

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **STOCKLAND C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Stockland, Honiton

LEA area: Devon

Unique reference number: 113366

Headteacher: Mr Stephen Clarke

Lead inspector: Mrs Margaret Hulme

Dates of inspection: 17<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> September 2003

Inspection number: 258034

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 controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	71
School address:	Stockland Honiton Devon
Postcode:	EX14 9EF
Telephone number:	(01404) 881456
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Roger Durrant
Date of previous inspection:	5 <sup>th</sup> May 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a small Church of England primary school that takes from a wide-ranging social area including some isolated rural families as well as from the two main villages of Stockland and Yarcombe. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average. There are 71 children on roll and most are of UK heritage and white. There are a few from other ethnic groups but none for whom English is an additional language. The proportion of those with special educational needs is similar to that nationally and includes one with a specific statement of need. Five teachers of whom one, the headteacher, is the only full-time member of staff teach the children. Pupil's attainment on entry is broadly similar to that found nationally but with a significant proportion of brighter children. In the last year almost ten per cent of children joined the school other than at the usual time and although the school often finds that such children are not as far on in their academic work the teachers try hard to help them catch up. The school offers innovative leadership of teaching and of curriculum, which staff and governors consider important and which has been instrumental in raising standards. In the last few years, the driving force of the headteacher and commitment of staff has resulted in standards that have greatly improved. The quality of sporting provision has been developed to overcome the lack of facilities in this small school and improve the quality of education for the children.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
3609	Margaret Hulme	Lead inspector	English, Information and communication technology, Religious education, Music, Special educational needs, English as an additional language
11041	Marvyn Moore	Lay inspector	
21086	Elizabeth Strange	Team inspector	Foundation Stage curriculum, Mathematics, Science, Art and design, Design and technology, Geography, History, Physical education

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **very effective** school that does well for its children. The headteacher's leadership is strong and caring, supported well by staff and governors. The committed teaching supports children's learning very effectively and is driving up standards, which are high in many subjects by the time pupils leave school. All groups achieve well. There are very few barriers to achievement and these are being resolved. The purposeful leadership in a school committed to high standards and a high quality of education provides very good value for money.

#### The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Children achieve well and reach high standards by the time they leave school.
- Teaching is supporting children's learning well and specialist teaching is driving up standards.
- The very good leadership of the headteacher provides very clear direction for the work of the school, but the role of subject leaders is ready for extending.
- The school is managed very well and has moved on considerably but staff responsibilities and their deployment now need review.
- There is a wonderfully caring and supportive ethos that provides a foundation for the very good provision for pupils' personal development. This results in very good attitudes and behaviour.
- The very effective partnership with parents results in very good views of the school and makes a very positive contribution to children's learning.

### HOW THE SCHOOL HAS CHANGED SINCE THE PREVIOUS INSPECTION

Change has been **very good**. The headteacher provides very firm direction for development and has empowered staff in moving the school forward. All issues identified in the previous report have been tackled successfully. Now the innovative teaching and curriculum combine very effectively in driving up standards. The very good commitment and support from parents and the community has created a strong partnership. There is now a much stronger sense of direction and purpose.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	C	C	A	A*
mathematics	E	C	A	A*
science	C	C	A*	A*

*Key: A\* - very high; 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, achievement is **good** and there has been a **very good** improvement in standards and children are now doing better in more subjects than at the last inspection, particularly English, mathematics and science. By Year 6 in the national tests, higher attainers did very well, with almost half reaching a higher level in English and mathematics and a very high proportion doing so in science. Almost all Foundation Stage children reached the goals they are expected to reach by the end of Reception and some began National Curriculum work early. Standards in English and mathematics have risen rapidly by Year 2 since the last inspection and are now above average. Children with learning difficulties achieve well and make good progress.

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **very good**. Almost all pupils are enthusiastic and the excellent relationships they have with teachers are resulting in very good efforts and high standards. Children benefit from teachers' high expectations. The orderly and harmonious community means that bullying is rare and any small instances of challenging behaviour are handled well. Overall, pupils'

spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good**. Spiritual development is good because an ethos has been created where all are respected and there is appreciation of what each individual finds important. Children know the difference between right and wrong and have a very good understanding of the need for social responsibility. Cultural development has improved and is now good. Attendance is **very good**. The attendance rate is very high compared with other schools and there are no exclusions. Punctuality is **very good** and children come willingly to school.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The quality of education provided is **very good**, reflecting the high standard of teaching, innovative curriculum, very good care and support for children and the very effective partnership with parents.

Teaching and learning are **good overall**. The teaching in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 is mainly **good** and often very good in Year 2 in English and mathematics. In Years 3 to 6 it is **very good**. The excellent relationships and teachers' expectations that children will work hard and do their best encourage children to be effective learners.

**The curriculum is very good** reflecting the very relevant range of learning opportunities and ensuring all groups achieve success. A **very good** range of additional learning opportunities enriches the curriculum and the school capitalises on the skills of the local community.

Care, welfare and support are **very good**. The staff make very good efforts to keep track of pupils' progress resulting in high levels of support and consequently good achievement.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The leadership and management of the school are **very good** with some outstanding features.

This **very good** leadership stems from a strong and purposeful headteacher, with good challenge and support from governors who keep in close touch with the school's work making an effective partnership. They are well organised and informed and take a keen interest in performance.

The **very good** management results from secure systems in place to ensure that financial and administrative work is efficiently carried out. Staff and resources are used effectively but the school has moved on and further rationalisation of the deployment of staff is now needed and the role of subject leaders is ready for extending. Decisions are made with improved standards in mind.

## **WHAT PARENTS AND PUPILS FEEL ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

**Parents:** they have very positive views of the school and are very satisfied with the quality of education it provides and the standards their children achieve.

**Pupils:** they enjoy coming to school for the range of learning opportunities offered them. Self-esteem is high because they are listened to and contribute effectively to the school community.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

The **most important** thing the school should do to improve is:

- extend the role of subject leaders and, because the school has now moved on considerably, review the afternoon organisation for infants and ways staff are used so that the needs of all ages can still be met as well as possible.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

Achievement is mainly **very good**. In Years 1 and 2 it is **good** and sometimes **very good** at Year 2 and at Years 3 to 6 it is **very good**. There is no significant difference in achievement between boys and girls by Year 2 or Year 6 and those with special educational needs are achieving well towards the targets identified for them. The few children from a minority ethnic group have done well since joining the school and are achieving well in the basic skills and all subjects of the curriculum.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children reach high standards in National Curriculum tests and in several other subjects by the time they leave school. A high proportion of children gained higher-level results.
- The trend in improvement in standards for English, mathematics and science has been above that nationally.
- There has been a rapid improvement in results of National Curriculum tests at Year 2.
- High standards in art and music have been maintained in junior classes since the last inspection.
- Consistently very good teaching at Year 2 and Year 6 has resulted in improved standards.
- Specialist teaching in science, art and design, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education is having a very positive effect on standards at Years 3 to 6.
- The organisation, where one teacher is working with the whole of the Foundation Stage, Year 1 and Year 2 in the afternoons makes it difficult to produce higher standards in other than reading, writing and mathematics.
- Innovative work in English and mathematics has been an important factor in driving up standards.
- Well trained teaching assistants give very good support and teaching in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT).

#### Commentary

1. Overall, there has been a very good improvement in standards since the last inspection. By the time they leave school children are achieving high standards in English, mathematics, science, art and design, design and technology, geography, history, physical education and religious education that are higher than is usually expected for age. Almost all reception children in the Foundation Stage reached expected standards in all six areas of learning and some began National Curriculum work early. Standards have risen rapidly by Year 2 since the last inspection. Children with learning difficulties achieve well and make good progress.
2. As can be seen below the pupils' performance in national tests at the end of Year 2 are not quite so good as the previous year because one child who joined the group just four weeks before the tests took place was not as far advanced in reading skills as the others. This was a small year group in a small school and one pupil can have a considerable effect on overall school percentage. In this school one pupil was the equivalent of eight per cent. This year (2003) the results have improved yet again but there is no published national data to make a comparison as yet.

#### **Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2**

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	92 (100)	84 (84)
writing	100 (100)	86 (86)
mathematics	100 (100)	90 (91)

*There were 12 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*



3. No table is provided for standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2002 because there were less than ten pupils. Results were well above average in English and mathematics and the results in science put the school in the top five per cent of schools in the country. All pupils reached the expected standard for this age and many did better. Just under half the group reached the higher levels in English and mathematics and almost all did so in science. These children have made very good progress since moving on from Year 2. The English and mathematics targets set for Year 6 in national tests were met in both subjects but of particular note was the performance of the higher attainers who exceeded the targets set for them.
4. Only two children had started school in the Foundation Stage at the time of inspection but school records show that last year when children entered school their attainment was broadly similar to that nationally and a significant group began school with attainment that is higher than usually expected at this age. Samples of work from the last year show that children succeeded in reaching the expected standards in all six areas of learning by the end of the Reception Year and some did better having commenced their National Curriculum work. A minority of slower learners were still acquiring basic literacy and numeracy skills but had the support of a well trained teaching assistant. Consequently all were able to achieve success and make good progress in their learning.
5. Since the last inspection there have been some changes to staff and to teachers expectations of how well children can achieve. In addition, the headteacher has led some innovative practice that has been introduced to eradicate any underachievement and drive up standards. Two introductions to different ways of working – one at the start of the day and one that applies to all lessons as part of co-operative working, are applauded by children and clearly extend concentration and urge them on to make their best efforts. However, it is the consistent approaches to the teaching of English and mathematics that have had the greatest impact and these are described in greater detail in the teaching section of the report. These together with a rigorous system of assessment and a totally consistent approach to marking are the main factors that are driving up standards. The headteacher is very vigilant and constantly discusses progress with staff and with parents. His aspirations to make this one of the best schools in the country result in high expectations of what children can achieve and they usually respond with very good efforts. Those that do not are firmly reminded, evident in the marking comments and in children's explanations of how well they are doing.
6. The introduction of specialist teaching is having a wonderful impact on standards in subjects at Years 3 to 6. For example at the last inspection standards in geography were unsatisfactory, as were aspects of history but both subjects are now much improved and show standards that are well above those expected for their age. High standards in art and design and music at Years 3-6 have been maintained and the specialist teaching of physical education has not only raised standards but also raised children's self-esteem because they are so much fitter and are exceeding their own expectations in sporting activities. The introduction of French conversation lessons, in the afternoons, is working well for junior children. Although there is no specialist teaching at Years 1 and 2 standards are above average in speaking and listening, reading, writing and mathematics. In the teacher assessments of science all reached a standard typical for their age but none reached a higher level. In all other subjects they remain typical for age at Years 1 and 2. Although this is satisfactory the organisation of classes in the afternoon when two key stages are together, which include three-year groups, can be problematic. This was seen in a music lesson when achievement for Year 2 children was unsatisfactory. It is a concern to the teacher and when numbers rise by ten children next term the class will be at 30 so a review of practice is timely.
7. The school has three very well trained teaching assistants who have many skills and much expertise, which they use very effectively when working with small groups of children. The ways that the teaching of letter sounds have improved standards in reading and spelling and the games devised to accelerate boys' interest in reading and improve reading comprehension, have been no mean feat and are greatly attributable to the tenacity of one of

these assistants. The work in numeracy and the introduction of a way of working that makes children think hard and push themselves to the utmost because they enjoy the challenges set has been very effectively supported by another assistant. The planning, to show children how to capitalise on new technology and use it well in other subjects, has been the recent task of yet another assistant and this is now moving the subject of information and communication technology forward. In this small school where the headteacher teaches a class for more than 50 per cent of the week such contributions are greatly valued and succeed in the important tasks of supporting learning and improving standards.

8. By teaching children to work co-operatively and providing such skilled assistants to help teachers the achievement of groups such as those with learning difficulties or from minority ethnic backgrounds is not different from the vast majority. For example, the time and planning given to assist one child who is reluctant to speak has particularly met this specific need and taking part in school work is no longer the problem it was just a few months ago; progress has improved dramatically. Letters of support from parents tell of rapid improvements and why they think it happens, for example, "*The PE in the mornings is inspired and makes my child settle and concentrate better on his work*". Another parent applauded the success for her child with special educational needs.

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

This is a significant strength of the school. Children come willingly to school and the attendance rate and punctuality are **very good**. Children have **very good** attitudes to the school and their work. There are no exclusions because behaviour is **very good** and occasionally outstanding. The provision the school makes for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good** overall.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is a wonderfully caring and supportive ethos that provides a firm foundation for the very good provision for pupils' personal development. This results in very good attitudes and most do their best in lessons.
- The outstanding ways that the school uses to build a desire to learn are based on the excellent relationships established and the resulting high levels of confidence and self-esteem.
- Children enjoy coming to school and show enthusiastic support for school activities.
- Behaviour in and around school is very good and bullying is not a problem.
- The rate of attendance and registration has improved and is now very good.
- The school very actively enables children to extend their personal development, particularly those aspects relating to moral and social development, which are outstanding.
- Personal, social and emotional development at the Foundation Stage is mainly good but there is a weakness in ensuring there are sufficient opportunities for the youngest children to become independent learners.

### **Commentary**

9. The aims of the school are reviewed each year and give emphasis to the need for happy, peaceful and co-operative relationships that will result in a harmonious school community. The teachers are determined to provide a place to learn in which children will develop a love of learning, which will be sustained later. Discussions with children made clear that they like being at this school, find others friendly and lessons are interesting and fun. This desire to learn is built on a foundation of excellent relationships which are established between the children and the adults in the school. Children know that teachers will listen to them and value what they do so self-esteem is high and they are very confident at taking part in lessons, such as giving an opinion in discussion or reading aloud to others or even evaluating the work of other children. The high regard in which children hold staff makes them keen to please their teachers. They are fully involved in all the activities offered by the school and the support they receive from other children and teaching assistants is a constant boost to their self-esteem.

10. The very good behaviour in and around school is reflected in courteous, polite children who welcome visitors in a warm and caring manner. They have learned from the excellent examples provided by the headteacher and staff and this is reflected in the way that they relate to one another. Throughout the inspection no apparent aggression was observed and as can be seen below there have been no exclusions. At the parents' meeting prior to the inspection the views expressed concurred with what inspectors found. Very effective procedures to deal with bullying are in place and both parents and children consider that the few incidents that have occurred were handled extremely well.

**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	68	0	0
Black or Black British – African	3	0	0

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

11. The previous report judged attendance as satisfactory but registration procedures did not comply with legal requirements. This is no longer the case and the attendance rate is now very high in comparison with other schools.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	3.2	School data	0.3
National data	5.4	National data	0.5

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

12. Parents told inspectors that they co-operate very well with the school regarding attendance, supporting the giving of awards and certificates as encouragement and a few children do succeed in getting full attendance.
13. The school is very successful in providing for children's personal development. New children starting school in the Foundation Stage soon settle into school routines. They are on course to achieve the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development by the end of the Reception Year. Although they had just started school and there were only two of them, they had already learned to play well together and were prepared to share and take turns. They concentrate well during directed activities with an adult, such as when learning alphabet letter sounds, but few activities were observed when children designed their own learning experiences, made their own decisions or were able to seek their own learning experiences to problems.
14. Provision for spiritual development is good. Children gain a good knowledge and insight into values and beliefs because an ethos has been created where all are respected and the things that are important to them are appreciated. The opportunities that arise for them to take part in moments of reflection and become aware of feelings and ideas are often evident in worship sessions. They write their own prayers, which often depict the beauty found in the natural world and express wonder at the world they see around them from their own school surroundings to that of mountainous areas in other countries. Children are moved by the feelings of wonder at the power of musicians, artists and writers. Spiritual development stimulates children's curiosity, inclination to question and use of imagination and intuition that motivates them to want to know and understand more about themselves and others. Character development is of utmost importance to the school stemming from recognising the

value and worth of others, developing a sense of community and the ability to build secure relationships.

15. Provision for cultural development has improved and is now good. An awareness of their own culture has arisen from their involvement in village life when they have taken part in celebrations and seasonal activities. Such visits as those from sculptors, artists, singers and theatres add to this awareness. Art and music have continued to be very well promoted and celebrations such as Harvest Festival brought a community dimension to this aspect of school provision. The previous inspection reported that a study of world faiths and an appreciation of the rich, cultural diversity of Britain was poorly developed. Now children have a good knowledge and understanding of world faiths and a growing awareness of the cultures of other countries from their work in geography, history, music and some aspects of information and communication technology.
16. The greatest strength in personal development is that arising from the excellent provision for moral and social aspects. Children have been taught how to work co-operatively and in this school the group work is just that! They do not sit in groups and work individually but, of necessity, work together because of the way that lessons are organised. For example, in a mathematics lesson for older pupils the groups were set a very challenging problem. All in the group were at great pains to discuss the problem together and any member who failed to understand was confident to say so and the others found different ways of explaining until that member did understand. Such phrases as, "Are we all agreed?" were commonplace and huge efforts resulted in excellent achievement.

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

The school does well for its children and offers them a **very good** quality of education. The teaching, curriculum and the leadership provided ensure very clear direction for the school's work.

### **Teaching and learning**

Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is **good** with some **outstanding** features. The teaching and learning of the Foundation Stage and Year 1 is mainly **good** and that of Years 2 to 6 is often **very good** and sometimes outstanding. This teaching and the leadership of the school are the two main reasons that children achieve as well as they do. The quality of assessment of pupils' work is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The leadership that provides very good direction for the teaching and learning.
- The very good teamwork and consistency of approach to lessons.
- The excellent relationships that give a firm foundation for learning and motivate children to make their best efforts.
- The innovative methods that are impacting on standards.
- The consistent start to every day of physical exercise, in which all children and staff all take part.
- The deployment of assistant staff, who support and improve children's work.
- A thorough system of assessment that ensures an appropriate response to the needs of individuals and changes planning when necessary.
- Very occasionally the use of the published mathematics scheme limits children's achievements.
- The organisation of the teaching of the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 during afternoon sessions relies heavily on the expertise of one teacher and sometimes hampers the older children's achievement.

## Commentary

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 28 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
2	10	12	3	1	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.

17. Teaching is good at the Foundation Stage, although evidence is limited because at the time of inspection only two children had started school. They are taught alongside Year 1 children and this works well during the morning sessions. There is good directed teaching by both the teacher and her assistant of early reading and number skills and for short periods concentration is high but more occasions are needed for them to become more independent in their learning as was seen in an art lesson when Year 2 children were also present.
18. The organisation is more difficult in the afternoons when Year 2, who require different levels of work, join the Foundation Stage and Year 1 class. Sometimes the planning for the three-year groups and two stages, which relies heavily on the expertise of one teacher hampers the older children's achievement. For example, in a music lesson the tasks were very appropriate for the Foundation Stage but far too easy for Year 2 because there was a weak focus on what children of different ages and abilities are expected to learn by the end of the lesson.
19. The teaching of Years 1 and 2 is good in one class and consistently very good in the other. In both classes the planning and use of resources is good but the co-operative working referred to earlier in this report is well established by Year 2, tasks have time parameters and the pace of lessons is faster than in the other class so children get through a lot of work. The establishment of excellent relationships is a motivating force for improving learning.
20. The teaching of Years 3 to 6 is very good overall. The headteacher sets a good example to others through his own teaching skills and occasionally lessons are outstanding.

### Example of outstanding practice

In a class of Years 5 and 6, children were being challenged to solve complex mathematical problems. The teacher, who was passionate about the subject had trained children to work co-operatively.

There was a buzz of expectation as the teacher entered the room. Rapt attention, a quick introduction and clear organisation soon had the lesson underway. Challenging questions, aimed at various capabilities kept them on their toes, determined to respond but the supportive atmosphere and trusting relationships made them secure in admitting any misunderstanding and the painstaking demonstrations convinced all of the importance of open, honest discussion. Surprise questions such as 'Give me the number after 999,999' made them very alert and exclamations of, 'Wow this is wicked' gave approval to his techniques and challenges. A move into groups was fast, simultaneous and lacking any disruption. Groups checked one another's understanding and provided explanations until all understood and agreed – essential to get the most points!

This excellent motivation produced a cracking pace and an evaluation at the end of the lesson made children realise how hard they had worked. The pride in their voices said it all – "I never thought I'd do it but I have, we all have. The teacher makes you understand because he thinks its fun!" The stimulating, enthusiastic and consistently challenging teaching based on expert knowledge of the subject succeeded in high achievement and standards well above that usually expected.

21. One of the main reasons for the constant successes in Years 3 to 6 is the result of an organisation that makes the best use of teachers' specialist skills. Those who find the subjects exciting and have very good knowledge and skills teach the subjects of art, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education to Years 3 to 6. Consequently children achieve well and reach high standards by the time they leave school.

This is similar to the teaching in English and mathematics where training has resulted in all adults being skilled teachers.

22. In all classes teachers listen carefully to children, who know their contributions are valued and this makes them eager to do their best work. Most children make very good intellectual and creative efforts because they want to please their teachers. Every child completed a pupil inspection questionnaire and many expressed their thoughts and feelings about school. They loved the lessons, found the work interesting, understood the reasons for rules and thought the teachers were fair and kind.
23. The very good teamwork in this school has evolved because the headteacher is the only full-time teacher and works with four other part-time staff. This has necessitated them working closely together and having a consistent approach to all they do. Considerable time is given by teachers and their assistants to discussion, decision making and understanding any new way of working that they consider will benefit the children and enable them to achieve as well as they can. The headteacher reads widely and is knowledgeable and up to date about methods that may work well in this school. He tries any proposed innovation in his class first and shares the results with staff before deciding on implementation. A notable example is the way that every child and teacher take part in physical exercise at the beginning of the day before lessons begin. This short session of exercise and fun sets everyone up for the day but most importantly it has made a considerable difference to what children can achieve in a day, high concentration levels, very good attitudes and highly developed co-operative working.
24. The strong sense of partnership results in effective support for those with learning difficulties and makes a significant contribution to their achievement not least towards each child's feeling of personal success. Both teachers and the highly organised and very well prepared teaching assistants make regular checks on children's learning, co-operating closely to track how well the children are progressing.
25. There are many strengths in teaching but the one that has made the most impact on children's learning is the willingness of staff to use innovative methods that have been proved to work well for these children. A system of teaching and combining letter sounds has improved how well children learn to read and spelling is much improved in the last few years. New ways of tackling writing for older children resulted in more pupils reaching a higher level in the National Curriculum tests. A way of teaching mathematics developed in Switzerland is now used in this school. Although it meets the requirements of the National Numeracy Strategy it has distinctive features that necessitate interactive whole class teaching. Teachers have recorded improvements to oral work, children's explanations of their mathematical thinking, a brisker pace resulting in more work finished and fixing key learning points. The arrangement of the classroom and the use of co-operative working skills are key factors in the system working well. The use of an accelerated reading technique has linked reading and information and communication technology. The reluctant readers, mostly boys, are now keen readers and staff have noted improvements to children's comprehension skills. The new system of assessment, introduced to combat any underachievement, where every child starts with a basic score based on their capability and which changes when they undertake specific assessment tasks or achieve individual targets has proved very popular with both staff and children and works well. Marking comments on written work are perceptive and succeed in moving children on. For example, on a piece of work the teacher had written, that 'organisation, extension of arguments and use of connectives were good but punctuation and handwriting needed attention'. A considerable amount of information about strengths and weaknesses in all subjects is recorded and much of it shared with parents, but its main use is to keep tabs on progress and adapt or change planning so that each child achieves success.

### **The curriculum**

There is a **very good** range of worthwhile curricular opportunities that cater for the interests, aptitudes and particular needs of children and ensures progression in their learning. There are **very good** opportunities for enrichment that include a range of extra-curricular activities. The quality and

quantity of accommodation are **good** for the Foundation Stage and **satisfactory** for the other two stages in meeting the needs of the curriculum. Resources are **good** overall.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Effective use is made of expertise from within and outside school to enrich the curriculum
- Very good equality of access to all learning opportunities.
- Very good provision for personal, social and health education.
- Very good use of innovation.
- Participation in the arts and sport are very good.
- The accommodation lacks essential facilities such as hall, library and ICT space but the staff do their best with what they have and improvise when necessary. Accessibility for all is not yet resolved but the governors have done as much as they can at present.

### **Commentary**

26. The enthusiastic headteacher is totally dedicated to producing a curriculum that is broad, balanced and very relevant to the children in this school. This is very successful. The full statutory curriculum is in place together with all six areas of learning for the Foundation Stage. Religious education meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus and an act of worship takes place each day that meets legal requirements. However, the staff and governors agree with the headteacher that although this is a small school the children are entitled to a much wider range of learning opportunities than the statutory curriculum provides. Children are prepared well for the next stage of education.
27. The school feels very much part of the community and has invited those with differing expertise to assist them in extending the range of learning opportunities. Lessons are enriched by visits to places of interest such as a local farm, bringing expertise into school such as artists and storytellers and holding workshops to extend understanding such as that about Judaism.
28. All children are included in all subjects and have the same opportunities as others to succeed. Those with learning difficulties receive appropriate support if they need it and provision for them is good. Both parents and children consider they are treated fairly. Those from minority ethnic groups share their experiences of living outside this country which others find interesting. The response of other children raises their self-esteem and helps them feel an important part of the school community.
29. Provision for extra-curricular activities is very good, particularly for a school of this size. Parents expressed satisfaction with the range of activities, drawing attention to the fact that clubs are provided for all stages except the Foundation Stage, which they thought acceptable, particularly when these pupils are tired by the end of the day. There was complete trust that these youngest children will have such opportunities later. This term, apart from sporting activities there are recorder groups, an art club, a nature club, which meets at a local farm and languages through French lessons during the day and a Spanish club after school using local expertise.
30. The very good provision for personal, social and health education incorporates sex education and knowledge about drug misuse. Aspects of citizenship have been introduced and capitalises on opportunities to develop co-operation, self-esteem and helping children understand feelings and emotions. They enjoy helping with the smooth running of the school taking on such responsibilities as assembly assistants and lunchtime helpers and even younger ones put out equipment and refill water bottles for drinking during the day. One child explained the social skills needed to work in a group such as disagreeing in a nice way, taking turns, using names, checking for agreement and understanding, keeping things calm, encouraging, listening, asking questions and giving ideas. Subjects such as science and physical education emphasise the need for a healthy life style, as does the start to every school day.

31. Participation in the arts has continued to have an emphasis since the last inspection. Music, drama, dance and art feature in whole school performances, clubs and lessons. High challenge is provided when the whole school takes part in such productions as 'A Midsummer Nights' Dream' which combines literature, art, music and dance. Such village highlights bring a range of expertise to the fore from the local community who work well with the school.
32. Tremendous improvement has been made to sporting activities. Evidence from newspaper reports, photographs and discussions with parents, teachers and children made clear how this school has refused to accept that small schools cannot provide a good range of learning opportunities outside lessons and has moved forward very successfully. Improving school sport has been a priority for school development this year and funds have been raised to provide such facilities as a hard-core area for team games. The school is now achieving very well in the field of sport and children take pride in such achievements as being county champions for kwik cricket, cross country, tag rugby, netball and under 11's football.
33. Innovative practice is high on the agenda of this school. It is well researched first, then its success in other schools observed before trialling it with older pupils. Only when all these tests are successful is it introduced to other classes gradually but such experiments have brought some interesting successes and more detail is contained in the section about teaching and learning. In particular it has resulted in enhancing the ways that literacy and numeracy is taught.
34. The accommodation provides satisfactory provision for the curriculum overall. Although it lacks such essential spaces as a hall, library and adequate space for whole class teaching of information and communication technology the staff do their best with what is available and parents have raised funds to add to the facilities. Provision for the Foundation Stage is good overall in relation to the premises, resources and assistant staff. The teacher enjoys working with this stage but because only two pupils had started school and the other ten do not enter until January it was difficult to judge how effectively the provision works, particularly when related to the difficulties of afternoon sessions. The governing body has recognised that there are still some barriers to be overcome in having accommodation that gives accessibility to all and plans have been drawn up to improve the building but are now awaiting further advice from the local authority.

### Care, guidance and support

There is **very good** provision to ensure pupils' care, welfare, health and safety. A **very good** range of support, advice and guidance is provided for children based on the monitoring of their achievements and personal development. Involvement in seeking, valuing and acting on pupil's views is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers know the children and their families very well and this information is used very effectively to provide appropriate advice and guidance.
- The excellent relationships create an atmosphere of trust and security.
- The very good management of children.
- Well qualified teaching assistants have the expertise to support and help children.
- Induction arrangements for children are very good. The arrangements for the oldest children moving to secondary school are good and almost all children look forward to it.
- No school council or formal procedures in place for consulting pupils.

### Commentary

35. There has been much improvement since the last inspection and this aspect is now a strength of the school. All staff care greatly about children's welfare and ensuring they have the best possible support in whatever they do and that the children work in a healthy and safe environment. The procedures for the protection of children are effective and in line with the



locally agreed child protection arrangements. Welfare and personal development are carefully nurtured.

36. The whole school approaches to discipline and behaviour, working with parents to encourage good attendance and the whole range of ways that the school now keeps abreast of the progress made by individuals stems from the very good leadership of the headteacher as part of his response to the previous inspection. In this aspect as with others he does not accept that 'satisfactory' is good enough or that being a small school means that excellent practice cannot be achieved. This is a constantly improving situation.
37. Playgroup links are well established and visits from pre-school children together with the home visits made by staff, enable the school to provide appropriately for new children starting school. A few parents had expressed some concerns about changes to the induction of new children but they have been listened to and practice has reverted to a staggered intake in the early weeks, which the parents find more acceptable. Older children know what happens as preparation before they leave the primary school and expressed no concerns about moving on to secondary.
38. Well-qualified assistants have the expertise to give pupils the support for literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology to improve their achievement. They work well with those with learning difficulties. Problems are identified quickly, starting at the Foundation Stage and regular checks on children's progress help them provide the right type of support. Tasks that can be done in different ways and targets that help them progress in small steps are effective ways of supporting those with learning difficulties. Specific needs are catered for well and the school is particularly good at working with such children who may join the school reluctant to speak, be part of the class group or play with others. This very good range of support contributes very positively to the achievement of all groups of children.
39. Pupils' views of the school indicate that they trust staff, enjoy being at the school and feel they are listened to and their views considered. Their responses to the questionnaire show that most children know how to get help when stuck and others are fairly sure. When asked about the formation of a school council the older children rejected this idea, telling inspectors that their views are taken into account and discussed by teachers and governors. For example, they had suggested that they use the school outdoor swimming pool during the holidays but teachers were unable to find sufficient people to supervise it safely and explained this, resulting in the pupils understanding the decision.
40. Parents' meeting responses were very positive about care for their children and the support to help them achieve as well as they can – over 90 per cent considered settling in was good, procedures for dealing with unsocial behaviour were good and children were treated fairly and encouraged to take responsibility.

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

The school's links with parents and the community are **very good**, effectively contributing to the curriculum and how well children achieve. The links with other schools and early years providers are **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school works very effectively with parents to support their children's learning, contributing very effectively to how well their children achieve.
- The headteacher and staff capitalise very well on the expertise and resources of the community.
- The excellent information for parents about children's standards and progress.
- The approachability of staff to parents – considerable time given by teachers.
- Although links with other schools are good the distances between the wide range of secondary schools makes the task more difficult than it might be.

## Commentary

41. There have been very good improvements to the school's partnership with parents and the community since the last inspection. At that point the present headteacher had just come to the school and not had time to share his vision or priorities for the school and communication did not encourage the spirit of partnership. The very positive views expressed at the parents' meeting were a good indication of the development that has taken place and how effectively it is working to the benefit of the children.
42. Parents told inspectors that there are now many opportunities for them to help in school and support their children at home. Anyone who wishes can be involved and they receive lots of encouragement to listen to reading, help with groups in class, assist with swimming and support their children on visits to places of interest. Parents are very prepared to give support to their children at home when requested and consider it important to attend curriculum meetings so that they know the best ways to assist them. There was general agreement that the amount of homework is appropriate and every child has a home-school book that provides parents with a range of information, including both pastoral and academic comment and to which they can reply. These interested parents are keen to help their children and such support is having a very positive impact on their children's learning. For example, almost all parents attended the workshop about the new teaching involving the use of letter sounds for decoding words and parents admitted that for the first time they realised how important it was to have a consistent approach if children were to achieve well.
43. Almost all parents returned their inspection questionnaires and of these 96 per cent were comfortable about approaching the school with almost the same proportion praising the ways that the school seeks the views of parents. This is managed very well and has improved since the last inspection. More formal consultations have been carried out using questionnaires but during the inspection it was evident that parents have easy access to staff and the headteacher every day. There is good dialogue between parents and teachers if a concern arises and parents were very pleased that from time to time teachers will telephone them to comment on progress and make them aware just how much improvement has been made. Parents are mainly very happy with the written reports they receive. These are very detailed and children are graded on a scale of 1-5 for attainment and effort in each subject. The number of formal parent consultation evenings has been increased to three per year. There was overall agreement that the school is very good at communicating. In their letters some parents emphasised their appreciation of how the leadership of the school has encouraged their interest and supported their children. Typical of these responses were:

*'The headteacher especially is marvellous with the children'*

*'My son has come on in leaps and bounds'*

*'The head cares deeply about the children and their education and always strives for the best approach, bringing in and trying out new ideas'*

*'Excellent, I couldn't wish for more'*

44. Members of the community regularly visit the school to make contributions to children's learning such as grandparents talking about their experiences in World War II in history or a local artist demonstrating the techniques of using watercolours in art. The whole community supports the school at the major performance, when a skilled singer helps with music and others help with drama and dance. A local farmer uses her farm to support children with their nature club and both churches at Stockland and Yarcombe are used for such celebrations as Harvest and Christmas. The vicar assists with collective worship and volunteers assist teachers with listening to reading. In addition, there are good links with other schools and the local playgroup, that support parents when children move from one stage of education to another. However, the distances between schools and the fact that this school is situated on the borders of three counties mean that contact with such a wide range of secondary schools is more difficult than it might have been.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school is **very good** with some outstanding features. The governance of the school is **very good**. The quality of leadership of the school, particularly by the headteacher is **very good** and that of other staff with responsibilities is **good**. The effectiveness of management is **very good**.

The main aids to raising achievement are:

- The dynamic leadership of the headteacher, who puts children first and is prepared to introduce different ways of working if they will benefit the children and enable them to achieve as well as they can, together with a sharp focus on standards.
- The teamwork of all staff, ensuring a consistent approach to teaching and high expectations of what children can achieve.
- Maintaining the excellent relations between staff and pupils that strongly motivate children to work as hard as they can.

A barrier to raising achievement by the school growing too quickly and putting pressure on the existing resources, suggested by the headteacher, is not one supported by the inspection team. At present there is only one area that could be a barrier and this relates to the organisation of lessons for Years 1 and 2 in the afternoons but the school is already making plans to improve this system.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher provides strong and purposeful leadership.
- The very effective teamwork ensures a consistent approach to teaching and learning.
- Good management of special educational needs.
- The excellent reflection of the school's aims and values in its work, clearly expressed in the behaviour, attitudes and values of the children.
- Governors help shape the vision and direction of the school because they have a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses.
- The approaches to financial and resource management help the school to achieve its educational priorities.
- The staff roles and responsibilities now need review to ensure they continue to meet the needs of the infant children as well as those of the juniors.

### **Commentary**

45. The headteacher has an excellent vision of the direction he expects the school to take to ensure a high quality education for all children. He is a leader who is constantly self-evaluating and seeking how improvements can be made. He is a firm and caring leader with a good level of professional knowledge and expertise. In particular he is knowledgeable about educational research and knows what has been effective elsewhere and whether it is worth trying at this school. Innovative practice has been the result. He sets a good example to others through his own teaching skills and has used all these attributes to mould team attitudes and values so that all staff share his understanding of what children can achieve. Staff consider that it is his skills that have made the school more successful than at the last inspection, but he ascribes it to the co-operation and commitment of the whole school team. The strength lies in honest and open relationships that have resulted in staff valuing one another and feeling valued themselves.
46. The headteacher and governors are keen to ensure that everyone in the school has the same hopes and aspirations and that its aims and values permeate all that they do. There is considerable importance attached to the need to develop everyone's self-esteem, resulting in children who feel comfortable about coming to school and staff who are introduced quickly and professionally to school routines. The school community is both orderly and harmonious.
47. The headteacher has built on the improvements identified in the last report and takes action to remedy weaknesses. There has been a real drive to raise standards, with success. A very effective assessment system is being used to try and ensure there is no underachievement.

Innovative ideas have been important in making the school the way it is now and helping the headteacher realise his vision.

48. There is no longer a deputy headteacher as there was at the last inspection and, since there is no other full-time teacher than the headteacher, the governors have not designated another teacher to take responsibility for the school in his absence, although in reality there is one teacher who steps into this role when needed. However, governors are aware of the need to put this on a more formal footing and consider it an appropriate time to review the roles and responsibilities of staff to ensure the current organisation is still working well for the children.
49. The subject co-ordinator role has developed well in respect of such subjects as English and mathematics because the headteacher holds both roles and has been vigilant about monitoring standards and practice. For example, he and governors have seen all staff teach these subjects. This part of the management task has not been extended to other subjects because at Years 3-6 specialists mainly teach the children rather than a class teacher as happens for literacy, numeracy and religious education. However, no one has responsibility for monitoring the Foundation Stage and when these children and all the Year 1 and Year 2 pupils are together each afternoon the teacher sometimes finds it difficult to meet the needs of the oldest children.
50. The management of the school's special educational needs provision is effectively led by a hard working co-ordinator. There are clear procedures to ensure this aspect runs smoothly and effectively. Close working with other teachers, support staff, governors and outside specialist agencies ensures the specific needs of all children are met.
51. The governing body does a good job in fulfilling its responsibilities in ensuring the school runs efficiently for the benefit of the children. The chair of the governing body plans a cycle of work over a year. Other governors make visits and their reports clearly identify strengths and where further development is needed. They are keen to have involvement in shaping the vision and direction of the school and gather first hand evidence of the school's performance. Individual governors have links to the curriculum and an effective relationship has been established which makes it easy for the subject co-ordinator to talk about concerns as well as successes and where they need help. This is essential in a small school where most teachers have more than one subject responsibility. The school development plan is well focused and identifies priorities. It is carefully costed, realistic and informed; needs are prioritised and planned into the programme of work. Governors consider that their decision-making is now better and more appropriate because they are well informed.
52. The most recent audit report found that financial management is in good order with a few minor recommendations that have already been carried out. The school's approaches to financial and resource management help it to achieve its educational priorities. For example, as part of its strategy to raise standards it has encouraged the teaching assistants to be involved in the teaching of the children, because they are well trained and have good levels of expertise and approved the organisation of the use of specialist teachers in the junior classes. The funds available are used sensibly and getting the best value for the children, so that they can achieve as well as possible, is important to the school's management and its use of resources.

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	223,915.46
Total expenditure	218,537.43
Expenditure per pupil	2,698

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	9,176.00
Balance carried forward to the next	5,378.03

53. Parents' meeting responses agreed that the leadership of the school is wonderful and that the headteacher and staff work well together as a team to provide the best quality of education for their children. There were many examples to support their views. The school is seen as strongly led and managed very well with many improvements since the last inspection. Responses to parental questionnaires showed that a high percentage (97 per cent) strongly agreed that the school is led and managed well. Children expressed real care for the school and are proud to represent it.

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

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

The provision for the Foundation Stage is **good** overall. At the time of the inspection only two children had joined the school in the Foundation Stage, although ten more will follow in January. As the inspection took place very early in the term there is insufficient evidence to make judgements about all areas of learning and where possible inspectors used work and records of the previous year for some judgements. Based on the limited evidence available children's attainment on entry to school is broadly in line with that expected for children of this age and a significant group begin school with attainment, that is above the typical standard. The school has assessed children using the national Foundation Stage profile. However, data has not yet been collated nationally and the school has not yet been able to calculate their own children's scores.

Evidence of written work shows that by the end of the Reception Year almost all children reach at least the recommended standard in the six areas of learning and some go well beyond. For the minority of slow learners, some very basic literacy and numeracy skills are still being acquired, but the majority of children make a successful start on English and mathematics within the National Curriculum. All children achieve well and, where they need additional support this is provided so that they too can achieve success early on in their school lives. The previous inspection had taken place in a summer term, when most pupils had reached the age of five and consequently there was no full report on the Foundation Stage but those who joined the school a year ago have clearly made good progress in that time.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is good and children make rapid progress in learning because they enter school in such small groups.
- There are good arrangements to find out what children know, understand and can do when they start school and to keep tabs on their progress.
- The good liaison with the playgroup helps staff to meet the individual needs of children well.
- Staff use their knowledge of the children and their families effectively to give every child a good start to school life and older children support them at play and lunchtimes.
- The Foundation Stage curriculum lacks sufficient opportunities for independent learning.

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

New children settle quickly into school routines and are secure and happy. They learn to play well and to share equipment and to take turns. Although children become engrossed for short periods in directed activities, they lack sufficient occasions to design their own learning experiences, to make their own decisions and to seek their own solutions to problems. Because they are part of a class where there are many older and more established pupils, new children quickly learn by watching others. Mostly, there is a calm and orderly atmosphere in the classroom. Children are given the security of knowing what is right and what is wrong. The teaching of personal and social development is good. Staff build good relationships with parents and other members of the local community who regularly come into school to support children.

### **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

Staff pay good attention to providing opportunities for children to have worthwhile conversations with adults as well as with one another. The good ratio of adults to children throughout each morning is particularly beneficial and many children make rapid progress as a result. The children's enjoyment of books is promoted through the whole class sharing of a range of texts. Children join in where they can and listen thoughtfully to distinguish the sounds at the beginning of words. Every day an expert teaching assistant, who keeps very careful notes to assess any child who is not making the anticipated progress, teaches a carefully structured language programme. Additional support is immediately allocated to remedy any problems. This is a strength of the provision. Children make marks and scribbles happily on paper and talk about these marks to the teacher who writes the text. Samples of work provided by the school show that at the end of the first year many children are

writing simple sentences independently in the form of diaries and stories. They form their letters correctly and standards are above those expected for their age. Children of average capability copy from a printed text, but do not always have the stamina to finish work. Attractive resources are evident to stimulate discussion and motivate children in this area of learning.

### **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

A range of opportunities for counting, matching and sequencing activities is provided and children enjoy their learning. They achieve well when sorting and classifying objects and can count confidently up to ten. They are provided with sand and water to explore capacity and play in the classroom shop to handle money and read numbers. Teachers extend the children's mathematical language in a variety of different ways, such as when fruit and snacks are handed out. The teaching assistant, who works regularly in the Foundation Stage class supporting mathematics, uses a quiet and methodical approach when demonstrating how children should form their numerals. She explains clearly how the children should sit and encourages them to take care. This approach pays dividends later for there is very little evidence of older pupils forming numbers incorrectly. The teacher encourages them to develop their mathematical vocabulary using a variety of ways, for example, by singing number rhymes and playing with attractive board games.

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

Children's experiences are linked to such topics as 'materials'. They use natural and man-made materials to weave pictures and produce collages. They talk about the strength of various materials as they work and one child made the comment, *"You mustn't put a big, big dob of glue because it will all soak through the paper because it's too heavy"*. Staff use skilled questioning to challenge their thinking. Children use the computer regularly and are developing the skills they need. For example, they can use the mouse to select and move objects around the screen and are learning to use a programmable toy. There was no evidence of early geographical or historical skill development at this early point in the term.

### **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

No activities were observed during the inspection. However, even the youngest children participate in the early morning whole school keep fit activity and show real determination and stamina as they make a brave attempt to run right round the school field. When using a range of tools such as scissors, crayons, and paintbrushes they demonstrate good co-ordination. The outside play area provides an adequate variety of equipment to assist their progress in controlling large movements.

### **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Children paint and make collage pictures. Classroom displays show close observational work about the natural world. Children are happy to reflect upon things of beauty and contribute to the displays initiated by staff. They talk about their favourite flowers and their preferred colours, explore a range of media and, when working with older children, learn how to handle tools and equipment. They are learning a range of rhymes and songs and are joining in with simple music making.

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

### **ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE**

Literacy lessons in all classes and samples of English written work were examined. A lesson in French with one class was sampled.

#### **English**

Provision in English is **very good** and reflects the very good leadership and high standards reached by the time children leave school.

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

- The teachers' very good knowledge of the subject supports learning and drives up standards.
- Some teachers challenge children to a very high degree and they respond by persevering and making great efforts.

- The very good leadership that ensures teachers have the advice and support they need.
- The ways that a well trained teaching assistant supports small groups.
- The emphasis that teachers put on well-presented work and effective marking comments that help children understand what they do well and where further improvement is needed.
- There is no designated library where children may study but the school has provided an area in one classroom where books can be found for research.

### Commentary

54. Since the last inspection there has been a great drive to improve standards led by the headteacher who is this subject's co-ordinator. Several weaknesses at Year 2 were identified in the previous report but this is not the case now because there have been changes to teachers and a whole school approach to the teaching of this subject from which children have benefited. By Year 6 pupils are doing very well with a high proportion of children reaching the higher levels, particularly in science where the school was in the top five per cent of schools in the country. Children acknowledge that they are expected to work hard and the faster learners are challenged well for their capability. There has been a rapid improvement by Year 2 as seen in both the 2002 and 2003 National Curriculum tests. The samples of written work provided for Year 1 and 2 show considerable improvements to that of the last inspection when it was unsatisfactory. Year 1 children have made very good progress since the Foundation Stage, making good efforts to present their work neatly and by Year 2 this has improved yet further. The slower learners achieve well and make good progress towards the targets identified for them because they have the right level of support. Although early in the term, the current standards in speaking and listening, reading, writing and spelling are above average and achievement in written work is very good.
55. The leadership of the subject is very good because the headteacher has introduced a number of innovative ideas for which staff have had training and successfully implemented them, as a way of helping children achieve as well as they can. A new way of tackling reading, by learning ways of decoding words has contributed to rapid improvements in reading and spelling by Year 2 as a result. The quality of writing across the school was also a concern and the headteacher worked with staff to explain how to use a 'writing for results' approach, which he had already tried with his own class. Changes to the assessment of writing followed. The effectiveness of this approach resulted in dramatic improvements in the National Curriculum tests with six pupils reaching the higher level at Year 6 when previously only one child had done so for the last four years.
56. The quality of teaching is good at Year 1 and very good at Years 2 to 6. The teachers and their assistants are now very knowledgeable about different ways of teaching literacy. Teachers are particularly good at keeping track of children's progress. For example, teachers noticed that boys were lacking interest in reading and decided to combine the reading of books with computer quizzes. This system of accelerated reading has shown that children choose to read more books because they enjoy the quizzes and to be successful they have to understand the text they have read. A spin-off from this system are the gains in comprehension skills. The self-esteem has risen of these previous reluctant readers.
57. The marking of written work that provides feedback to pupils on specific areas where improvement can be made is very effective. For example, in the books of older children it gives a breakdown of the parts of writing that are done well so explanations are clear and occasionally if standards drop there are detailed reasons for it such as *'keep the same viewpoint – don't get too personal'*. Children read the comments and can explain what is working well. Teachers find interesting ways of teaching such topics as the use of connectives in writing. In one class the topic of football was used which maintained interest and resulted in good efforts. Homework tasks are clear, used to reinforce learning and have the same high expectations – *"rewrite the opening paragraph and make it clearer to the reader what you are trying to see"*.



58. Although there is no library area to which children of any class can have access or groups or individuals come to study the co-ordinator has ensured that all classrooms have a selection of fiction and non-fiction texts together with a range of books, kept in one classroom, to support their individual research. Effective use is made of the Internet to research topics in this subject and children use their information and communication technology skills well for reinforcing reading and writing skills in infant classes and word processing factual accounts in junior classes.

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

The skills that children develop in English are linked to and applied in, other subjects of the curriculum. The children's skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening enable them to communicate and express themselves in all areas of their work in school. Younger children quickly learn that writing is used for many forms of communication. For example, they make lists of what they need to make a clothes peg soldier in design and technology and record what they have done in a simple science experiment. They make good attempts to use labelling, add information and give explanations. In mathematics children in Years 1 and 2 meet stories and rhymes that rely on counting and sequencing. Children in Years 3 to 6 are encouraged to read and interpret problems in order to identify the mathematics involved.

The majority of children in all classes are developing good speaking and listening skills and using them very effectively in discussion, answering and asking questions and when listening to others' views in lessons about other subjects. However, about 25 per cent still need support to feel confident in this. By Year 6 there are well-reasoned responses to social topics. In mathematics they explain and present their work to others during plenary sessions and communicate by developing the precise use of mathematical language. English contributes to the teaching of personal, social and health education and citizenship. Younger children talk about things that improve their health and about rules for keeping them safe around the school. Older children debate topical problems and events, such as 'should clubs release players for international matches' or 'should children wear school uniform?' Planned activities within the classroom encourage children to work together and respect each other's views.

### **French**

No judgements can be made about standards or the teaching of French since only one lesson was seen with Years 3 and 4. A teacher and a teaching assistant, who have good knowledge and skills in the subject, worked as a team and children showed pleasure in their involvement and worked hard. In this lesson the standards achieved were good in relation to the school scheme. Interest levels were high and nearly all children admitted to finding it challenging but exciting. The creative use of teacher-made resources made effective use of puppets and gave children confidence to speak through the puppets. At the end of the lesson they willingly demonstrated their skills. Clearly this is preparing children well for their move to secondary school.

### **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **very good**, its effectiveness reflected through how well children achieve and the high standards they reach by the time they leave school.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The subject leader has very good expertise, has a real passion for the subject which is transmitted to the pupils and has deliberately concentrated on raising standards.
- Some teachers challenge pupils to a very high degree and they respond by persevering and making great efforts to work out complex mathematical problems.
- Pupils have very good levels of numeracy. They are given ample opportunities to apply these skills in solving problems, extending their learning considerably.
- Group work is used very effectively, demanding that pupils explain their methods to each other and enhancing their understanding.
- The practice of using lessons which are occasionally taken directly from a published scheme of work without adaptation to suit the needs of pupils, needs review.

- The monitoring of this subject needs extending to all classes to ensure there is always sufficient pace and challenge so that all pupils achieve well.

### **Commentary**

59. Although early in the new school year, standards in lessons are above average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 with a significant group of the oldest pupils already reaching standards that are well above those expected nationally. This is an impressive improvement since the previous inspection when standards for pupils in Year 2 and 6 were typical of those expected nationally and the standards of numeracy for younger pupils were lower than average. Of particular note is the progress of the faster learners. For example in the national tests a higher proportion of children reached the higher level than previous years. There has been much hard work to raise achievement in mathematics, which is still rising, including that of pupils with special educational needs. In particular pupils make good progress throughout the school in calculating numbers and are very confident when developing their understanding of number operations. Pupils throughout the school have a very good grasp of how to apply their number skills to solve real life problems. Children in Year 2 work out the weight of five sacks of vegetables, they put jugs of various sizes in order and can successfully make graphs illustrating the varying weights of fruit.
60. The quality of teaching is good overall and there is very good and sometimes outstanding teaching in Years 5 and 6. In the best lessons teachers expect pupils to work at a fast pace and time is used productively so that much is achieved. It is sometimes possible at the end of the lesson to see that pupils are tired from the concentration they have shown when working through complex problems. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6, whilst seeking to discover a *simple* way to calculate the total of odd numbers between 1 and 100, gradually identified a pattern of square numbers, which would be beneficial. They recognised at the end of the lesson how much effort they had applied. Their self-esteem grew alongside these achievements. Pupils are very well supported in developing their social skills and working collaboratively. They take turns in leading group discussions, ask each other if they are understanding the approaches and help each other overcome difficulties. This strategy is highly effective and pupils are motivated to work in this way because there is a *group* rather than an individual assessment each week.
61. Very occasionally lessons were not sufficiently stimulating for pupils. While children clearly need to practise skills such as forming numerals correctly and completing number grids, there were few opportunities in these lessons for the pace of the lesson to vary and for greater demands to be placed on them.
62. The leadership of the subject is very good. The subject leader is an excellent and dynamic teacher who leads by his own high example and pupils throughout the school enjoy their lessons immensely. He is continuously evaluating, resulting in the introduction of strategies that bring about improvement. Standards in this subject are continuing to rise because it has been a deliberate focus of development over recent years. The subject leader is well placed to monitor lessons throughout the school to ensure that the quality of teaching and learning is improved still further where this is necessary.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

Samples of work provided by the school show that children use their mathematics skills well in other subjects. Work in science at Year 2 shows the use of measurement and graphs to record findings and, by Year 6, great care is taken to calculate and measure. These children enjoy using their knowledge of problem solving to plan a science investigation. In design and technology they make effective use of mathematics skills before adapting plans for making a vehicle. In geography, younger ones use counting and recording skills when carrying out a traffic survey. Older children calculate distances travelled when working on the use of time and store and retrieve data as part of their work. Children are becoming very aware that the application of mathematics skills can be used more widely than in this subject's lessons and see a purpose in acquiring such skills. This work is having a positive effect on the standards they achieve, particularly by the time they leave school.

## SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good** and its effectiveness, particularly in relation to specialist teaching, has resulted in improved standards.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- A well planned and imaginative curriculum which incorporates many opportunities for pupils to develop their investigative skills well.
- The teacher uses very good demonstrations and activities for the children to ensure that they fully understand what is being taught.
- Pupils are allowed sufficient time to work in small groups and discuss their investigations, developing their full understanding of difficult ideas.
- There are very good links made to other subjects.
- There are occasional examples of inattentive behaviour which should be eradicated.
- More space is needed for the children in Years 3 and 4 to carry out practical work more successfully.

### Commentary

63. In lessons standards are average at the end of Year 2 and above average at the end of Year 6 at this point in the year. A significant proportion of older pupils are working well above the expected standard. There is no significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls. Those children with learning difficulties achieve well because they receive the support they need in lessons. This is a dramatic improvement amongst pupils in Years 3 to 6 where standards have risen considerably since the previous inspection. On this occasion no lessons were seen involving Year 1 or 2 pupils, but from their written work it is clear that they make satisfactory progress and standards have been maintained. Older pupils make good progress and achieve well because the specialist teacher has very good knowledge of the subject and successfully provides an exciting and appropriate range of activities that enables effective learning in each lesson.
64. A scrutiny of work indicates that pupils cover the full range of statutory requirements and that there is a very good emphasis on developing pupils' enquiry skills. The examples of work were limited in Year 2, but even so it is apparent that pupils learn to observe living things carefully and take good care when recording their findings. Older children produce a very impressive amount of work and clearly put much effort into their lessons; they systematically build up the necessary scientific skills over time. Pupils know how to pose questions, which can be investigated, choose appropriate equipment, measure carefully, ensure a test is fair and repeat a test to check for accuracy.
65. The quality of teaching is good. The specialist teacher has very good subject knowledge and prepares activities that are entirely suitable to support pupils' understanding. For example, in one lesson where pupils were learning about the properties of materials, the teacher gave each group a very well chosen assortment of objects, which encouraged the pupils to use a variety of language such as '*strong, light, fragile, tough*'. Since each group had different objects, when the various groups reported back to the class the vocabulary, which had been accumulated, was extensive and many pupils had gained new learning.
66. The assessment of pupils' knowledge and understanding is used effectively, for example, to ensure they had a good understanding of how to make a test fair. They worked in groups whilst the teacher listened to pupils discussing how they could approach the task. Consequently, the teacher was able to record the pupils' current capabilities and plan future work at the next level. Pupils worked productively together, explaining their reasons and reaching agreement within a limited period of time.
67. Good teaching included demonstrating to pupils how scientific findings are often communicated using graphs, tables or diagrams for the sake of clarity. This gave pupils an opportunity to develop their mathematics and information and communication technology skills

in new situations. Although most pupils became very engrossed in their work there were occasional examples of inattentiveness. The accommodation for the Years 3 and 4 pupils did not allow enough space for good cooperative practical work.

68. The subject leader is new to the school and at the time of inspection had been in school for just two weeks so there is insufficient evidence to judge leadership. Since the last inspection the main improvement has been the much higher standards in Years 3 to 6 because of the introduction of specialist teaching at this stage.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Despite the difficulties imposed by accommodation the provision for information and communication technology is **good**, reflected in its effectiveness.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The good leadership of the co-ordinator and very effective contributions of the teaching assistant.
- The well-established co-operative working, enabling small groups to achieve well.
- The improved awareness that children have of how their knowledge and skills make some everyday tasks easier and add to the interest of other subjects.
- The accommodation lacks sufficient space for the whole class teaching of this subject in a separate room.

### **Commentary**

69. During the inspection it was only possible to see small groups of children working with the teaching assistant because there is no separate room for whole class teaching and the main group of five networked computers is located in the Years 5 and 6 class where other lessons carry on while this activity is happening. Each class also has its own computer and these are used well during lessons. From the evidence available, which includes discussions with staff and children and some samples of work, standards are typical for their age and given that children had little experience of this subject when entering school they are now making good progress and achieving well. This is largely due to the additional small group activities that occur beyond the experiences in the classroom.
70. The main teaching seen was that undertaken by the teaching assistant and this was good. The teaching assistant is experienced and uses her expertise very effectively in planning the sessions and providing support. Children talked about these small group sessions and explained that they are managed well with the class teacher contributing when necessary although the teaching assistant has the main responsibility and her teaching is good. The class teachers put the plans together each term and work is overseen by the headteacher. The sessions planned ensure that every child uses the computer every week and this is seen as an entitlement and not used as a reward. Other technology resources, apart from computers are used such as programmable robots, tape recorders, CD ROMs, calculators and a digital camera. The assessments made informally as children are working and recorded later are used to guide children's progress and shared with parents.
71. The small group work is particularly effective because when pupils work as mixed ability groups the more competent children help others. If considerable discussion is sought the small group may be divided into pairs; sometimes the children work in age groups for equal interaction. The teaching assistant gives clear instructions to the group and intervenes when becoming aware of some misunderstanding. A group from the class of Years 3 and 4 children found the task of making a branch database quite challenging, but this became easier as they designed questions to help them classify the objects they saw on the screen. They watched with rapt attention as they saw their efforts produce a chart. In a class of older children the Internet was being used effectively as a source of information in a session combining ICT and geography work about rivers. Skills were well developed as they used icons, scrolled backwards and forwards, or used the 'help' system. When working together learning was

extended and such phrases as “don’t forget where you click to move on” were typical of the ways they worked.

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

The school is now making good efforts to use ICT in other subjects and to make children more aware that such technology can assist them in their studies and if they harness the power of technology and use it purposefully it will make tasks easier. It is increasing children’s skills and gives purpose and relevance to their work. Every class is involved in word processing and using the skill to write factual accounts linked to such subjects as geography, history and religious education or to reinforce basic skills. Effective use of ICT was seen in an art lesson for younger children to generate pictures and use them to label with appropriate vocabulary. Year 1 children used a robotic toy to devise a route around school. In Years 5 and 6 they link graphical modelling skills to artwork about objects and meanings, learn how to control a device when making a vehicle in design and technology and use geographical work on mountains to learn how to monitor environmental change. Although this work is in its early stages a two year programme is planned with good links to the subjects of art, design and technology, geography, history and science.

### **HUMANITIES**

No lessons were seen in geography or history but inspectors looked at samples of children’s work and had some lively discussions with them about what they had been studying.

### **Religious education**

The provision for religious education is **very good** reflecting the good leadership for the subject and improved standards.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The good teaching is driving up standards.
- The excellent relationships which encourage openness during discussions.
- The ways that teachers challenge and inspire children resulting in very good efforts and well presented work of a high standard.
- The very good contributions to children’s spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Their understanding of how the beliefs and practices of a religious group influence the way that people live.

### **Commentary**

72. Standards have improved since the last inspection and overall are better than usually expected in the locally agreed syllabus for their age by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Children gradually build up a wide-ranging knowledge of world faiths and understand the similarities and differences between them. By Year 2 the written work is mainly typical of that expected for children of this age but that of higher attainers is better. In particular they have a good understanding of Christian belief and how it influences the way some people live. Unlike the previous inspection lessons were seen at all stages and there was plenty of work to show how well children were achieving. Teaching is good and sometimes very good and this is having a positive effect on the improvements to standards.
73. In all lessons there were opportunities for discussion; in fact children had no choice about not talking about their work in groups as every lesson contains these co-operative working elements. The excellent relationships established and the secure knowledge that views are valued give children the confidence to speak openly about their feelings and beliefs. For example, Year 2 children dramatised the story of Noah outdoors and the skilful questioning of the teacher, who was taking part in the drama, made them very aware of what a colossal task it was to build this ark. The excitement at the downpour of rain and spontaneous speech and actions that followed, “don’t step out there’s still water everywhere” and “look at the sky – wow! colours everywhere” eventually led to children extending their knowledge and understanding of what was experienced and why. The superb efforts culminating in a mature understanding of the emotions experienced by Noah and his family resulted from inspirational and challenging teaching.

74. The presentation of written work has improved since the last inspection when it was deemed unsatisfactory. Very good progress has been made and in all classes there is a range of ways used to record work both handwritten and word processed - worksheets, drama, play scripts and factual accounts which are all neatly set out. Much of the written work at Year 3 relates well to the personal lives of the children, such as the reasons for rules. A challenging activity, to find powerful words to describe 'God is my rock' and 'Jesus light of the world,' produced some writing of good quality as well as reinforcing English work. A particularly outstanding piece of work in Year 6 was the writing of a letter from a Jewish child to a non-Jew showing good use of appropriate language and a deal of empathy about the way their beliefs influence the way they live.
75. Overall, the leadership of the subject is good. Advice and support for other colleagues is good, assessment is very good and resources have been improved but the role needs extending to include more management tasks such as observing the teaching of others. Although the school accepts this is necessary the co-ordinator is part-time and a review of some aspects of the organisation are required before this can be done.

### Geography

No lessons were seen but many samples of work were provided and displays indicated that pupils have a lively interest in this subject as a result of an exciting curriculum. The provision in geography has improved and is now **very good** resulting in improved standards since the last inspection. Samples of work amongst pupils of all capabilities are better than those expected for age and all pupils are achieving well.

Year 2 pupils talk fluently about the local environment including the physical and human features and they compare these with contrasting localities. They are confident when using geographical terms such as *landscape*, *slopes* and *routes*. They demonstrate positive attitudes and a real appreciation of the beautiful countryside in which they live for example, "I love my walk because I see squirrels". In recent months all pupils have benefited from visits to the Butterfly and Otter Centre, to Buckfast Abbey and a residential trip to Dartmoor for the oldest pupils. When walking around the school Year 2 pupils can follow a route confidently using the directions left and right and diagonal and they can point out symbols such as the danger sign on the swimming pool gates. Even the youngest pupils learn about damage to the environment and carry out surveys to measure the amount of pollution through litter or noise. These pupils develop their interest in the environment by writing to the headteacher asking him to provide more rubbish bins to avoid unnecessary deterioration in pollution levels. All pupils consider pertinent issues relating to their own village, such as types of transport used and calculating distances to be travelled for pastimes and entertainment in nearby towns or cities. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 recognise the problems faced by those living in other parts of the world such as climatic effects on both the land and people and use secondary sources to further their enquiries. Their own drawings of diagrams and maps are of a high standard.

The experienced subject leader has improved the learning significantly since the last inspection, particularly developing good questioning skills, beginning to plan surveys and using secondary sources effectively. There are plans to use ICT to make databases, graphs and spreadsheets.

### History

No lessons were seen but samples of work and recent projects were scrutinised. Children talked extensively about their work in this subject. It is evident from these sources that the provision in history has improved and is now **very good**. Standards now exceed those typical for pupils at the end of Years 2 and 6. In particular, the work of younger pupils is now much better presented and organised.

Pupils talk with real enthusiasm and interest about this subject and the projects they have covered over the last two years. By the end of Year 2 children have a good understanding of the passing of time. They have a good awareness of how circumstances have changed over a period by comparing pictures of everyday life in the past and the present. Older pupils clearly enjoy recalling

what they know about famous characters from the past such as Henry VIII and the more recent life of John Lennon. They have a clear understanding of the impact on Britain of Henry VIII and Queen Elizabeth I and have drawn up a Tudor family tree.

Imaginative approaches to teaching have stimulated children successfully. For example, the visit by a Roman centurion initiated a series of lessons about the Roman Empire and pupils demonstrated their empathy by writing letters home, as if they too were Roman soldiers. One child wrote "Tomorrow we have to march another twenty four miles – which I'm dreading." When studying aspects of life during the Second World War pupils produced a variety of work linked to other subjects, such as posters encouraging young men to 'sign up' and those instructing everyone to wear gas masks. They interviewed a gentleman who had been an evacuee and asked him about his feelings as well as about the food and transport available in the 1940's. Pupils were perceptive in describing how frightening it must have been for children to be evacuated. One child said, "I think it would be frightening to go just with rations and to a strange family that didn't know about you".

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

No lessons were seen in design and technology but inspectors looked at some samples of work from Year 6. Two lessons were seen in art and design, music and physical education, together with the daily exercise session when everyone takes part. Inspectors looked at samples of children's work in art and design and watched a recorder group.

#### **Art and design**

The provision in art and design is **good**, reflecting the high standards by Year 6 and the specialist teaching.

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

- There is very good teaching by a member of staff with subject expertise and an assistant who is an artist.
- Pupils become completely engrossed in their activity because they are shown techniques that enable them to be successful.
- Older pupils achieve very well because high quality demonstrations show them what they need to do and give them confidence to try something new.
- Out of class learning enables keen artists to develop their enthusiasm and creativity further.
- Learning objectives are not always pitched at an appropriate level for all pupils in mixed age classes.

#### **Commentary**

76. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. By the end of Year 6 they are better than expected for pupils of this age and by the end of Year 2 they are at least typical of what can be expected. In the two lessons seen teaching was satisfactory in the infant class and very good in the junior one. In the juniors pupils clearly benefit from the specialist knowledge of an artist who supports in class and the expertise of the subject leader. Throughout the school pupils achieve well and, in one lesson the older pupils made very good progress and responded very well to the teaching. A very well planned lesson for pupils in Years 5 and 6 began with an evaluation by pupils of the work of various water colourists. The teaching assistant, an artist herself, very effectively demonstrated a range of techniques, such as *under drawing* and *wet on wet* and pupils became familiar not only with the terms, but through careful observation, noticed how various effects were achieved. They were keen to try their own sketching and all worked hard.
77. Pupils of all capabilities are supported very well and the specialist teacher only intervenes to ensure that pupils can succeed. One talented pupil is able to pick up the skill of speed drawing whilst others build on previous techniques of thumbnail sketching. Because pupils are so engrossed in their drawing they work very quietly. Any talking relates entirely to the task in hand. Those who are especially enthusiastic can become members of the art club. A significant proportion of pupils are members and they enjoy opportunities to visit local art galleries as well as working in two-dimensional and three-dimensional aspects to create their

own work. Younger pupils have fun working with a range of materials representing ideas and feelings, such as responding to Aboriginal stories and works of art by creating their own colourful paintings in a similar style. Teachers plan tasks that draw on information, communication and technology skills and younger children explained their work on display, taking pride in their achievements.

78. When teaching is satisfactory, it is because the tasks are not well matched to all pupils needs in a class of varying ages. Consequently, some pupils, who are not sufficiently challenged by their learning become distracted. The majority of pupils respond well and some respond very well in lessons. They clearly enjoy expressing their ideas and making a range of images and artefacts.
79. The leadership of the subject is very good. The good subject knowledge is resulting in children learning techniques systematically and building on previous learning very effectively.

### **Design and technology**

No lessons were observed. However, there were samples of Year 6 pupils' work that focused on a series of lessons in which pupils each designed and made a buggy, which used electricity and switches. Evidence from this work indicates that standards are above those expected for their age and that pupils achieve well. This is an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection, as is the fact that resources are now satisfactory. Pupils explored the components of other moving toys before designing a specification for their own buggy. Teachers' useful comments, such as, "Look at the possible chassis shapes again" supported learning. Pupils acquired the correct terminology as well as the symbols for electricity and they incorporated lights into their buggy designs. The project was purposeful and pupils responded honestly when evaluating their finished products. An example of this includes, "I was pleased with the design because it worked out. My brother liked it because it was fun and easy to use!"

### **Music**

The provision for music is **very good** in Years 3 to 6 and **satisfactory** in Years 1 and 2. This reflects the very good specialist teaching in the junior classes.

No overall judgement can be made about standards or teaching in this subject since only two lessons were seen and there were no samples of work available. However, in the two lessons sampled there was a distinct difference between the Foundation Stage, Year 1 and Year 2 class and the other in Years 3 and 4 which was taught by the specialist. The music specialist also taught the recorder group and both sessions were very good with children achieving well and making good progress during their lesson.

The lesson for the infant children started well with an emphasis on listening skills and responses were good but the teacher found it difficult to plan for such a wide age group and the activity of learning to hold a percussion instrument and play it correctly, neither excited the Year 2 children nor extended their knowledge in this subject. Better use too could have been made of the teaching assistant. By contrast the specialist teacher used her knowledge and skills well when working with juniors. The lesson built on previous skills and children were involved in both appreciation and performance aspects. The quality of singing was good and the use of teacher demonstration, tuned instruments and tape recorder proved a successful combination. Because the preparation and organisation was very good and the teaching assistant worked alongside the teacher making effective use of her skills as a musician the direct teaching of skills resulted in higher standards than is usually expected for this age. These children clearly had developed a good musical knowledge and when challenged to put their musical accompaniment and singing together they followed the conductor and read notation well. Although the provision for juniors is very good this is not the case for infants; there is a weakness in this subject because the provision for Year 2 children is not working well, in contrast to the findings of the previous inspection.

Of particular note are the very good contributions made to this subject by the involvement of parents and the local community. The expertise of local singers and extra-curricular activities such as



recorder and dance groups add an effective dimension to such performances as 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

Provision in physical development is **very good** reflecting the effectiveness of the leadership and the commitment from all staff to give their best efforts to making this subject challenging, exciting and enjoyable.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Each school day always begins with an exercise session out of doors. The headteacher demonstrates his very good leadership as he encourages all staff and pupils to approach each day with energy and enthusiasm.
- The school achieves very high standards in a wide variety of sporting events.
- Most teaching is very good and is characterised by the teachers' high level of commitment to pupils and by excellent relationships between pupils and staff.
- Teachers assess pupils' performance well and as a result pupils are effectively supported in improving still further.

### **Commentary**

80. By the end of Years 2 and 6, standards are above those, that are typical for pupils of these ages. This is an improvement on the previous inspection when standards were broadly in line with national expectations. Almost all pupils achieve well and many perform particularly well when competing in a range of sporting activities. There is innovative practice to emphasise the importance of a healthy life. Two lessons were observed during the inspection and ample additional evidence from press cuttings and parents' questionnaires supports the view that the school's high standards of performance are a source of pride to both individuals and to the community.
81. It is apparent from the speed with which pupils rush to change into their sports kit first thing every morning that they are eager to start the day with the regular keep fit session. Warm up exercises are completed and then everyone completes a number of circuits around the field. Pupils who flag and those with special educational needs are well supported by staff or parents and no one feels the need to drop out. The session finishes with a game and the children comment that "This is great fun" and "It makes you feel good". Not only does this practice ensure that everyone is physically energised to start the day, but the whole community feels united with a strong sense of direction for what is to follow. Pupils have the opportunity to participate in a good range of sporting activities out of class and the take up and achievement is excellent. The pupils speak with pride about the sporting life of the school and their successes are increasing their motivation for playing sport.
82. Teaching was good in one lesson and satisfactory in the other. Relationships are very positive and in the best lesson the teacher helped pupils understand how they could improve their performance and how to judge their own success. Demonstrations are used very effectively and pupils listen acutely to advice in order to benefit. In one very good orienteering lesson the pupils were instructed to "Set the map" and they practised inside the classroom before going onto the field to apply their knowledge in a competitive situation. The complete lesson was enjoyable for everyone and the pupils put real effort into their running, even though it occurred on a hot afternoon and towards the end of the day.
83. Although there is no school hall to be used for sporting activities, the headteacher has made the improvement of sports provision a priority. During the summer a new and extensive hard court area has been developed in addition to the large school field. Gymnastics and dance lessons occur in the nearby village hall and the school has its own swimming pool, which is used extensively. This subject is very well led and managed.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

### *Inspection judgement*

### **Grade**

<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	2

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

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

<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3

<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	2

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