. This, allied to the teacher's very good subject knowledge and incisive, perceptive questioning, challenges pupils and enables them to learn very well. The subject leader is very keen to give pupils experience of seeing how history is interpreted, and for them to try to empathise with the moods and feelings of different times. Some of the older pupils, studying World War 2, were perceptive and understanding about some aspects of being a young child during this conflict. On looking at photographs of children being evacuated from London during the Blitz, one pupil observed, "They are smiling". Another suggested, "Ah well, they might not be aware of how serious the situation was", and a third said, "It might have been a bit of an adventure for them".

132. No overall judgements can be made about teaching in Years 1 and 2, but teaching in Years 3 to 6 is very good. It is vivid and captures pupils' imagination so that they want to learn more. When older pupils were examining World War 2 gas masks, their touch, feel and smell, and thinking of why they were issued, they were engrossed.
133. The subject is very well led. The leader has effectively modified national planning guidelines into a well-thought-through programme that is progressive, and which pupils and adults are enthusiastic about.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

134. Pupils' standards by the age of eleven are well above those expected nationally and they achieve very well. All pupils achieve at least the expected levels by Year 6 and the majority achieve above them. Some gifted pupils achieve very high standards in researching and presenting information, although they have too few experiences of gathering data using sensors and data-loggers or of controlling devices. By the age of seven, pupils are achieving above the standards expected nationally for their age. Pupils with diverse social backgrounds and those with special educational needs are very well integrated in lessons; they co-operate well in shared tasks, and relationships between pupils and with their teachers are excellent. As a result, pupils with special educational needs and those from minorities, such as travellers' children, achieve well as they learn from other pupils as well as from their teachers and teaching assistants.
135. These standards represent a very good improvement since the last inspection, when they were broadly in line with those expected. A number of factors have contributed to these improvements. The school has for the past three years benefited from the use of an information-technology suite that all pupils have access to for timetabled lessons. As a result the teaching of basic skills has improved dramatically. Teachers have received very good training and support from the school's leader of information and communication technology, who is an accredited trainer. In addition they have enthusiastically embraced national pilot projects such as that for on-line numeracy materials for the Department for Education and Skills for which most were provided with laptop computers. Consequently, teachers are much more confident in their own skills, routinely prepare their own lessons and materials with the computer, and are confident in demonstrating basic skills to pupils. The school governor linked to this subject is also very knowledgeable in information and communication technology and has done much to support developments with the subject leader.
136. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 acquire good basic skills in the subject that enable virtually all to confidently carry out sequences of routine tasks such as logging on to the network, locating and opening files and applications, and saving their own work. This enables them to apply their skills to help raise their achievements in many subjects. For example, Year 2 pupils used a CD-ROM to research information about Mexico as part of their geography topic. They made their own 'passport' before locating Mexico on a

world map and finding out some key facts about it, such as the main cities and some animals that are prevalent there. By Year 2 the great majority of pupils are able to make pictures of their own using a graphics application, having discussed the style of painters such as Mondrian. They design patterns for clothing for soft toys in design and technology. Year 1 pupils learn to make pictograms of information they have gathered, such as the frequency of eye colour in the class and studies of weather patterns over a period of two weeks.

137. By Year 4, pupils are very confident in their basic skills to enable them to combine text, pictures and graphics when communicating information. In one Year 4 science lesson about forces the class teacher skilfully demonstrated how a spreadsheet can be used to present the frequency of types of forces used in a range of toys. The discussion with the whole class was very effective because pupils were expected to suggest a sequence for the development of the work, evaluate the different types of graphs available and choose the most appropriate style of presentation for the data being processed. Many pupils produced graphical presentations and an analysis of the patterns that showed a good understanding of the impact their finished work would have on their intended audience.
138. Information and communication technology is used effectively in classrooms to help pupils with special educational needs. For example, teaching assistants help Year 3 pupils in a literacy lesson to sequence events in the story of Cinderella. Year 5 pupils to draw shapes and angles and programme a floor robot to follow a prescribed route.
139. In Years 5 and 6, pupils apply their well-developed skills in most subjects to research and exchange information, including the use of the Internet. They begin to learn how information and communication technology can be used to monitor events and the environment, using sensors and data-loggers in their science. They also learn to programme instructions for devices such as traffic lights in design and technology. However, both these aspects are less well developed than other aspects of information and communication technology in the school.
140. Year 6 pupils refine and present information in a variety of styles and, taking due account of their intended audience, often combining text, pictures sound and motion into very effective presentations. For example, they used a presentation application to prepare a sequence of slides and accompanying notes about a major organ system such as the heart or lungs to use as science teaching materials for younger pupils. Almost all pupils were able intuitively to sequence the commands and effects as their work developed and some very gifted pupils quickly produced presentations of a high standard.
141. Teaching and learning in the subject are very good. Lessons are planned very well and learning intentions regularly referred to throughout lessons so that pupils remain focussed on the outcomes their teachers intend. Teachers' skills and confidence in using information and communication technology, and their good understanding of how to use it to raise standards in other subjects, are evident in the quality of discussions and demonstrations to their classes in a range of contexts. The computer suite and data-projector are used very effectively to teach pupils new skills, and they are encouraged to be creative and imaginative in their work. Relationships are excellent and pupils managed very well. A strong feature of lessons are the quality of discussion between pupils and the way the very able exchange their ideas with others and assist them to solve problems. However, one weakness is that teachers sometimes miss good opportunities to discuss how information and communication technology is used in the wider world and its impact on people's lives.

142. The subject is very well led by the team leader. She understands the strengths and weaknesses in the subject and has a very clear vision for its development. Curriculum plans are good and pupils' skills regularly assessed and recorded with them. Plans are in place to upgrade the computer suite, extend access to Internet facilities to all classrooms and provide further projection facilities to assist teaching in classrooms. The development plan for the subject is very good, and very good support has also been provided by governors, contributing to the rising standards in the subject.

MUSIC

143. The school has successfully maintained the consistently high standards throughout that were found in the last inspection. By the end of Year 2, and particularly by Year 6, pupils' standards are well above those expected. For some pupils they are high. This is due to the excellent provision provided by the school. Very good use is made of specialist teaching throughout the school and peripatetic teachers for tuition in a wide range of instruments. The very good quality and range of instruments available for pupils successfully support their eagerness to participate in musical activities.
144. Pupils in Year 1 can name a range of percussion instruments such as the guiro, castanets and tambourine. They confidently use hand signals to demonstrate the high or low pitch of a note and make very good progress in singing the syllables of their names in this way. Pupils listen attentively and describe sounds well. For example, a pupil described the sound made by playing the metallophone as an echo. They take genuine interest in new instruments that are regularly introduced to them.
145. Singing throughout the school is of a very high standard. Pupils demonstrate very good use of pitch and diction when singing in assemblies. Older pupils sing particularly well. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 give very dramatic performances of songs being prepared for a public performance. Year 5 pupils are particularly confident and eager to take solo parts. Pupils confidently evaluate songs according to style and mood. The majority are familiar with major and minor keys and consider these when listening and appreciating contrasting pieces of music. They make very good interpretations of types of style and mood and very good progress in understanding the importance of considering the key, style and mood before writing a piece of music. Year 6 pupils identify changes in tempo. Some know the terms 'legato' and 'staccato' and they are beginning to understand musical terms for change of mood such as 'allegro' and 'largo'.
146. Many pupils in this school, eighty-seven, play musical instruments and have the opportunity to participate in a range of festivals and to take examinations. Evening performances are a regular event to enable family members and friends to enjoy the pupils' achievements. During the inspection such an evening was observed where approximately seventy pupils participated. The standard of instrumental playing is outstanding for primary pupils. Their ability to play as individuals, in a group or as a 'Big Band', and to adapt so readily is exceptional. Very dedicated pupils played a range of brass and woodwind instruments. There were beginners and the more experienced playing the trumpet, trombone, saxophone, flute and clarinet. All played with a very good sense of rhythm and mood. Pupils successfully portrayed their love of music and pride in their achievements.
147. All pupils have very positive attitudes to music, and instrumentalists show dedication and self-discipline. They behave very well in music lessons, are confident and enjoy the experiences. Music is a strong feature of this school and every effort is made to ensure that pupils receive the full curriculum in spite of withdrawal sessions for

instrumental tuition. All pupils have equal opportunities to play an instrument if they so desire.

148. The teaching of music by very talented musicians throughout the school promotes very good progress by all pupils whatever their ability. Teachers' very secure knowledge and understanding of the subject are used effectively to build on pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills, and support them in achieving high standards. Lessons are very lively and well balanced between participation, listening and evaluating. Pertinent use of praise and encouragement promotes confidence in pupils and a willingness to participate.
149. The leadership and management of music are excellent. The school ensures that pupils have the best of resources, i.e. teaching, instrumental tuition and good tuned and untuned instruments. Good use is made of the music and drama room that is situated outside the main building; for example, for instrumental music tuition.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

150. Standards are in line with expectations in Years 1 and 2 and above expectations by the end of Year 6. This is a broadly similar picture to that seen at the time of the last inspection.
151. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 work enthusiastically in dance and gymnastics. In the dance lesson observed the teacher effectively developed ideas from stories that had recently been read in the classroom. This made the activities seem more real to the children. They displayed sound control, with several beginning to demonstrate some poise and quality in their movements. The plenary session was especially effective as pupils and class teacher discussed what they had done, and pupils were encouraged to evaluate their work. Ideas were put forward in order to help pupils develop their dance sequences further next time. In gymnastics, pupils enjoy their work and co-operate well with others. They show increasing control when balancing and making curled and stretched movements. Effective teaching creates good opportunities for pupils to demonstrate good practice and share ideas. However, some inefficient use of apparatus and space when using mats meant that groups were too big and pupils had to queue for their 'turn'. This reduced the time available to practise in order to improve quality of movements. Nevertheless, most seven-year-olds link movements into simple sequences and, overall, the teaching seen was sound.
152. Teaching overall in Years 3 to 6 is good. In gymnastics, pupils demonstrate inventive body shapes based on curling on the ground and in the air, and many show good awareness of continuous movement, with good, clear starting and finishing positions. Teachers' expectations are high, and there is a clear focus on developing skills and awareness. However, the deployment and use of large apparatus are not sufficiently refined to maximise the time available for practising, and improving the quality of movements.
153. Pupils achieve well in games because of the school's systematic development of skills and techniques. In a hockey lesson with some of the older pupils in Year 5, the clear learning objective was to practise and develop key skills, and the teacher's own very good subject knowledge and skills were instrumental in helping pupils achieve very well. After a lot of hard work, the final part of the lesson was a celebration of good techniques, with pupils making their own evaluations and naming others they thought showed good skills. Very good subject knowledge and understanding in a dance lesson seen enabled the teacher to inspire a class relatively inexperienced in dance.

By the end they had made good progress in vigorously developing their ideas of 'Match of the Day' into dance.

154. Pupils in Year 4 learn to swim at a local leisure centre. By the time they leave school nearly all pupils can swim 25 metres and many do much more, gaining distance awards and learning elements of personal safety in water.
155. A feature of the school's work in physical education is the excellent provision for extra-curricular activities, team and competitive sports, and coaching from a number of professional clubs, including cricket, netball, tennis, football and judo and this make a good contribution to raising standards in the subject.