

# INSPECTION REPORT

**ST MICHAEL'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND VOLUNTARY  
AIDED PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Lyme Regis

LEA area: Dorset

Unique reference number: 113851

Headteacher: Mr C Tozer

Lead inspector: Mrs S Lacey

Dates of inspection: 10<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> November 2003

Inspection number: 257870

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	169
School address:	King's Way Lyme Regis Dorset
Postcode:	DT7 3DY
Telephone number:	01297 442623
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs A Vivian
Date of previous inspection:	6 <sup>th</sup> July 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is smaller than most primary schools. Pupils come from a wide range of social, economic and academic backgrounds. About seven per cent are from minority ethnic families. All but one pupil have English as their mother tongue. There are three pupils from travelling families. The percentage of pupils claiming free school meals is below average, but this does not reflect the socio-economic backgrounds of the pupils and about 30 per cent of families receive government support. When children start school, their skills, knowledge and understanding are wide-ranging, but in most years are a little below average for their age overall. Twelve per cent of pupils have been formally identified as having special educational needs, which is below average. Three of these pupils have a statement of special educational need. These pupils have a range of learning and physical difficulties. A further 20 per cent of pupils have been identified as needing extra support because they are a little behind their peers. The percentage of pupils joining or leaving the school other than at the normal time is usually high, but only slightly above average last year. This mobility is almost entirely due to house moves. The school has recently been awarded 'Investors In People' accreditation. It has also received government School Achievement Awards for improving standards in national tests for the last three years.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
3764	Stephanie Lacey	Lead inspector	English, art and design, geography, history, music, special educational needs and English as an additional language
9769	Margaret Morrissey	Lay inspector	
19302	Christine Perrett	Team inspector	Foundation Stage and science
30618	Paul Story	Team inspector	Mathematics, information and communication technology, design and technology and physical education

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**St Michael's is a school with some considerable strengths. It provides a sound education overall.** Staff and governors are committed to providing for the needs of all pupils within a Christian environment. The very well respected headteacher gives a clear educational lead. Standards are rising in English and mathematics in Year 6 tests as a consequence of good teaching in these subjects. The school provides sound value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Most pupils achieve well in English because of good teaching, although standards are below average in reading in Year 2.
- Standards have risen year on year in Year 6 national tests.
- A caring Christian ethos provides a very firm foundation for children's learning and pupils are happy at school, behave well and get on very well with each other and the staff.
- The headteacher manages the school well and provides a clear educational direction for the way forward.
- Standards are above average in music and art.
- Teaching assistants provide valuable support for work in classrooms.
- Governors make a good contribution to the running of the school.
- There are good links with the community.
- Planning for the development of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding in some subjects is unsatisfactory and some pupils have an unbalanced timetable.
- Some subject leaders are not as effective as they could be.
- There are some inconsistencies in teaching.

Overall the school has made good improvement since its last inspection in July 1998. There has been a successful drive to improve pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Consequently standards have risen in Year 6 national tests and the school has received three government achievement awards for the good progress made. Teaching is good, although not as strong as at the time of the last inspection. People matter at St Michael's and the school has achieved the 'Investor in People' award in recognition of its good work. The school has tackled the weaknesses identified by the last inspection, which were related to work in ICT and the assessment of pupils' progress in subjects other than English and mathematics. There is still work to do in both these areas, including the use of ICT in other subjects, and this is identified in the school's improvement plan.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	D	B	B	D
mathematics	C	B	B	E
science	C	C	D	E

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average. Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

**Overall, pupils achieve well because of good teaching.** In each year group, there is a wide spread of ability, with about a third of the pupils having some learning difficulties. Most of the pupils identified with special educational needs are only a little behind their peers. Year on year children start school with skills, knowledge and understanding that are below average overall. In the Foundation Stage, children make steady progress. This year, not all will reach the goals that

children are expected to reach by the end of the Reception year in communication, language, literacy and mathematics. In Years 1 to 6 pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well. They move ahead more quickly in Years 5 and 6. Standards in Year 2 are currently broadly average in writing and below average in reading and mathematics. In Year 6, standards are broadly average in English, mathematics and science. Over the last few years, the rise in standards in Year 6 tests has been faster than the national trend. The low grade given in the table for pupils' attainment in comparison with similar schools is misleading. It does not take into account the very good progress this group of pupils made when they were in Year 2. Throughout the school, standards are above average in art and design and music.

**Pupils' personal development is good. This is because there is very good overall provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.** Pupils enjoy school and like learning. They behave sensibly in lessons and at playtimes. Attendance is below average.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The school provides a sound education with some significant strengths. Teaching is good overall.** Teaching and learning are good in Years 1, 2, 5 and 6 and sound in the Reception class and Years 3 and 4. Good relationships and good provision for pupils with special educational needs are features of almost all lessons. Staff place a heavy emphasis on the teaching of literacy and numeracy skills and pupils have moved ahead well in these areas. Art and design and music are consistently well taught. In some of the less successful lessons, organisation and the use of time were not good enough. Sometimes the marking of pupils' work does not always give clear pointers for improvement. There is sound provision for children in the Foundation Stage, but the lack of an enclosed outside area limits their development in all areas of learning. The curriculum for pupils in Years 1 to 6 is soundly based on the National Curriculum, but planning for some subjects is unsatisfactory and the timetable for pupils with special educational needs concentrates on English to the detriment of other subjects. Good links with the community and exciting arts projects bring learning alive. Parents support the school well.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Overall, leadership and management are good with some strong features.** The headteacher provides a clear educational lead for staff and governors. He is very well organised and the school runs very smoothly. Senior staff provide good support, but some subject leaders are not as effective as they could be. Governors are fully involved in the work of the school and make a good contribution. All statutory requirements are met.

## **PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

Parents are generally pleased with the school. A minority are concerned about bullying and the information that they receive about their children's progress. The inspection found nothing to substantiate their concerns. Pupils are positive about all aspects of school life.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

The most important things the school should do to improve are:

- Raise standards in reading and mathematics in Years 1 and 2.
- Improve the planning for the development of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding in science, design and technology (DT), geography, history and information and communication technology (ICT).
- Ensure that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, experience the full range of the curriculum.
- Improve the effectiveness of subject leaders.
- Tackle the inconsistencies in teaching, especially in relation to organisation, the use of time and marking.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

#### Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Children's achievement in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Most are on line to reach the early learning goals in all areas of learning by the end of the year, with some children struggling in the areas of communication, language, literacy and mathematics. Pupils' achievement is good overall in Years 1 to 6 and they do particularly well in Years 5 and 6. Overall standards are rising in English and mathematics. Currently, standards in Year 2 are below average in reading and mathematics and broadly average in writing. In Year 6, standards are broadly average in English, mathematics and science. Throughout the school, standards are above average in art and design and music.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in English in Years 1 to 6 because of good teaching.
- Pupils achieve well in mathematics in Years 5 and 6.
- Standards are below average in reading and mathematics in Year 2.
- Standards are rising in writing as a consequence of the school's efforts.
- Standards are above average in art and design and music.

#### Commentary

##### *Starting school*

1. When children start school in the Reception class, assessment data shows that their knowledge, skills and understanding are wide ranging. For many years, the overall profile has been below average, with children having particular difficulties in the areas of communication, language, literacy and mathematics.

##### *School's results in national tests*

2. Overall standards have risen in Year 2 and Year 6 national tests since the last inspection. In Year 6, the improvement has been above the national trend. There has been particularly good improvement in writing because of the concerted efforts of all staff.
3. The table below shows that in 2003, standards in Year 2 were below average in reading and mathematics and above average in writing. This indicates considerable improvement in writing during the year and a fall back in mathematics. Higher attainers did not do well in reading. Teacher assessments show that all pupils reached the expected Level 2 in science, but that few reached the higher Level 3. When compared with similar schools, pupils at St Michael's did better than their peers in reading and mathematics and much better in writing. Standards rose after the last inspection and remained well above average for several years. In 2002, standards fell to the present levels. The reason for the drop back is partly because of staff changes and partly because there is a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the younger pupils' classes.

##### ***Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2003***

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.4 (15.3)	15.9 (15.8)
writing	15.4 (12.4)	14.9 (14.4)
mathematics	15.9 (16.7)	16.4 (16.5)

*There were 28 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*



4. The table below shows that in 2003, standards in Year 6 tests were above average in English and mathematics and below average in science. Standards were not so high in science because higher attainers did not do so well in this subject. This is related, to some extent, to the difficulties in planning work within mixed aged classes in previous year groups. In English and mathematics pupils work in single year groups and do better. This particular group of pupils reached high standards in their Year 2 tests and their progress over the last four years has been steady.

**Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003**

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.9 (28.1)	27.0 (27.0)
mathematics	27.6 (27.8)	27.0 (26.7)
science	27.9 (28.3)	28.8 (28.3)

*There were 29 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

5. The school's own tracking of progress shows that pupils' progress is now more even from year to year than it was a few years ago, when pupils moved ahead very quickly in Year 2 as a result of strong teaching.

*Inspection findings*

*The Foundation Stage*

6. At the time of the inspection, children had been at school since September, attending for mornings only. This year, children have settled well into school and are making steady progress. Many children are well set to reach the early learning goals in all areas of learning, but a significant number struggle with communication, language, and mathematics. Staff do the best they can to plan for children's development in all areas of learning, with a heavier emphasis on work related to the development of early literacy and numeracy skills. This is to the detriment of pupils' development in other areas of learning. The lack of an enclosed outdoor area limits opportunities for children's physical and creative development especially.

*Years 1 and 2*

7. Pupils achieve well overall because of the good provision made for their development. This includes pupils with special educational needs, who are especially well supported by learning support assistants. They move ahead well in reading and writing. They make good progress in Year 1 in mathematics and steady progress in Year 2. Standards this year are a little below average in reading, mathematics and science and average in writing. Standards were broadly average in lessons seen in other subjects and above average in art and design and music.

*Years 3 to 6*

8. Pupils move ahead steadily in Years 3 and 4 and achieve well in Years 5 and 6. All pupils are suitably challenged, including pupils with special educational needs and those from minority ethnic groups. Standards are broadly average in English, mathematics, science and ICT. They are set to rise by the end of the year because of the extra support given in Year 6. Standards were also broadly average in the few lessons seen in most other subjects, but above average in art and design and music.

*Whole school matters*

*Pupils with special educational needs*

9. Most of the pupils identified as having special educational needs are a little behind their peers, especially in the development of their literacy and numeracy skills. The school has a very structured support programme in place, which is effectively helping these pupils to move forward and catch up. The downside is that this involves withdrawing pupils from lessons and so they miss out on work in other subjects. The school is looking into adjusting the timetable

so that pupils are not missing the same lesson every week and are not withdrawn from subjects other than English. Children are not withdrawn from class in the Foundation Stage and, in the lessons seen, made the same steady progress as their peers. Some pupils have more significant difficulties, with three pupils having statements of special educational need. These pupils are also supported well, with teaching assistants providing sensitive support; as a consequence, they make good progress.

#### *Pupils from minority ethnic groups*

10. The school does not analyse the progress of pupils from minority ethnic groups or that of traveller pupils separately. In lessons seen, these pupils achieved as well as their peers.

#### *Pupils whose mother tongue is not English*

11. There is only one pupil learning English as an additional language. He had only been at school for a few weeks at the time of the inspection and had made great strides because of the good provision made for him by the school.

#### *Higher-attaining pupils*

12. Generally higher-attaining pupils are challenged effectively in most subjects. One exception is in science last year in both Year 2 and Year 6, where few pupils did better than expected. In mixed aged classes in Years 3 to 5, higher-attaining pupils are not always sufficiently challenged in some of the foundation subjects.

#### *Boys and girls*

13. Boys have done better than girls in Year 2 mathematics national tests for several years and in Year 6 tests girls have done better than boys in English and mathematics. There is nothing in the school's provision to account for these differences.

#### *Using skills across the curriculum*

14. Currently, pupils do use their skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT in other subjects to help them to make progress. However, there is no systematic planning for the development of these skills in other areas and so opportunities to move forward more quickly are lost.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. A strong Christian ethos underpins all aspects of school life and pupils learn to be caring and well behaved, with positive attitudes to their learning. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and fosters pupils' very good personal development. Attendance is below the national average.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- A strong caring Christian ethos permeates all activities, and helps to promote pupils' very good relationships and personal development.
- The very good role models of the staff ensure that pupils quickly know the difference between right and wrong and behave well.
- Pupils' spiritual and moral development are very good, and their social and cultural development are good.
- There are very good opportunities to support pupils' cultural development through art and music.
- Global citizenship is promoted well through links with a school in Uganda.
- There are some reported incidents of minor squabbles between pupils, but these are soon sorted out.
- There are good procedures for monitoring and improving pupils' attendance.
- Attendance is below average because of term-time holidays and illness.

## Commentary

### *Attitudes and behaviour*

15. Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development are good, maintaining the positive picture found at the time of the last inspection. Pupils are well behaved, polite and courteous. They respond well to the caring ethos of the school. Some children in the Foundation Stage enter school with underdeveloped social skills, but they learn the rules quickly, and respond positively to the clear routines. They enjoy the range of activities planned for them and are eager to learn. Pupils in the rest of the school also enjoy school, and show a considerable pride in being members of the school community. In conversations with inspectors, it was clear that pupils enjoyed school. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good overall. Staff deal quickly and effectively with the few incidents of inappropriate behaviour that occur. No incidents of bullying were seen during the inspection and, as the table below indicates, no pupils have been excluded from school. There have been no racist incidents.

#### **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	168	0	0
White – any other White background	6	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	2	0	0
Any other ethnic group	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	4	0	0

*The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

### *Relationships*

16. Pupils' relationships with adults and each other are very good, and have a positive impact on their learning. When given opportunities to work independently or in groups, pupils work co-operatively, sharing and valuing ideas, and concentrating well on the task. They are supportive of each other and their teachers. Pupils are happy and secure, and enjoy school life in an atmosphere where all are valued. They enjoy receiving rewards for achievement in all areas of schoolwork, and are particularly proud to receive the headteacher's gold awards. Pupils of all ages generally mix well at playtime and lunchtime, although some older pupils report that there are some minor disagreements. These are quickly sorted out with the help from teachers. Pupils with special educational needs take a full and active part in lessons and activities at playtimes.

### *Personal development*

17. Spirituality is promoted very well in assemblies, and through the high quality music and art that are celebrated throughout the school. Pupils learn to appreciate the lives of those less fortunate than themselves through the many charities that the school supports. Pupils have a very good understanding of right and wrong, which is promoted from a very early age. They benefit from the very good role models set by the adults in school, and obey the 'Golden Rules'. This helps the school to be a very orderly community. There are some opportunities for pupils to enhance their social development through taking responsibility, which they do with commitment and pride. Residential visits for pupils in Year 6 provide a good opportunity for pupils to develop maturity. Pupils are encouraged, through all school activities, to be honest, trustworthy, and well mannered.

### *Cultural development*

18. Pupils are provided with a curriculum that promotes a good understanding of Western culture in subjects such as history, art and design, music, and English. The school's strong musical and artistic traditions are used well to enhance this development. Pupils' understanding of different cultures is promoted through religious education, in which pupils learn about the major world faiths, and the links that have been established with a school in Uganda.

### *Attendance*

19. As this table shows, attendance is below the national average and levels of unauthorised attendance are above the national average. Absences are almost equally divided between term-time holidays and sickness or medical visits.

#### **Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)**

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.1	School data	0.5
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

*The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.*

20. Pupils arrive punctually for the start of the school day. Registration practice is swift and efficient and is in line with legal requirements. Parents agree they are well informed by the school of correct attendance procedures and are frequently reminded that term-time holidays do not benefit pupils' progress.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The school provides a sound education for its pupils, with some good features. Literacy and numeracy skills are taught effectively and so pupils move forward well in these areas. There is a strong emphasis on the arts, especially in the areas of art and design and music. However, planning for work in some other subjects is not as good as it could be. The lack of an enclosed outside area for pupils in the Foundation Stage limits their development in all areas of learning. Parents are supportive of all that the school does for their children.

### **Teaching and learning**

Overall, teaching is good and ensures that pupils achieve well, especially in English. The strongest teaching is in Years 1 and 2 and in Years 5 and 6, with older pupils making particularly good progress. Teaching in other years is sound. Teaching is not quite as strong as it was the time of the last inspection. A clear timetable for pupil assessment has been established in English and mathematics and procedures are being developed for other subjects but marking of pupils' work does not always provide clear indications of how to improve.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Literacy and numeracy skills are taught well.
- Teachers have high expectations of good behaviour.
- Very good relationships between pupils and staff underpin effective learning.
- Pupils with special educational needs are supported well, although withdrawal from some lessons means that they miss work.
- There is good use of specialist teaching, especially in music.
- Teaching assistants make a good contribution to work in classrooms.
- Marking does not always provide pupils with a clear picture of how to improve.
- There is good use of assessment in English and mathematics to monitor pupils' progress and plan their work.
- Assessment procedures in the rest of the curriculum are not fully developed.

## Commentary

21. The table below indicates the quality of the teaching in lessons seen during the inspection. At the time of the inspection, the deputy headteacher, who works with the Foundation Stage children in the mornings and teaches across the school in the afternoons, was on extended sick leave. Temporary teachers were taking her classes. Parents and pupils are very positive about the teaching staff. Pupils clearly enjoy learning.

### **Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 39 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
1(3%)	3 (8%)	18 (46%)	14(36%)	3 (8%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

*The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.*

### **Common strengths**

22. There are some common strengths in teaching that underpin pupils' learning. All teachers have established a calm and purposeful atmosphere in their classrooms. This is built on very good relationships between pupils and staff and fostered by high expectations of pupils' good behaviour. Consequently, pupils settle easily to their tasks and work hard with little distraction.
23. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught effectively. This work is planned carefully and explained clearly to pupils. As a result, pupils move forward well and apply their developing skills to other aspects of their work. Pupils' progress in phonic skills and spelling has had a very positive impact on their writing, for example.
24. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well. These pupils are clearly identified by staff and are given appropriate support within class. There is a substantial programme of withdrawal for help with basic skills. Teachers and teaching assistants work with pupils on structured programmes of work. Pupils move ahead well in these sessions. This is effective in the short term, but does mean that these pupils are not fully included in all lessons and miss out on work in some subjects.
25. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to work in classrooms. In some sessions they work specifically with pupils who have special educational needs and in others they provide more general support. In both situations they work effectively with individuals or small groups and provide focused support.

### **Characteristics of the very good and excellent lessons**

26. In the best lessons, a zippy pace and lively approach helped pupils to learn very effectively. In these lessons very good questioning enabled pupils to reflect on what they had learnt.

### **Example of outstanding practice**

#### **In an excellent music lesson, Year 6 pupils explored the structure of the rondo form**

The lesson got off to a very good start with a lively singing warm up activity. Then after a brief, but very focused, explanation of the rondo form from the teacher pupils set to work. In groups of twos and threes, pupils experimented with a range of tuned and non-tuned percussion instruments to work out a tune to a set rhythm. They concentrated well and worked hard. The hall was throbbing with sound. All pupils had the opportunity to play at least two instruments and all experimented with tunes using the pentatonic scale. The teacher constantly challenged the higher attainers and encouraged the less confident. The class came together to share what they had done and to put the pieces together in a rondo form in an A - B – A – C - A pattern.

### *Use of teachers' subject expertise*

27. Good use is made of some teachers' specialist expertise or interest in particular subjects. This is so in the two 'job share' classes, where staff teach the subjects that they are particularly interested in. Other teachers swap classes for some sessions. This enhances work in art and design and science. The headteacher also has a very positive impact on the quality of teaching across the school, particularly in music.

### *Timing and organisation*

28. In the less successful lessons, a range of factors meant that pupils did not learn as much as they should have done. These included:

- A lack of clear explanation about the purpose of the lesson.
- Problems with the timing of the lesson, including overlong introductions and a slow pace.
- Difficulties with group organisation, including the physical arrangement of groups in the classroom.

### *Assessing pupils' progress*

29. Overall, assessment is satisfactory. Children in the Foundation Stage are assessed satisfactorily and any areas of difficulty identified, although the children do not know what they need to do to improve. The strong and regular programme of assessing and recording pupils' progress developed in English and mathematics is now being copied in science. Results of tests and statutory assessments are analysed thoroughly and recorded and good use made of this data to track pupils' progress and set targets for improvement. Teachers use informal day-to-day assessments to plan for the next stages of learning. Good use is made of assessment information to group pupils by ability in English and mathematics lessons.

30. The school tackled the weakness identified by the last inspection in assessment of pupils' progress in subjects other than English and mathematics. Since that time, planning for subjects has been modified and so further assessment systems are being developed. The simple systems used in ICT, PE and RE are a relatively new introduction and pupil assessment is currently being tried in music. Assessment is unsatisfactory in history and geography.

31. Annual personal reviews with pupils help ensure that they are aware of how they are getting on and how they need to improve. Pupils' English record sheets contribute to this process well and those being introduced for mathematics will strengthen assessment.

32. In most cases, teachers mark pupils' work regularly and give them good verbal feedback on how they are doing. Sometimes written comments do not give pupils a clear enough picture of what they need to do to improve, or whether they have learnt what was expected in a particular lesson.

## **The curriculum**

The school provides a satisfactory range of learning opportunities. The curriculum is enriched imaginatively by visits, visitors, clubs and practical activities. The school is well staffed and the accommodation is good overall, but with no enclosed outside area for children in the Foundation Stage. Resources for work in different subjects are satisfactory.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- A strong emphasis on literacy and Numeracy has helped to raise standards.
- There are good links with community, visits, visitors, exciting arts projects and good range of clubs.
- The timetable is not balanced for pupils in the Foundation Stage and for pupils with special educational needs in Year 1 to 6.

- There is very good provision for art and design and music.
- Planning for the development of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding in science, design and technology, geography, history and information and communication technology, particularly in Year 4, is often unsatisfactory.
- The use of ICT in other subjects is underdeveloped.
- There is no enclosed outdoor area for children in the Foundation Stage.

## **Commentary**

### *Planning for work in the Foundation Stage*

33. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is planned appropriately to provide a range of interesting and relevant activities, but at the time of the inspection the balance of the curriculum was unsatisfactory. The school rightly places great importance on the development of literacy and numeracy skills, but there is too much time allocated to these, resulting in limited experiences in other areas of learning such as creativity. Children are in school for the mornings only at this time of the year and this does not help in providing an appropriate balance. The school has tried to compensate for the lack of an outside play area, but the current situation restricts opportunities for development in all areas of learning. This was an issue identified by the last inspection.

### *Planning for work in Years 1 to 6*

34. The curriculum is firmly based on the National Curriculum. It has been developed since the last inspection, using national guidance. For several years, there has been a heavy emphasis on English and mathematics in order to raise standards. This has been successful and the school is looking towards creating a timetable to provide a more varied approach to learning. The introduction of a programme of sex education as part of broader work on diet, health, drugs and personal safety has been developed since the last inspection.
35. Teachers make good use of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy as the basis for planning. Ability grouping in these lessons meets the needs of all pupils, including the gifted and talented and those with special educational needs. Catch-up programmes in English and mathematics help to meet pupils' specific needs. Unfortunately, this often results in pupils missing lessons in other subjects, restricting their experience of the full curriculum.
36. The creation of an additional teaching group during the mornings allows Year 4 pupils to be taught as a single age group for English and mathematics. For the rest of the day, these pupils are included in either the Year 3 or Year 5 class. This means that they do not always have access to the curriculum expected for their age group or the opportunity to develop specific subject skills, knowledge and understanding. This is particularly problematic in science, history and geography.
37. Topics in history, geography and DT are blocked for extended periods of time. This means that pupils have not yet studied history this term and pupils in Years 3 to 6 are only just beginning DT.
38. Long breaks mean that pupils forget information, lose time in revision and do not develop skills sequentially. ICT skills are being developed, but the use of ICT to support learning in other subjects is not yet a consistent or regular feature of the curriculum.
39. A strong programme of visits and visitors, together with good use of the locality, particularly in geography, makes learning relevant and interesting. A good range of clubs, sporting and musical activities and links with local artists and arts projects enrich pupils' learning. Consequently the overall provision for music and art and design are very good. An annual residential visit in Year 6 to the Isle of Purbeck provides good opportunities for pupils' personal development. Parents appreciate these and feel that there is a good range of activities.

### *Staffing, accommodation and resources*

40. The match of teachers to the curriculum is good overall. The provision of support staff is also good and improved since the last inspection. They are well trained and provide good support for teachers and enhance pupils' learning. Accommodation is good overall. The buildings have been improved since the last inspection to include a new computer network and a new hall. There is unsatisfactory provision in the Foundation Stage with no secure outdoor play area. Facilities for disabled pupils and adults are satisfactory. Stairs between Foundation Stage and Y1 and Y2 prevent internal access but the main school can be reached externally. There are ongoing plans to provide an under-12 facility on the school site. There are satisfactory resources in the school with improvement in the ICT provision since the last inspection.

### **Care, guidance and support**

Pupils are cared for well. Their health and safety is a priority for all staff and governors. Pupils enjoy school and know whom to turn to with any welfare or educational problems. They are involved satisfactorily in the school's work.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Staff care for pupils well, with health and safety a priority.
- Effective child protection procedures underpin pupils' care and welfare.
- Teachers know the pupils well and provide good levels of support.

### **Commentary**

#### *Health and safety*

41. The school cares well for all pupils in a healthy and safe environment. This represents good improvement since the last inspection. Staff are vigilant and, when needed, plan health and safety issues into lessons. The school is built on a hillside, which presents its own problems for safety and security. The school addresses this very well with all checks and balances in place. A large number of staff are trained first aiders. The headteacher and governors have worked hard to make significant improvements to the school building and, together with the caretaker, ensure the environment is maintained to a good standard. Pupils' personal health and safety are good. Through their everyday learning and the personal, social and health education programme, pupils are learning to care for themselves well.

42. There are effective child protection procedures, which meet statutory requirements, the agreed policy is well known to all staff and there are good working relationships with all relevant support agencies; overall, this provides good protection for pupils.

#### *Support and advice*

43. This area is strong. Induction arrangements are good, both when children start school and when they move on to secondary school. Very good relationships between pupils and staff mean that pupils have the confidence to seek help and support for their work and for any personal problems. Pupils are known very well by all staff and receive good support from them.

#### *Pupils' involvement in the school's work and development*

44. Pupils are involved in the life of the school and their views are sought through circle times. They discuss what they have learnt at the end of lessons and all are fully involved when deciding classroom rules and monitoring their successes. Their views and requests are listened to; during the summer they requested more outside seating in the shade and this was provided. The strong Christian ethos in the school strengthens the care and support which teachers provide for pupils. Parents are pleased with the willingness of the teachers to discuss pupils' needs with them.



## **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

Parents have positive views of the school and appreciate the work of all staff and particularly that of the headteacher. The partnership between home and school and the local and wider community plays a significant role in supporting pupils' home-school learning and progress. There are good links with other schools.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents are confident that teachers have high expectations of all pupils .
- There is good quality written and verbal information for parents.
- There are productive links with the community.
- There are effective transition arrangements for pupils.

### **Commentary**

#### *Partnership with parents*

45. There are good links between parents and the school; parents are happy to approach the school; they have confidence in the management and respect for the staff. They are pleased with teachers' expectations of pupils and say they help children to become mature and independent. The majority of parents attending the parents' meeting had positive views; however, the number of parents at the meeting, like the number returning the parents' questionnaire, was low and so cannot be taken as a representative view overall. Concerns raised by parents that there was not sufficient information on pupils' progress were not supported by the inspection which found that information provided is good.
46. Good information and guidance are provided to enable parents to continue children's learning at home. Newsletters are particularly informative and clear. Parents are encouraged to spend time in school; a number help in the classroom. Through parent consultation evenings and the Friends of the School Association, parents' views are sought and then fed into the school development plan. Parents respond well to personal approaches from the school for help and support; this is appreciated by the school who believe it contributes well to pupils' learning and the general ethos of the school.
47. The Friends of the School Association is a hardworking committee which raises a considerable amount of money to support the school. The committee provides a range of events, including fairs, concerts and an annual barbecue. The school uses the group to discuss any changes and developments and is about to discuss the format of school reports.

#### *Community links*

48. Productive links with the community through a range of visits and visitors involve pupils in interesting initiatives; they also provide good enrichment of the curriculum and support pupils' personal and social development by increasing their awareness of the lives of other people and of the environment.

#### *Links with other schools*

49. There are strong links with other schools through the active part played by the headteacher in the local pyramid of schools, particularly providing curriculum support for drama, dance and the arts. Links with the secondary school are good and support pupils prior to transfer and during the transfer process.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The school is led and managed well. The experienced headteacher provides a clear educational lead. He is well supported by the deputy headteacher and Key Stage 2 co-ordinator. The school is

managed effectively with very good structures and procedures underpinning its day-to-day life. The governing body makes a good contribution to the work at St Michael's.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher has high expectations of staff and pupils and provides a very good role model for all members of the school community.
- There is a very strong Christian ethos in which individuals are valued and supported.
- There is a clear focus on improving standards, shared by all.
- Very good systems and procedures enable the school to run smoothly.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher complement each other well and have developed an effective staff team.
- The arrangements for supporting pupils with special educational needs by withdrawing them from lessons limit these pupils' experience.
- Governors make an effective contribution.
- Some subject leaders are not as effective as they might be.

#### *A very strong Christian ethos*

50. Work at St Michael's is very firmly established on the teachings of Christ. This is evident in the care that all members of the school community show to individual pupils. The school makes its aims clear and these, in the form of its mission statement, are displayed prominently in several areas of the school. This states that '*We aim to help every child to make the most of his/her unique gifts, to provide a Christian environment, and to teach Christianity as true*'. There is a very positive approach to learning shared by staff and pupils, with pupils trying hard to do their best in the knowledge that staff will support them as well as they can.

#### *The leadership of the headteacher*

51. The headteacher provides a strong lead for staff. He leads by example, both in his own teaching and in the dedicated way in which he tackles work associated with the responsibilities of headship. He keeps staff clearly focused on working together to raise standards. This work has been particularly successful in raising pupils' achievement in writing. There is room for the headteacher to delegate some of his responsibilities to staff, particularly in the area of subject leadership.

#### *The leadership of the deputy headteacher and senior teacher*

52. The deputy headteacher was on extended sick leave at the time of the inspection, but spoke to inspectors about her work. It is quite clear that she complements the headteacher well. She has particular strengths in managing and working with staff and also leads the work in the younger pupils' classes. The proof of her success is that her team are managing well during her temporary absence. The team leader for the older pupils' classes has been appointed this term. He also leads the work in ICT and science and is providing a good support for staff.

#### *The leadership of work in subject areas*

53. Overall, the leadership of the staff responsible for different subject areas is sound, with English and mathematics the stronger areas. The role of subject leaders is not as developed as it might be. In the foundation subjects particularly, subject leaders do not have a clear overview of teachers' planning or of standards achieved by pupils. This is because they do not have clear systems for monitoring planning or work in classrooms. This makes it difficult for them to plan for improvement year by year.

#### *The leadership of the work with pupils who have special educational needs*

54. Overall the leadership of the work with pupils who have special educational needs is sound, with some good features. The member of staff responsible has a part-time class responsibility. She also spends time working with groups and individuals from Years 4 to 6, who are withdrawn from classes for extra help. Another part-time teacher works with groups of younger pupils. This heavy emphasis on withdrawal means that these pupils do not have a balanced curriculum and are not fully included in all classroom activities. Both teachers provide good advice and support to staff and teaching assistants. The headteacher has

responsibility for managing the records and arranging contact with professionals outside the school and this is organised well.

*The management of the school*

55. There are very clear structures and procedures in place, which underpin the management of the school. The headteacher is very well organised and has a clear overview of work in all areas. Recruitment, retention, deployment and workload of staff are very well managed and all support staff are effectively used. There is some creative deployment of teaching staff so that teachers use their subject expertise across the school. Induction of staff is good; new teachers are well supported and monitored. All teaching assistants are working on or have achieved extra qualifications since taking up their post in school.
56. The continuous staff development programme is good; all staff feel their personal development training is good and that teaching benefits. There is a very thorough programme of monitoring and support for teaching and learning in focused areas of school improvement. In the last twelve months, for example, writing has been a focus for development and the work of all teachers has been monitored and evaluated. This has fed into discussions to improve practice and standards in writing have risen.

*Financial management*

57. The school's finances are managed well. The table below shows that the budget is in a healthy position, with a five per cent carry forward to the current year. The headteacher plans the budget with support from the governors' finance sub-committee. This is fully involved in the planning, monitoring and reviewing of expenditure and also in the consideration of adjustments under the budget headings for the financial year. There is an awareness of the need to resolve the large class sizes in Years 3 to 5 in the afternoons and the finance committee reviews the financial possibility of adding a seventh class each term. The recent local education authority (LEA) audit of the school's financial management gave a gold star in recognition of its careful planning. The principles of best value are soundly applied.

**Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003**

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	410,283	Balance from previous year	3,680
Total expenditure	393,308	Balance carried forward to the next	20,655
Expenditure per pupil	2,144		

*The governance of the school*

58. The school is governed well, with individual governors making significant contributions to the work of the school. The chair of governors works very closely with the headteacher and provides good support and challenge. Governors undertake their responsibilities through effective work in a number of sub-committees as well as through focused visits to the school. They are clear about the strengths and weaknesses of the school. All statutory requirements are met.

*Recent challenges*

59. The good management structures in place have enabled the staff team to cope well with the many challenges in recent months associated with staff illness and leaves of absence. Staff have worked hard to ensure that the provision for the pupils has been maintained.

*Planning for the future*

60. An effective strategic plan provides a firm foundation for school improvement. It is securely based on detailed evaluations of how well pupils are doing in different subjects and areas of school life. Current priorities for improvement include work towards achieving the 'Basic Skills Mark' in order to address low attainment in reading and writing in all year groups and further

developments in ICT. Both of these are key to the school's future development. The headteacher drafts the plan year by year in consultation with staff and governors.

## **COMMUNITY PROVISION**

Community provision is good. The school and other interested groups are working to extend this provision.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school uses all available community projects and interests to improve its provision and to ensure pupils and school are at the heart of the community.
- Work is in progress to provide an under-12s' facility within the school campus.
- Strong links with the local community.

### **Commentary**

61. St Michael's School was founded by the Church to serve the local community and this ethos remains at the centre of the school's programme for community use. Community provision is good and the community benefits from the service provided. A wide range of organisations currently use the school accommodation, taking advantage of the competitive charges for lettings set by the school. There are regular lettings for clubs and local groups in term time and during school holidays; in the summer term groups have held residential camps. These include the Brownies and Girl Guides. The present use of the school facilities has a direct effect on pupils' development, personal care and social development.
62. Work is continuing to provide a significant extension to the present facilities through the new dimension of an under-12s' facility. Lyme Development Trust is supporting the plans to develop under-12s' provision in the school. The Under-12s' forum group, which is headed by the school and includes the local playgroup, after-school club and the school and community nurse, is re-submitting planning permission for this project, which will provide a needed facility for pupils in the school and the whole community.

## **PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS**

### **AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

At present, the Foundation Stage is managed by a temporary teacher covering for sickness. Therefore, it is difficult to make direct comparisons between now, and the findings of the last inspection. Provision is currently satisfactory and children are prepared well for transfer to Year 1. The children enter Reception in the September before they are five. At the time of the inspection, the Reception class was small and children were only attending in the mornings. Children do not attend full-time until the beginning of the term in which they are five, in line with the local county policy. The majority of children have attended the local playgroup before coming to school. They enter school with a wide range of abilities, which are overall below those expected for this age. Although children learn effectively because of sound teaching, indications are that some will not reach the early learning goals by the end of the year in the communication, language, literacy and mathematical areas of learning.

There is a good ratio of adults to children, ensuring that the needs of all are met well. All staff work successfully as a cohesive team, monitoring all children's progress, but these assessments are not sufficiently matched to the 'stepping stones' so that the teacher has a clear picture of how far children have to travel to meet the required standards. The accommodation inside is satisfactory, although at the time of the inspection, the room lacked stimuli, and there were no three-dimensional displays. Outside facilities are unsatisfactory as children do not have continuous access to a separate secure outside area, and resources for outdoor activities are unsatisfactory. This was a weakness highlighted in the last report.

### **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is **good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children achieve well because of the high expectations set by staff and continuous reinforcement of rules.
- Every opportunity is taken to enhance children's development, and children are in line to reach the expected goals by the end of the year, with some exceeding these.
- Supportive relationships are being established and so children feel confident and happy.

#### **Commentary**

63. The quality of teaching in this area of learning is good. Adults set good role models for the children and manage them well, resulting in good personal and social development. Children enter school with below average personal skills, and some children still find it hard to consider the needs of others. However, the clear boundaries, and the consistent role models set by the adults, ensure that the children know what is expected of them, so that they quickly learn the correct way to behave. Children already know the routines well, settle to tasks with a minimum of fuss, and the majority behave sensibly as a result of the good adult role models who have a calm but rigorous approach to work. The majority of children show interest in what they are doing, concentrate well, even when not directly supervised, and are eager to learn. Children are continually encouraged to feel confident about what they achieve, and are reminded of the high standards that the adults expect. They are friendly and take a pride in their work. Children are encouraged to share, take turns amicably, and put up their hands when answering a question, although some find this hard to do. When children do not conform, they are dealt with firmly but fairly, so that they learn how to appreciate the needs of others within the group. Children are expected to clear up after themselves, which they do without much prompting. The supportive relationships ensure children feel secure and confident to seek help when

required. The gains in learning already evident in this area are as a result of the continual reinforcement of rules by the adults, and treating each other and the children with courtesy and respect. This leads to trusting relationships and helps the children succeed.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

Provision in communication, language and literacy is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers and support staff take every opportunity to develop the children's language skills.

### **Commentary**

64. Early indications are that not all children will meet the expectations in this area of learning. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Children are making sound progress as a result of the many opportunities they are given to talk and listen, and staff take every opportunity during all activities to develop the children's vocabulary, through questioning and consistent insistence that children listen to the contributions of others. Very good relationships mean that children have the confidence to talk, and all adults are genuinely interested in what the children have to say. Children enjoy books, and listen attentively when a story is read to them. They take books home to share, and the most able pupils are recognising some simple words. There is a good emphasis on the recognition of sounds to help children learn to read and write, which they use well to write their names. However, there is a lack of extra challenge given to children when they finish, resulting in some children aimlessly wandering and not being gainfully occupied. All children are encouraged to hold their pencils and form letters correctly.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- A range of planned activities help children to acquire mathematical skills.
- Good links are made to other areas of learning through the use of role-play.
- Sometimes tasks are too difficult.

### **Commentary**

65. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Children are making steady progress, but not all will reach the expected goals by the end of the year. The teacher plans a range of interesting activities to promote mathematical understanding. There is a wide range of ability, with some children already able to count to five and beyond, recognising and ordering numbers confidently, while others cannot match numbers to objects and have no understanding of the sequence of numbers. Adults use a variety of number rhymes and songs to help children count. Although little written recording of number has been done so far, practical activities observed indicate that pupils are making sound progress. Children are developing their counting skills while using coins in the pet shop, where they buy animals and the appropriate food. This activity provided good opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills and knowledge and understanding of what food pets eat, alongside counting skills. Good learning occurred during this activity, and children showed real involvement in this role-play situation. Children are given opportunities to recognise simple patterns, but most children cannot sustain a repeated pattern when joining a string of coloured beads. Some activities that are planned do not match children's abilities closely enough so that the expected learning does not occur, showing insecure knowledge of the stage of learning of the children. For example, when children were asked to make a repeated pattern when threading beads, there were too many

colours and too many different shapes for children to choose from, so children just enjoyed threading.

## **KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD**

66. Limited evidence of work in this area meant that it was not possible to make an overall judgement on provision or quality of teaching and learning, although a visit to the local pet shop provided an interesting setting for the role-play area. Talking to the children indicates that they have underdeveloped knowledge and understanding of the world about them although they show curiosity and interest when questioned. Children have opportunities to use computers and are developing good control of the mouse when they click and drag icons around the screen.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The teacher makes the most of the hall for structured lessons to compensate for unsatisfactory outside facilities.
- There is no continuous access to an outside play area, so opportunities for development are limited.
- Activities are not sufficiently well matched to the stage of development of the children.

### **Commentary**

67. In the one hall session observed, teaching and learning were satisfactory. Indications are that children will attain the expected goals by the end of the year in spite of the limitations in the accommodation. This is because children are well co-ordinated when they enter school. Children are very aware of the effect exercise has on their bodies, and they move with increasing control, developing an awareness of the space around them. They have positive attitudes to their lessons and obey commands promptly, demonstrating real gains in their personal and social development. The one lesson observed was well planned, but group activities were too hard and too many children were unoccupied. This indicates a lack of knowledge of the exact stage of development of the children, resulting from insufficiently rigorous assessments. Children have limited opportunities for outdoor play and do not have continuous access to the outside area. This is unsatisfactory, as it was at the time of the last inspection. This and the limited resources for outside play restrict opportunities for physical development. Children develop their manipulative skills well by handling dough, scissors and brushes, and manipulate small construction equipment with dexterity. There is, however, a lack of stimulating large construction equipment to further enhance physical development.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

### **Commentary**

68. It was not possible to make an overall judgement of provision or standards on the limited evidence seen, but the work on display indicates that standards are as expected. There was good use of role-play observed during the inspection to develop children's imagination, but no use of creative media other than paint. The half-day nature of attendance limits time available for creative activities.

## **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2**

## ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good** and has been maintained well since the last inspection.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in writing have risen significantly as a consequence of the school's efforts in this area.
- Teaching and learning are good overall.
- There is good attention paid to the development of pupils' literacy skills, especially in the area of phonics.
- Good support is provided for pupils with special educational needs.
- The introduction of the National Literacy Strategy has provided a clear framework for teachers' planning.
- Work on helping pupils to learn about books and authors and to enjoy reading is underdeveloped.
- The range of quality of fiction books, especially for older pupils is limited.
- There is a good system for pupils to share books with their parents and carers.
- Pupils' progress is carefully monitored, but marking of work does not always help pupils to improve.
- Opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy skills in other subjects are not systematically planned.

### Commentary

69. The school is committed to helping pupils acquire basic skills in reading and writing through a structured programme of phonics teaching. Standards in writing are rising because of the school's clear focus on improvement and are higher than they were at the time of the last inspection. At the moment, standards are below average in reading in Year 2 and broadly average in writing. Standards in Year 6 are broadly average in reading and writing but, if this year is typical, standards will rise by the time of the Year 6 tests because of the extra support provided for pupils.
70. The inspection found that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, those from minority ethnic groups and pupils from travelling families, achieve well because of good teaching. They move on more rapidly in Years 5 and 6. Pupils with special educational needs are given particularly good support, both in lessons and through a range of additional support programmes. These are particularly successful with the pupils who are only a little behind their peers. Many catch up by the time they reach Years 5 and 6. In some cases, withdrawal from lessons for extra help limits their progress in other subjects.

### *Speaking and listening*

71. Overall standards in speaking and listening are broadly average. Pupils develop their skills in a range of situations. Teachers encourage pupils to contribute to question-and-answer sessions at the start of many lessons, for example. At these times, pupils respond confidently. Several instances of pupils discussing work in pairs were observed during the inspection. At these times, pupils worked sensibly, respecting the views of their friends. Several pupils spoke to inspectors about their work and expressed themselves well. There are some opportunities for pupils to speak to a larger audience, in assembly, for example.

### *Reading*

72. Standards in reading have not risen as quickly as in writing, in spite of the school's concentration on phonics. Factors contributing towards pupils' good overall achievement include:
- A structured approach to the teaching of reading skills.
  - Small group support.
  - Support from parents at home.



Overall, the emphasis is on the teaching of reading skills to the detriment, to some extent, of encouraging pupils to enjoy reading and stories. Features that are missing from the reading programme in many classes include:

- A stimulating reading environment, with displays of books to capture pupils' interest.
- Regular opportunities to listen to stories and poems.
- A wide selection of good quality fiction books, especially in older pupils' classes.

Nonetheless pupils do like reading and many, especially older pupils, are developing a real appreciation of authors like Jacqueline Wilson, JK Rowling and JRR Tolkien.

### *Writing*

73. There are several factors that have contributed to rising standards in writing. These include:

- A whole-school focus on improvement.
- Rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning.
- Support for teachers in the form of in-service training and the opportunity to see 'model' lessons.
- A clear structure for the teaching of spelling.
- High expectations of pupils' work.
- Careful planning for the development of skills.
- Good displays of pupils' work to show them that it is valued.
- Opportunities to write at length.

Pupils' writing encompasses a range of genres and is often lively. Much of the writing is purposeful, but there is more scope for pupils to share their writing with a wider audience.

74. Overall, the good quality of the teaching ensures that pupils achieve well and make good progress. This progress is clearly reflected in detailed progress-tracking sheets. Generally lessons are well planned and securely based on the National Literacy Strategy. In most cases, teachers share the objectives for the lesson with the pupils. Most lessons are interesting and this helps pupils to be fully engaged in learning. There is scope to improve the marking of pupils' work so that it is clear to them whether they have learnt what they were meant to. Teaching assistants make a particularly strong contribution to the teaching of English, especially with pupils who have special educational needs. The specialist teaching of these pupils is also strong and is a key factor in their good progress. The subject leader has a good overview of the strengths and areas for development.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

75. Good examples were seen of pupils using their language and literacy skills in other subjects. At the moment, there is no structured plan to outline the development of different language and literacy skills across the curriculum.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Improvement in standards.
- Good provision for pupils of lower ability including those with special educational needs.
- Adoption of numeracy strategy as basis for planning has been successful.
- There is a strong focus on developing pupils' numeracy skills.
- There are good arrangements for assessing pupils' work.
- The use of ICT to support learning in the subject is at early stages of development.
- The subject leader has not had sufficient opportunity to monitor work in classrooms.

## Commentary

76. Standards in mathematics have been steadily improving and in Year 6, the rate has been above the national trend. Standards are currently below average in Year 2 and broadly average in Year 6. Although pupils enter the school with poorly developed mathematical skills, good teaching, particularly in the youngest and oldest classes, ensures that they make good progress. By Year 6, they are working at least at the level expected for their age. There is a wide spread of ability, with around a third of pupils identified as having learning difficulties. A focused drive has been implemented to improve attainment. Assessment data is used well to identify need and create ability groups. The good support provided by teachers and learning assistants enables all, including the more able and those with special educational needs, to make good progress and achieve as well as their peers. The creation of a separate teaching group for Year 4 during the morning and targeted catch-up programmes including booster and springboard groups contribute to this process well.
77. Pupils' recorded work showed a strong emphasis on developing numeracy skills. It is also evident in the speed with which they complete mental calculations in response to teachers' questions. A good example of this was the way in which Year 6 pupils used multiplication tables to calculate fractions of numbers up to 100, which was apparent in the carefully written calculations seen in their exercise books. Teachers are careful to introduce the correct terminology and encourage pupils in its use. Pupils in Year 5 confidently created a definition of a diagonal, for example, referring to adjacent and non-adjacent corners and talking in an informed way about different types of triangle created by the diagonals of a pentagon. Good use is made of resources to support learning. In a Year 5 lesson the interactive smartboard was well used to introduce work on diagonals. It allowed whole-class participation and discussion of complex shapes. Homework is often used to reinforce learning. Teachers use a variety of approaches to reinforce concepts. In a Year 1 class, pupils recognised and learnt different ways of making five through a variety of activities.
78. Pupils develop an understanding of shape, space and measure alongside their numeracy work. There are written examples of numeracy skills being used to solve everyday problems and handle data. However, there are fewer examples of pupils regularly investigating and using mathematics to solve problems.
79. The quality of teaching and learning ranged from satisfactory to very good in the lessons seen. It is good overall and is particularly strong at the top and bottom of the school, where there is a strong sense of purpose and explicit objectives for learning. Although all lessons follow the numeracy strategy, learning objectives are not always shared with pupils or used as a focus for review. In some lessons, the initial warm-up sessions do not have a sufficiently brisk pace and teachers do not always explore with the class the strategies used to arrive at answers. In all lessons seen, suitably challenging tasks had been prepared for the different ability groups and good use was made of teaching assistants to support these activities. In a Year 2 class, this allowed for the completion of individual pupil assessments whilst others worked.

80. A strong programme of regular assessment is used well to identify areas needing attention. The recently developed child-friendly attainment record will involve pupils more fully and give them a clearer view of how well they are doing. The school has recently introduced a commercial scheme to support teaching. The subject leader has played a central role in this work but has not had sufficient opportunity to form a view of the quality of teaching and learning across the whole school. Use of ICT to support learning in the subject is not yet a consistent and planned feature in all classes.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

81. There are examples of pupils using mathematics to make calculations, record data, measure materials and complete tasks in other subjects. Opportunities often occur incidentally to reinforce number work but are not yet part of a consistent overall planned approach.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The quality of teaching and learning is good, and pupils in all classes are acquiring skills, knowledge and understanding through practical investigations.
- There are weaknesses in the way the curriculum is planned in Years 3 to 5.
- Large classes make it more difficult to organise investigational work in Years 3 to 5.
- Assessment procedures are not rigorous enough.
- There are insufficient opportunities for the subject leader to monitor work in classrooms.
- There is insufficient use of ICT to support the subject.

### **Commentary**

82. Standards of attainment throughout the school are in line with the national average, as they were at the time of the last inspection. The achievement of pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, is satisfactory. However, school and national test and assessment data show that there are fewer pupils working at higher levels than might be expected. The curriculum is planned on a two-year rolling programme to accommodate the mixed-age classes, but the way it is arranged results in pupils missing some units of work and duplicating others. Planning for the sequential development of skills is therefore unsatisfactory. This means that pupils have significant gaps in their knowledge.
83. The quality of teaching and learning is good. There is good emphasis in all classes on practical work to enhance pupils' scientific skill development. This was done particularly well in a Year 6 lesson when pupils used their own methods to investigate the composition of soil. Pupils learned which was the most effective method, through their mistakes. In this lesson, the teacher constantly posed the question 'why?' which made the pupils think clearly and logically about what they were doing. However, in other lessons, activities were very prescribed, and pupils had few opportunities to use their scientific understanding to plan their own investigations and so learning here was more limited. The mixed-age classes are very large, which has a negative impact on pupils' learning, as there are too many pupils for all to do practical work at the same time. Resource limitations result in large groups working together, which means that some pupils in the group are not actively involved and remain onlookers. This impedes learning for these pupils.
84. The subject leader has very good subject knowledge and uses this well in his own teaching. He ensures that all areas of the curriculum are covered, but the scheme of work has not been sufficiently adapted to meet the needs of the pupils. For example, the unit of work planned for Year 1 pupils concerning food groups was too difficult for them to understand. The subject leader has a good overview of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject, although his

priority for this year is information and communication technology. There is no rigorous system for assessing attainment in the investigative strand of the subject, and no method at present of tracking pupils' attainment over time, although the leader is aware that assessment procedures need developing. He does not have enough opportunities to observe his colleagues teach, or analyse sufficiently critically teachers' planning. This limits the impact that his work has on pupils' standards. Resources generally are satisfactory but there are shortages, for example equipment for making circuits, to meet the needs of the very large classes. There is insufficient use of information and communication technology to support the subject.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in information and communication technology is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There has been an improvement in resources and staff expertise since the last inspection.
- Good, knowledgeable leadership of the subject is promoting initiatives and developing practices to improve pupils' knowledge and understanding.
- There is a need for greater systematic focus on direct teaching of ICT to develop pupils' skills.
- ICT is not consistently used to support learning in other subjects.
- There are insufficient opportunities for the subject leader to monitor work in classrooms.
- The lack of suitable resources is limiting pupils' skills in control technology.

### **Commentary**

85. It is not possible to reach secure judgements about standards and the quality of teaching and learning in ICT. In the only whole class session seen in Year 2, pupils worked on tasks at the expected level. They made rapid progress in entering, correcting and saving text through the clear instruction and demonstration of the teacher. After recalling prior work on poems, pupils decided collectively on suitable text to match an illustration of Mog the Cat'. The teacher reinforced and encouraged the use of correct terminology and technique. Consequently, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, made rapid progress and achieved well.
86. During the inspection, there were a few additional opportunities to observe groups of pupils using computers in class. The teacher in a Year 5 mathematics lesson made good use of the interactive board to involve pupils in identifying the shapes created when diagonals were inserted into 2-D shapes. Under the direction of their teacher, a group of Year 3 pupils used class and library computers to enter, amend and present data collected during their survey on beach safety. Following their teacher's demonstration, some Year 6 pupils began to create slide frames for a multimedia presentation. In both instances, available time was lost by the resolution of technical problems which left pupils only a brief opportunity to engage independently with the task. This group teaching of ICT is clearly not as efficient or effective as direct whole-class teaching.
87. Discussions with pupils and teachers and examples of pupils' work show a strong focus on word-processing and, more recently, on Internet research. Other areas such as handling and presenting data or monitoring, modelling and control, are not yet being developed to the expected levels with older pupils. Many pupils, particularly older ones, have not been introduced to ICT skills in a progressive and structured manner. Recent adoption of national guidance as the basis for planning should ensure that all pupils cover the expected range of activities.
88. Resources have been improved and staff confidence and expertise developed since the last inspection, through national funding and the school's own budget. All classrooms and the library now have a good range of networked computers, allowing opportunities for the use of ICT skills during other lessons. Recent acquisition of a digital projector and interactive board

will now allow the possibility of whole-class direct teaching of ICT skills. The planned purchase of a second set up would allow the upper and lower school access to their own resources.

89. The knowledgeable subject leader leads and manages the subject well, although much of his time is taken with resolving technical problems. He makes good use of his expertise to alert colleagues to possible ways of increasing pupils' ICT skills, encourage their use of new equipment and introduce them to its capabilities. However, there are currently few resources for control. The recent introduction of a simpler method for assessing and recording pupils' progress will provide a clear overview of how well they are doing but there are few opportunities for evaluating and improving the quality of teaching and learning.

### **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

90. The use of ICT to support learning in other subjects is being developed. Pupils make regular use of their class computers to create and present work in literacy and other subjects and to access the Internet for research. Examples of this were seen in geography in a Year 4/5 lesson and in pupils' work in the subject from other year groups. Wider use is not yet a consistent feature of the curriculum and access by individual pupils is limited to the availability of computers.

### **HUMANITIES**

91. In humanities, work was sampled in **history** and **geography**. No history has been taught this academic year and three geography sessions were seen in Years 3, 4 and 5. It is therefore not possible to form an overall judgement about provision in these subjects. There is every indication from pupils' work that standards are broadly average in geography in Years 3 to 5.
92. In the three geography sessions seen, the teaching was sound overall, with one good lesson observed. The work planned was interesting and in the younger pupils' class, firmly rooted on their own experience of Lyme Regis. Good use was made of ICT to develop pupils' understanding in two of the sessions. In the good lesson, work was planned well to challenge pupils of different abilities.
93. It is clear from the current arrangements for work in these two subjects that some aspects of planning are unsatisfactory. At the moment, work is 'blocked' so that term-by-term pupils in each class work on either a history or geography topic. This means that the development of pupils' skills and understanding in these subjects slows because of the long time-lapse between units of work. There are also some flaws in the rolling programme of topic coverage in Years 3 to 5. The present framework, new this year, does not ensure that pupils cover the required study units. Teachers make sound assessments of how pupils achieve in lessons in order to plan subsequent work, but there are no systems in place to assess pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding at the end of a unit of work. The subject leader acknowledges that these subjects need development.

### **CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS**

94. In this area of the school's work, lessons were sampled in three subjects. There was a heavier focus on music, which was identified by the school as a strong area.
95. Work in **art and design** was sampled during the inspection, with two lessons seen. There is every indication that provision is good and that standards are above average throughout the school. The school plans a rich and vibrant programme of work and this forms a firm basis for pupils' good achievement. In one lesson, for example, pupils worked very effectively and collaboratively to use tissue paper to create a picture.
96. Good links are made with local artists and pupils have the experience of working with them on interesting projects. Pupils in Year 6, for example, have worked with Hugh Davenport Wood

to undertake clay work based on sketches of people in movement. Their work is of a high quality. The school takes part in Dorset Arts and Crafts competitions and has won several awards. Recent commendations are for symmetrical patterns based on Islamic tiles and batik work based on Ugandan art. This good use of inspiration from other cultures was also evident in a lesson in which pupils looked at work from Australia in preparation for work on their own pictures of Lyme Regis. Pupils have experience of working with a range of materials. Their observational work is particularly good.

97. Only two lessons of **design and technology** were seen during the inspection. Blocking arrangements meant that DT was not being taught in other classes. Only one class provided examples of work from the current year. Talking to pupils and teachers, viewing planning and looking at photographs and examples of the previous year's work suggest that pupils have opportunities to design and make products. However, ICT is not yet being used for design or control.
98. Under the careful direction of their teacher, Year 1 pupils quickly formed and recorded judgements about the texture and taste of different fruits. Good links were made to literacy through the use of the story of 'Handa's Surprise'. Examples of Year 2 pupils' work on puppets show that they are being taught to plan, make, review and record their work. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Year 6 pupils used a paper net pattern to create a box, a good link to numeracy skills. However, pupils did not show good recall of previously taught skills, or sufficient understanding of how materials are shaped and joined. As a result, a high level of teacher input was needed.
99. Teachers plan lessons using national guidance. However, insufficient thought has been given to ensuring that pupils systematically work with a range of materials and techniques, enabling them to select appropriately. Long breaks between blocks of work leads to poor recall of previous learning. Assessment procedures are at an early stage of development and there are few opportunities for the subject leader to monitor teaching and learning. Good attention is paid to safety and there are sufficient tools and equipment for practical sessions.
100. In **physical education**, the school has introduced half-termly swimming sessions at the local pool for all pupils, addressing a concern from the last inspection. Standards in swimming are good. All pupils leave the school confident and safe in the water, an important achievement given the proximity of the sea. All strands of physical education are planned and taught. It is not possible to reach a firm judgement about overall provision or standards in the subject as it was not being taught in Years 1 or 2 during the inspection and only gymnastics and games were seen in the older classes.
101. Teaching was satisfactory overall in the lessons seen. Pupils in Year 6 worked hard to refine their paired balances, introducing elements of tension and counterbalance well. Their teacher provided well timed coaching intervention and opportunities to observe others. Good levels of challenge and constant encouragement to identify improvement ensured that all, including the more able pupils and those with special educational needs, made good progress and achieved well. In other, less effective lessons, pupils did not achieve as well. They needed to spend more time on observing, considering and reflecting on the quality of their movements and needed more guidance from teachers about how to improve.
102. The subject is being overseen during the subject leader's absence. National guidance has been supplemented with supportive guidance for non-specialists and manageable assessment procedures developed. There have been very few opportunities for monitoring teaching and learning. After-school clubs and success in competitive sport all make a positive contribution to learning in the subject. The large hall, large gymnastic apparatus, well maintained grounds and access to the nearby sports field all support learning well.

## MUSIC

The school's provision for music is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are above average throughout the school.
- Very good subject expertise of a number of the staff.
- There is very good provision for instrumental tuition.
- There are good opportunities for pupils to perform.

### **Commentary**

103. Very good provision for music has been maintained well since the last inspection. Three class lessons were observed during the inspection and pupils were heard singing in assemblies and hymn practices. Based on these it is quite clear that pupils achieve very well because of very good teaching overall. The oldest pupils, for example, worked in groups in the lesson seen to compose a piece in rondo form. They used tuned and non-tuned percussion instruments, with all pupils having the opportunity to play both. They all showed a good sense of timing and rhythm. Standards of singing are high, with pupils singing tunefully and confidently throughout the school.
104. One of the key elements of the very good provision is the particular skill of a number of members of staff. The headteacher leads the teaching in this area and has significant subject expertise and experience. He works largely with the older pupils. The younger pupils are taught by one of the Year 2 teachers, with support from colleagues. One of the teaching assistants is usually available during music lessons to act as an accompanist. This very good support enables the teacher to concentrate on working with the pupils to improve their skills. The subject leader undertakes half of the teaching and has a good overview of work in younger pupils' classes. She works closely with the headteacher in planning work and maintaining provision.
105. Older pupils have opportunities to learn to play a brass, wind or stringed instrument. Many take up this offer. The school has been involved in various concerts and often takes part in St Michael's church services.

### **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

106. Provision for pupils' **personal, social and health education** is satisfactory. There is an outline scheme of work that helps teachers with their planning. Some elements of the curriculum, such as sex education, and the dangers of drug misuse, are taught through science. Circle time is well established throughout the school where topics of concern to the pupils are discussed and resolved. In one short session seen, for example, Year 6 pupils discussed how playtimes could be improved. During these sessions, pupils are confident to share their concerns and they listen carefully and learn to respect the feelings of others.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

### *Inspection judgement*

### *Grade*

<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
How inclusive the school is	4
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	4

<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>4</b>
Pupils' achievement	3

<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>3</b>
Attendance	5
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>4</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3

<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

*Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).*