

# INSPECTION REPORT

**Puddletown CE First School**

Dorchester

LEA area: Dorset

Unique reference number: 113765

Headteacher: Mrs Vivienne Burgess

Lead inspector: Mrs Joyce Cox

Dates of inspection: 22<sup>nd</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> November 2004

Inspection number: 267526

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: First school  
School category: Voluntary controlled  
Age range of pupils: 4-9  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll: 121

School address: High Street  
Puddletown  
Dorchester  
Dorset  
Postcode: DT2 8RY

Telephone number: 01305 848206  
Fax number: 01305 848094

Appropriate authority: Governing body  
Name of chair of Mr Mark Warder  
governors:

Date of previous 25<sup>th</sup> January 1999  
inspection:

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Puddletown is a Church of England voluntary controlled first school, situated near Dorchester in Dorset. The school is smaller than other schools nationally. It caters for 121 pupils aged between four and nine years in five classes. Over 10 per cent of the pupils are from out of the catchment area because the school has a good reputation. Socio-economic circumstances are mixed with pupils coming from privately owned and rented homes. The number of pupils entitled to free schools meals is below the national average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements, varies from year to year. It is currently in line with the national average. The majority of pupils with special educational needs have learning difficulties and a small minority of pupils have emotional and behavioural difficulties. All the pupils are from white, English-speaking families. There are no pupils who speak English as an additional language. The school currently has two pupils from traveller families. An above average number of pupils join the school other than at the usual starting date. A new headteacher was appointed in January 2004 and a newly qualified teacher joined the staff this September to teach the Year 4 class. The children's attainment on entry to the school is similar to that of other four-year-old children nationally.

The school has received several awards in recent years including Investors in People and School Achievement Awards in 2002 and 2003 and is currently working towards achieving a second 'Healthy Schools' award.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Members of the inspection team |                  |                | Subject responsibilities   |
|--------------------------------|------------------|----------------|--|
| 25074                          | Joyce Cox        | Lead inspector | English<br>Science<br>Religious education<br>Geography<br>History<br>Physical education<br>Personal, social and health education and Citizenship   |
| 9173                           | Sarah McDermott  | Lay inspector  |  |
| 26945                          | Sylvia Gatehouse | Team inspector | Mathematics<br>Information and communication technology<br>Art and design<br>Design and technology<br>Music<br>Provision for children in the Foundation Stage<br>Special educational needs |

The inspection contractor was:

Altecq Education Limited  
102 Bath Road  
Cheltenham  
GL53 7JX

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

The school provides a **good** and rapidly improving quality of education in a warm, friendly ethos and succeeds in including every pupil in all aspects of school life. Pupils' achievement is good throughout the school. Teaching is good overall and much of it is very good. The headteacher provides good leadership and management. The school gives good value for money

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

- The commitment, energy and vision of the new headteacher inspire the school community and considerable improvements have taken place since her appointment.
- Pupils' achievement is good in English, science and information and communication technology (ICT) throughout the school.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good and teaching assistants are very effective.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very good and, as a result, pupils have very good attitudes, enjoy their lessons and behave very well.
- The school takes good care of all its pupils and has very good provision for children who experience learning difficulties.
- Although pupils achieve well in mathematics lessons, standards could be higher.
- Assessment information is not used sufficiently in some subjects to track pupils' attainment and achievement.
- Pupils have limited knowledge of what it means to live in a multicultural society.

The school has made good progress since the last inspection in terms of effectively tackling all the issues identified for improvement. Very good progress has been made in improving the standards in writing and ICT, which are now above average. The systems for monitoring and improving attendance have been improved considerably and attendance is now well above the national average. Teachers' planning has also improved and is now very good.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

#### Year 2 results

| Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with: | All schools |      |      | Similar schools |
|---|-------------|------|------|-----------------|
|   | 2002        | 2003 | 2004 | 2004            |
| Reading   | A*          | B    | B    | A               |
| Writing   | A           | C    | B    | B               |
| Mathematics   | A           | C    | C    | C               |

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average*

*Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals*

Achievement overall is **good**. Reception children achieve well because of the good provision and teaching they receive. Infant and junior pupils, including those with special educational needs and those from traveller families, also achieve well because of the good teaching throughout the school. The work seen during the inspection indicates that:

- children in the reception class are on course to meet the national expectations (Early Learning Goals) in all the areas of learning.

- infant pupils reach above average standards in English, science and ICT by the end of Year 2 and average standards in mathematics and music. Their achievement is good.
- Years 3 and 4 pupils reach above the expected levels in English, science and ICT and attain the expected levels in mathematics and music. Their achievement is good.
- standards are in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus in religious education at the end of Year 2 and Year 4. Pupils' achievement is good.

In 2004 the school was involved in the Key Stage 1 teacher assessment trials. The unvalidated results indicate that Year 2 pupils' attainment is above average in reading and writing and average in mathematics. This represents good achievement from an average starting point in reception. The Year 4 optional tests in 2004 also indicate that pupils' achievement is good as pupils attained well above average results in reading, above average results in writing and average results in mathematics. Pupils' attainment in mathematics is improving rapidly this term as a result of very good teaching, improved subject leadership and improved levels of resources.

Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is **very good** and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils have very good attitudes to their work. They enjoy their lessons, work hard and their behaviour is very good. Attendance is very good and punctuality is good.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a **good** quality of education. Teaching and learning are **good** throughout the school and in many lessons the teaching is very good. There is very good lesson planning, with interesting activities to capture pupils' interest. Teaching assistants are very effective and make a considerable contribution to pupils' good achievement. Assessment is satisfactory. Pupils' progress in English and mathematics can be clearly tracked from year to year but this is not developed in other subjects. The curriculum is good with very good use made of pupils' ICT skills in a number of subjects. Pupils have good opportunities to become involved in extra-curricular activities. The school takes good care of its pupils and has very good links with parents and the local community.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **good** overall. The headteacher provides good leadership and management and has swiftly and successfully established a strong, cohesive team whose members are committed to school improvement. Since her appointment in January 2004 the school has moved forward rapidly and effective structures are now in place to ensure that it continues to improve. School funds are targeted where they are most needed and the headteacher and the administration officer monitor spending carefully. Governance is satisfactory. Governors are keen and very supportive but many are new to their roles and responsibilities. There are some minor omissions in the prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents.

## PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parental support for the school is very good. Parents are very positive about the progress that their children make. They like the family ethos and feel that they are made very welcome in school and that they are encouraged to play a full part in their children's education. Pupils feel very happy at school. They like their teachers and enjoy their lessons.



They enjoy being members of the playground council and feel their views are always listened to and acted upon.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- raise standards further in mathematics;
- extend the use made of assessment information so that pupils' attainment and achievement can be tracked in all subjects;
- ensure pupils are fully prepared for life in our multicultural society;

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- ensure that the prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents contain the necessary information.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

Pupils' achievement is **good** overall throughout the school. Standards in English, science and ICT are above average in Year 2 and Year 4. Standards in mathematics are average in Year 2 and Year 4. Pupils with special educational needs and those from traveller families achieve well. Boys and girls do equally well.

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

- Standards in writing and ICT have improved considerably since the last inspection.
- Pupils have very good opportunities to use their ICT and literacy skills in all subjects.

#### **Commentary**

##### ***Foundation Stage***

1. From an average starting point, reception children do well and meet the expected standards for their age in all the areas of learning. Children's achievement is good because they settle quickly and happily into school. Reception staff know the children well and plan interesting activities which ensure children achieve well. Children find learning fun and interesting.

##### ***Key Stage 1***

2. Years 1 and 2 pupils continue to do well and reach above average standards in reading and writing and average standards in mathematics. Pupils' attainment in religious education is in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. As the table below indicates, inspection judgements are similar to the school's results in this year's national tests for seven-year-olds. Pupils also do better in tests than those pupils in similar schools. Indeed, improvements in test results have been better than the national trend over the last five years. This is because the good teaching makes pupils' learning meaningful and exciting and ensures that they work hard and achieve well.

#### ***Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2004***

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| Reading       | 17.0 (16.9)    | 15.8 (15.7)      |
| Writing       | 15.3 (15.2)    | 14.6 (14.6)      |
| Mathematics   | 16.3 (16.8)    | 16.2 (16.3)      |

*There were 30 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

### Years 3 and 4

3. An analysis of the 2004 Year 4 optional unvalidated tests reveals good achievement. Results were above the county and national averages in English, mathematics and science. Pupils' achievement in reading was particularly impressive, with over three-quarters of the pupils attaining Level 4, which is the national expectation for most eleven-year-olds. The attainment of the current Year 4 is above average in English and science and average (and improving rapidly) in mathematics. Pupils' attainment is in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus in religious education.
4. The school has made very good progress in improving standards in ICT throughout the school. Pupils attain standards that are above national expectations and their achievement is good. Improved subject leadership and management, resources and staff training have ensured that all elements of the ICT curriculum are fully covered. In addition, pupils are given very good opportunities to use their ICT skills in all subjects of the curriculum.
5. A similar position exists for pupils' application of their literacy skills. Pupils' attainment and achievement in writing have improved considerably since the last inspection due to good subject leadership, improved planning of pupils' work and high quality training from the local education authority. Teachers are extremely skilled at planning very good opportunities for pupils to record their work in all subjects in their own words, which accelerates pupils' overall achievements in literacy. One area noted for further improvement is some junior pupils' handwriting, which can sometimes be untidy.
6. Pupils with special educational needs are very well provided for and have individual education plans with clear and achievable targets. They make good progress towards meeting their targets. They achieve well, reaching standards commensurate with their abilities. The achievement of pupils from traveller families is also good and they quickly become integrated into all school activities.

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

The attendance of the pupils is **very good** and their punctuality is **good**. Pupils have **very good** attitudes and behaviour. Pupils' personal development is very good and this is a strength of the school.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Levels of attendance are extremely high.
- Pupils thoroughly enjoy school life and their learning.
- The school's very effective mission to promote personal development results in very well behaved and responsible pupils.
- The school is particularly successful at celebrating good work and raising the pupils' self-esteem.

- There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to experience the richness of living in a multicultural United Kingdom.

## **Commentary**

7. Pupils love coming to school because the staff are welcoming and lessons are fun. In class pupils listen attentively and get down to work very quickly. They are very productive and are keen to please their teachers. Pupils of all ages take part enthusiastically in activities at lunchtime. They especially look forward to Golden Time when they are rewarded for the week's good work and behaviour.
8. Since the last inspection the school has worked very effectively to improve the promotion of pupils' personal development. The social development of pupils is now very good. There are plenty of chances for pupils to take on responsibilities around the school and look after their school community and each other. The mixing of ages in the Rainbow Club for indoor lunchtime games means older and younger pupils learn to get on very well together. The playground council provides a valuable forum for pupils to put their ideas forward for playtimes. In class pupils now have much more scope to be in charge of their own learning and to make independent decisions.
9. Pupils' moral development is very good. Pupils are sensitively and firmly taught the difference between right and wrong. The full involvement of pupils in establishing their rules and the very good range of rewards means that the pupils have a clear understanding of appropriate behaviour. Pupils behave very well in class and it is rare to see learning disrupted by silly actions. Out in the playground they are exuberant and on occasion a little over boisterous. Bullying is very rare and, should it happen, is nipped firmly in the bud. There have been no exclusions in the school's history.
10. The spiritual development of the pupils has improved since the last inspection and is now very good. The close link with the parish church underpins the strong Christian ethos of respect for each other and thinking how others might feel. Of particular note is the impressive celebration of good work and actions. Pupils are encouraged to believe each of them has something to give or a talent to share. Consequently self-esteem is boosted and the pupils try even harder.
11. The cultural development of the pupils remains satisfactory since the last inspection. Through trips and visitors pupils have a good knowledge of their local Dorset culture, including the ways of life of the traveller community. Aesthetically they are learning to appreciate a wider range of music, art and dance. However, there are insufficient opportunities for the pupils to find out more about the backgrounds and cultures of the many other different ethnic groups who now make up a significant proportion of the population of the United Kingdom.

## **Attendance**

12. The school has increased its attendance levels significantly since the last inspection to the current impressive figure of over 98%. There was no unauthorised absence last year and authorised absence is very low compared with other primary schools. Over the last year the school has very successfully tightened up its monitoring systems and resolved the key issue concerning the systems to promote good attendance raised at

the last inspection. The school administration officer is on very good terms with parents and ensures they let her know immediately should their child be off school. Most pupils are brought to school on time, whether by parents or the local authority buses. The very good attendance levels are a major factor in the achievement of high standards of work.

**Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 2003 –2004 (%)**

| Authorised absence |     | Unauthorised absence |     |
|--------------------|-----|----------------------|-----|
| School data:       | 1.5 | School data:         | 0.0 |
| National data:     | 5.1 | National data:       | 0.4 |

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

**QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The school provides a **good** quality of education, which helps all pupils to achieve well. Teaching and learning are **good**. The curriculum is **good**. There are a **good** number of extra-curricular activities. Assessment is **satisfactory** and improving. The school takes **good** care of its pupils and has **very good** links with parents, other schools and the local community.

**Teaching and learning**

The quality of teaching and learning is **good** overall. Assessment is **satisfactory**.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers have very good relationships with pupils.
- All teachers plan work at just the right level for pupils of different abilities.
- Teachers’ very good relationships and high expectations of pupils’ work and behaviour lead to a calm and purposeful atmosphere for learning.
- Teachers and teaching assistants make very good use of ICT in all subjects.
- Junior pupils’ handwriting and the way some junior pupils present their work is an area for improvement.

**Commentary**

13. Teaching is better than at the time of the last inspection. Although the overall grade for teaching then was the same as it is now, the percentage of good teaching in the current inspection is much higher than previously. Teaching was consistently good in the reception class and has a significant impact on the speed with which children settle and upon their enthusiasm to learn. The monitoring of teaching and learning throughout the school since January 2004 has become much more focused and has formed part of the professional development programme for all teachers. This, together with new staff appointments and improved subject leadership and management, has helped to improve teaching. All parents who returned their questionnaires and those who attended the parents’ meeting quite rightly considered that teaching is good.

14. Very good relationships between teachers and pupils have a positive impact on pupils’ learning. There is a climate where teachers expect pupils to get down to work quickly

and this means that little time is lost and pupils get a good deal of work done. Pupils know exactly what is expected of them because teachers make clear the learning intention of the lesson and how long they have to complete their work. Pupils concentrate well during lesson introductions so the teacher can introduce new ideas quickly and assess whether or not pupils understand. Teachers are positive towards pupils so their comments about work or behaviour concentrate on the positive aspects rather than any negatives. This raises pupils' confidence and self-esteem, helps to get the most out of them and makes them better learners. Teachers trust pupils to work well together so that when opportunities arise for investigative or collaborative work they can allow them important time to discuss their ideas with others. This is especially important when planning investigative work in mathematics and science.

15. Teachers plan work very thoroughly and skilfully cater for the wide range of pupils of different ability within their classes. They are very aware of the higher attaining pupils and those with special educational needs, who receive interesting and exciting tasks which motivate and inspire them. Teachers' detailed planning often includes the use of the interactive whiteboard and computers in the ICT suite. During the inspection ICT was used very effectively in a range of subjects such as English, science, music and mathematics. Teachers' skilful use of ICT enlivens lessons and quickly engages pupils' interest so that they are motivated and very productive.
16. Several parents at the parents' meeting, although extremely happy with most aspects of the school, expressed some concern regarding some pupils' standards of handwriting and presentation. The school has just introduced a new handwriting scheme, which is intended to improve handwriting. However, inspectors agree with parents' concerns and feel that some junior pupils' handwriting and presentation could be neater.
17. Teachers and teaching assistants carefully take into account the particular requirements of pupils who have special needs. They pay attention to the targets identified in pupils' individual education plans and set tasks that suitably consolidate, challenge and extend pupils' learning. Pupils from traveller families are welcomed into the school by all staff and pupils and achieve well in lessons due to good support from staff and the local authority's traveller support service.
18. The quality of assessment is satisfactory. Teachers now have access to a wide variety of good quality assessment systems in English and mathematics. Pupils have begun to evaluate their own efforts, reflecting on how difficult or easy they found the tasks. Pupils' achievements in English and mathematics are noted and tracked. This helps teachers to identify the right level of work in lessons and recognise specific patterns of learning. The assessment information also ensures accuracy in setting targets for pupils to achieve in future in English and mathematics. However, the school has identified in its development plan that assessment in other subjects such as science and religious education is just beginning. Teachers' marking in English and in written work in other subjects is often good and is consistent across the school. Lesson planning is very good and clearly designed to cater well for pupils of all ability levels. Pupils' writing is carefully analysed and standards have improved considerably since the last inspection. Year 3 and 4 teachers' comments refer specifically to what the pupils were meant to learn. They are constructive and helpful, often referring to a particular sentence or paragraph that the teacher feels could be improved. Subsequent

efforts to re-write sections show that the teachers' comments and advice have been acted upon by the pupils and that work has improved.

### **Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 23 lessons**

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very poor |
|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| 1         | 9         | 9    | 4            |                |      |           |

*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.*

### **The curriculum**

The school's provision for the curriculum is **good**. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities. Resources and accommodation are satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The overall quality of the curriculum and teachers' short-term planning of all subjects have improved considerably since the last inspection.
- The curriculum for information and communication technology is very good.
- There is good enrichment of the curriculum.
- The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- Subject leaders are beginning to make full use of their expertise.
- The transition between the curriculum in the Foundation Stage and Year 1 is improving.

### **Commentary**

19. The school offers all subjects of the national curriculum and enough time is allocated to each. Statutory requirements are met for religious education, sex education and drugs awareness. Teachers' planning is very good, including clear aims so pupils know what they are going to learn in each lesson. Teachers meticulously prepare different tasks that meet pupils' abilities, including those with special needs and those who are more able. Teaching assistants and voluntary helpers have a clear understanding of the work they are to supervise.
20. Resources for mathematics and for information and communication technology are much improved and are having a very positive effect on raising standards. Teachers make very good use of the newly established computer suite so pupils' attainment is rapidly rising throughout the school. Teachers and support staff are very skilled at using the interactive whiteboard in the ICT suite.
21. Visitors, clubs, study trips and celebrations make a good contribution to the enrichment of the curriculum. Recorder clubs and sporting clubs provide good opportunities for pupils to enhance their special talents and interests, as well as developing their personal and social skills. The school makes good use of local places of interest or natural beauty and there are very good links with the middle school.
22. Sharing expertise between staff is a particularly strong feature in developing the curriculum. For example, the subject leader in music teaches every class. This arrangement provides good opportunities for all staff to improve their own understanding because she shares her own good subject knowledge. The school makes very good provision for instrumental tuition by engaging the county's peripatetic service in percussion, strings, keyboard and brass teaching.
23. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported in their learning, especially in literacy, because there is very good provision in class and in short withdrawal sessions for

particular help. The very small number of travellers' children receive a good curriculum through regular support from teaching assistants and visiting specialist staff. Sufficient time is allocated in the computer suite for each class to develop pupils' ICT skills and to enliven other subjects such as mathematics, science, music and history.

24. Staff are working together to improve the links between the provision in the Foundation Stage and the curriculum in Year 1 so that pupils' attainment and achievement proceeds smoothly without fragmentation at the time of transfer. This is an ongoing area for development that the school has already identified.
25. The accommodation and resources are satisfactory. The school is a very attractive 1864 listed building but with damp walls, draughty windows and four classes accommodated in temporary classrooms, which the school feels is not designed for 2004 education. Heating, repair and maintenance costs are obviously high. The school has no playing field but makes good use of the nearby middle school facilities and the local recreation ground. Good use is also made of the middle school swimming pool by Years 3 and 4 pupils, as the school's own swimming pool is currently out of action and extremely costly to repair and maintain.
26. The school makes the very best use of all its accommodation and has recently successfully expanded its ICT suite to provide very good ICT opportunities for all its pupils. This considerably improved accommodation, together with good subject leadership, has had a tremendous impact on pupils' attainment and achievement in ICT. The school has also successfully reviewed all its available internal space to provide an improved teacher resource area, improved curriculum storage and a refurbished library. The external areas are currently being skilfully improved with the valuable assistance of the Dorset Garden Trust and the parents' and pupils' 'Groundforce' team.

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

The care, welfare, health and safety of the pupils are **good**. The school provides **good** support and guidance based on monitoring. The school listens very carefully to pupils' suggestions and concerns.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school pays very close attention to the pastoral needs of each individual pupil.
- The pupils are taught very effectively how to look after and keep themselves safe.
- Pupils are very well involved in school life and feel any worries are listened to.
- Children new to the school are settled in very effectively.

### **Commentary**

27. The practical needs of the pupils are properly met. Child protection procedures are good. Nearly all staff have a certificate in basic first aid, but it is not sufficient to have only one staff member with a full qualification. The school has very good formal systems to check the building for potential hazards. Even though there is no caretaker, the headteacher is quick to organise necessary repair and maintenance from local contractors or parents. As many pupils go home on school buses the staff are very careful to supervise pupils onto the correct transport so they arrive home safe and sound.

28. All staff know their pupils very well and give them high levels of pastoral support. Parents are very pleased with the way the school looks after their children's individual needs. Very close communication between home and school means teachers can give pupils sympathetic and practical assistance in the full knowledge of background circumstances. Staff are quick to notice if pupils are unhappy or not doing as well as they should be. Teachers and support staff work very well together to get the pupil back on track and enjoying their learning. Children from traveller families are supported well with the effective input of the County traveller support service. Academically teachers give good support to their pupils. However, although assessment procedures are good in English and mathematics, they are currently just being developed in other subjects.
29. The school has made a very good start in establishing personal, social and health education (PSHE). Especially effective is the promotion of personal safety with the proximity of the seaside, railway lines and roads. The school is very successful in teaching the pupils to be aware of potential danger and to know how to act in emergencies. The very useful link with the County's 'Streetwise Safety Centre' means all the pupils have 'hands on' experience to consolidate their learning about personal health and safety. The school is working methodically to ensure all pupils gradually and effectively build on their personal education as they progress through the school.
30. There are high levels of trust in the school. The staff establish very good relationships with the pupils and their parents so pupils feel comfortable to turn to adults in school if they are sad or worried. Teachers value the views of the pupils and are keen to listen to their suggestions so pupils grow in confidence and are willing to share their ideas. The pupils' independence and chance to take the initiative have improved with the increased involvement in running their own events (such as the table top sales to raise money for playground equipment) and in understanding their own learning targets in English and mathematics. The playground council gives pupils a good grounding in citizenship and an entirely appropriate introduction to participating in school management.
31. The very well organised and sensitive settling in of new children means that they are soon able to cope very maturely with school routines. Parents are very appreciative of the welcome given to their young children. The close liaison with the adjacent pre-school and the afternoon sessions for the 'Puddleducks' pre-school children in the actual reception classroom allow the children to become familiar with their new surroundings and adults before they start.

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

The school has **very good** links with parents. Links with the community and other schools and colleges are also **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school has a very strong partnership with parents to support the pupils' learning.
- There are minor omissions in the governors' annual report to parents and in the prospectus.
- The school plays an active part in the village of Puddletown.



- Links with other schools through the Dorchester Area School Partnership (DASP) are particularly productive.
- Annual reports are not sufficiently clear on the progress made by pupils over the year in each subject.

## Commentary

32. The school has worked very successfully to improve its partnership with parents significantly. Parents are kept well abreast of school events via the regular newsletter (introduced since the last inspection) and the very 'user friendly' web site. The prospectus and annual governors' report give a very good flavour of the school, but omit a few legally required items. The school ensures that parents are familiar with what is being taught in the classroom so they can share in their children's learning from home. Recent workshops on mathematics and reading and an open day about ICT teaching and learning have given parents a good insight into current teaching methods. Homework routines are clear to parents. The concerns of a few parents who believe that they do not receive sufficient information on their children's progress are partially justified. The parent teacher consultations are a good opportunity for parents to find out how their children are getting on. However, the written annual reports do not give parents a sufficiently clear message on how their children have progressed in each subject. The school puts great store on the views of parents to help it plan for the future. The headteacher carries out regular consultations, follows up any concerns and feeds back the results to the parents. The positive involvement of parents in their children's education is a major factor in their good achievement.
33. Parents provide very welcome practical and financial support to the school. The very active Friends of Puddletown School (FOPS) raise significant funds for extra resources and organise very successful events to rally support for the school. The school is very successful in encouraging parents to share their many talents to help the school and their children's education. A very good number of parents help in school with reading workshops, accompanying trips and running school clubs. The physical hard work of the parents' 'Groundforce' group has greatly helped in the development of the outside areas.
34. Links with the local community are very good and have improved a great deal since the last inspection. The school is now very well involved in village life. Pupils extend their learning in subjects such as history and geography by studying the local area and the strong link with the parish church benefits their understanding of Christianity. The pupils take part enthusiastically in the village carnival and flower festival as well as collecting for charities in the locality. Through their active involvement in the village, pupils are positively learning the pleasure and benefits of a mutually supportive community.
35. The school gains a great deal from being a member of the Dorset Area Schools Partnership. Pupils recently have had the chance to compete in sports, share in musical productions and participate in country dancing. Teachers gain from shared professional development and the input of experts in subjects such as ICT and literacy. Pupils transfer very confidently to the middle school because they have many opportunities to visit their next school and get to know the staff. The very close ties

with the on-site pre-school mean that children moving up are supported very well as they start full-time school.

## **Leadership and management**

The overall leadership and management of the school are **good**. The governance of the school is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The new headteacher has a very clear sense of direction and has invigorated the school.
- The headteacher's leadership and management of the curriculum and teaching are very good.
- There is a shared determination among staff and governors to succeed in raising standards.
- The school is committed to educational inclusion and shows very good concern for the needs of individuals.

### **Commentary**

36. The new headteacher has worked very hard to bring about many changes in less than a year. She has introduced many very good initiatives, which have brought new life to many aspects of the school, inspiring staff with renewed and more focused enthusiasm. She has been careful to manage change with sensitivity, mindful of the workload of all staff, but has remained steadfast in her determination to raise standards in teaching and learning and to improve the curriculum. There is clear evidence that she is being wholly successful in realising her aims. For example, she releases senior staff by teaching their classes and efficiently deploys the deputy headteacher similarly, enabling subject leaders to get to grips with their responsibilities in developing the curriculum. Parents are eager to register appreciation of the changes the headteacher has instigated, describing her as a 'breath of fresh air'. Consequently, there is a positive spirit of teamwork among staff, parents and governors. The school has a very happy and purposeful ethos and runs smoothly. There are many examples of mutual support and shared expertise between staff in subjects such as music and information and communication technology during lessons, as well as before and after school.
37. The school is whole-hearted in its stance on educational inclusion and the needs of individuals to succeed. The provision for travellers' children and those who have special needs is very good and is carefully managed and monitored by the headteacher. For instance, she has established very good documentation systems and deploys teaching assistants to work with individual pupils every afternoon, maximising the use of their time.
38. The leadership of other key staff is satisfactory overall because they have only recently been enabled to perform their roles with alacrity. They have made a good start and contributed manageable action plans to the school improvement plan, but assessment systems are not yet embedded and in full use. There are, however, notable exceptions. The co-ordinators for English and information and communication technology are dynamic and determined to raise standards of attainment through

implementing effective monitoring and reviewing procedures. The co-ordinator for music shares her good subject knowledge with all members of staff when she teaches music to their classes, providing them with good opportunities to gain in knowledge, understanding and confidence. The Foundation Stage is managed well and children get off to a good start.

39. The headteacher is the co-ordinator for special educational needs. She has established very good assessment systems that include reports and records for all pupils with special educational needs. She has drawn up a new policy to guide and direct the school's overall approach in managing this aspect of the school's work as efficiently and effectively as possible. She has organised timetables for teaching assistants to support pupils regularly, especially with reading, writing and spelling. Evidence shows that this action is being very effective in raising not only pupils' attainment but their self-esteem and self-confidence. The school takes a strong stance on special educational needs and is totally committed to the principles of educational inclusion.
40. Many governors are new to their responsibilities and are enrolled in forthcoming training to help them understand their duties, for instance in writing their annual report to parents, monitoring the budget and operating best value principles. They are keen and already show a developing appreciation of the strengths of the school and where there is need for further improvement. They have considerable potential to be an effective team in helping the school to shape its vision and direction. The day-to-day routines are efficiently managed so the school runs very smoothly. The administration officer provides a very warm and friendly welcome to all parents, visitors and pupils. Resources are well organised, the school is very clean and the grounds are well kept.
41. The main aids to improvement are the leadership and management qualities of the new headteacher, the strengths of her staff and the whole-hearted commitment of all staff and the governing body to raising standards. The capacity to succeed is high. The main barriers to improvement are the constraints of working in a very attractive but very old building and the possible reduction in pupil numbers caused by falling rolls and subsequent budget implications.

### ***Financial information***

42. Financial management is good and adheres satisfactorily to the principles of achieving best value for money in order to achieve educational priorities. The school provides good value for money.

*Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004*

| <i>Income and expenditure (£)</i> |          |
|-----------------------------------|----------|
| Total income                      | 349,957  |
| Total expenditure                 | 345,692  |
| Expenditure per pupil             | 2,904.97 |

| <i>Balances (£)</i>                 |       |
|-------------------------------------|-------|
| Balance from previous year          | 4,657 |
| Balance carried forward to the next | 8,922 |
|                                     |       |

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

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

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **good**.

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

- Pre-admission arrangements are very good and ensure a smooth beginning to school.
- Consistently good teaching ensures that children make good progress.
- Children achieve well in all six areas of the curriculum.
- Staff work together effectively to provide a positive and stimulating learning environment.

#### **Commentary**

43. Attainment on entry is broadly average, although there is a wide variation that includes some more able children and some who have special educational needs. Under the good leadership and management of the co-ordinator, support staff and regular voluntary helpers successfully establish a welcoming and happy ethos. Parents are delighted with the comprehensive arrangements that ease children's transition from pre-school to school. Children make good progress and achieve well because of the consistently high quality of teaching and very good planning in all six areas of the Foundation Stage curriculum. Children with special needs, and those who are more able, are identified swiftly so their progress is secured. Parents are kept informed about their children's work and achievements through regular newsletters, reports and meetings, and they particularly like the daily informal opportunities when staff are available for the exchange of information. Assessment procedures are very good and used very well to plot children's future learning. The school is working hard to perfect its transfer arrangements between the reception and Year 1 class. The accommodation is somewhat cramped but staff have made good use of it and the area is bright with attractive and interesting displays of children's work. Although there is no hard-surfaced area adjacent to the class, very good use is made of a delightful garden nearby throughout the year and daily opportunities on the large, level school playground are timetabled for outdoor physical development, weather permitting. The school has maintained the good provision seen during the last inspection.

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

Provision for the development of children's personal, social and emotional development is **good**.

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

- Good pre-admission arrangements ensure a smooth, happy beginning to school.
- Consistently good teaching ensures that children make good progress.
- Behaviour and attitudes are very good.

#### **Commentary**

44. Regular opportunities, including weekly visits, before admission provide the majority of children with a very good idea of what school life will be like. Consequently they know the staff and each other well and settle swiftly and happily to daily routines. They are very familiar with the school's expectations of behaviour so they quickly develop very positive attitudes to each other and their work. They rapidly make friends and get along together happily, willingly sharing toys and other resources such as the computer, and take turns patiently. Children play alongside each other co-operatively, for instance in the role-play doctor's surgery. Staff show genuine care for children who are new to the school and therefore finding it harder to adjust to the school's routines and expectations than others. The majority achieve well and are well on course to reach the early learning goals by the end of the year because of consistently good teaching. The more able children are well on course to exceed the expected standards.

### **Communication, language and literacy**

Provision for children's development in communication, language and literacy is **good**.

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

- The quality of teaching is consistently high and the teacher's planning is very good.
- Staff continuously promote the development of speaking and listening skills.
- Parents are closely involved in helping their children to enjoy books.

#### **Commentary**

45. Good teaching gets children off to a successful start in developing their speaking and listening, reading and writing skills. There are frequent opportunities for children to listen to adults and each other when they all gather together, for instance at registration and story times, and when their teacher introduces them to the conventions of reading by using 'Big Books'. Skilful questioning by staff promotes conversations and very good planning and assessment procedures are used very well to record children's progress and achievement. In discussions, and in other whole class activities, the teaching assistant is not always as interactive with pupils as she could be. Parents throng the classroom every morning when books are exchanged, ready for the night's homework of sharing the book together. Children are introduced to letters and their sounds and regularly practise writing both formally and informally, for example on whiteboards or in damp sand. They are beginning to make good use of their developing skills when making get-well cards, where they write messages inside such as 'Get well soon, Mummy'. A few children are better at speaking than listening. However, the majority of children make good progress and achieve well because of the good teaching. The majority are well on course to reach the early learning goals by the end of the year. The more able children are well on course to exceed the early learning goals by the end of the year.

### **Mathematical development**

Provision for children's mathematical development is **good**.

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

- Children get off to a good start because of good teaching and very good assessment.
- Practical activities enliven children's learning in mathematics.

- There are good links with other areas of learning.

## Commentary

46. Children achieve well and make good progress because the quality of teaching is good and assessment systems are used well to plot further learning. They enjoy their mathematical activities because they are fun and practical and they use colourful and attractive resources. Good links with other subjects such as literacy, art and music reinforce children's knowledge and understanding in relevant ways, such as singing 'Five Green Speckled Frogs' and painting 'Five Currant Buns'. Children have good opportunities to develop their mathematical vocabulary when playing with the sand and water, correctly using words such as 'heavy', 'light', 'full' and 'empty' and make good use of computers to consolidate their growing knowledge of number and shape.

## Knowledge and understanding of the world

Provision for children's knowledge and understanding of the world is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have many exciting opportunities to stimulate their interest in the world around them.
- The school makes very good use of its environment and community.
- Very good information and technology resources are used very well.
- There are limited opportunities to use programmable robots.

## Commentary

47. Children enjoy a rich curriculum in this area of learning. Particularly impressive are the opportunities for children to express awe and wonder in events they witness in their day-to-day learning, such as discovering a newly laid egg or experiencing the power of the wind when holding the string of a kite. The school maximizes the use of its environment throughout the year, encouraging children's scientific knowledge and understanding of plants and animals, for example, through planting bulbs, studying mini-beasts and observing chickens. They gain an insight into people's lives both in the village through going on a 'sound walk' and around the world and investigate the taste, smell and feel of real fruits such as pineapples. In visiting a farm and the seaside, they gain an understanding of contrasting localities and how these affect people's lives. A number of visitors stimulate children's interest and understanding of the work that adults do, including paramedics, policemen and dental nurses. The recently improved computer suite provides children with regular opportunities to practise their keyboard skills, for instance in designing a house or an island, although there is no resident programmable robot to extend the children's techniques in control technology. The majority of children make very good progress and achieve very well. They are well on course to exceed the early learning goals by the end of the year because of the very good teaching and the rich curriculum.

## Physical development

Provision for children's physical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good use is made of the school's level playground.
- There are regular timetabled lessons in gymnastics in the school hall.
- There are frequent opportunities for children to develop their dexterity.

### **Commentary**

48. The majority of children make good progress and achieve well because of good teaching and are on course to reach the early learning goals by the end of the year. Weather permitting, children have daily lessons in physical development outside on the school's playground and access to a good range of wheeled toys such as tricycles and scooters. They also use a range of small apparatus such as hoops and balls and learn to skip, jump and run with increasing accuracy and control. In the hall they develop their climbing and balancing skills using a wide range of apparatus such as climbing frames and ladders. In class, there are many chances to develop their finer movements, using their fingers nimbly on the computer keyboard, when completing jigsaws, in writing practice or when using construction apparatus. The school makes good use of its facilities to compensate for the lack of an adjacent hard-surfaced area that would permit spontaneous outdoor play activities.

### **Creative development**

The provision for children's creative development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Exciting activities stimulate children's interest in this area of learning.
- There is good teaching in music by the subject leader.
- Good links are made between art and information technology.
- There are limited opportunities to experience multi-cultural art, music and dance.

### **Commentary**

49. Children enjoy a good range of stimulating activities in music, literature, role-play and art. Good teaching by the music specialist enables children to develop their singing skills and to explore the many different sounds they can make using a sheet of paper. She makes very good links with literacy as she reads a poem about windy weather that the children enhance with suitable sound effects. The role play area ranges from a doctor's surgery to a pirate's galleon, while a portable puppet theatre enables children to re-enact favourite stories for themselves. These activities provide good opportunities for children to develop their speaking and listening skills as they work together. Good use of computers enhances children's art skills, allowing them to make good and confident use of their keyboard skills as they choose colour and brush size when designing their own pictures. There are not many opportunities for children to gain experience of the art, music and dance of other cultures, although their knowledge and understanding of their own culture is secured through taking part in school celebrations and performances throughout the school year. The majority of children make good progress and achieve well because of good teaching and are on course to reach the early learning goals by the end of the year.



## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in reading and writing are above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 4.
- Infant pupils use phonic skills well to work out new words when reading.
- There are very good opportunities for all pupils to use their literacy skills in other subjects.
- Some junior pupils' handwriting and the way they present their work is untidy.

#### Commentary

50. The standards seen during the inspection were above average overall by the end of Year 2 and by the end of Year 4. In the national trial of teacher assessments in 2004 for pupils aged seven, standards were well above average in reading and above average in writing. The trend over the last three years has been well above the national trend in reading and above in writing, indicating good achievement from an average starting point in reception.
51. Year 4 pupils' results in the unvalidated optional tests indicate good achievement in English in 2004. Pupils' results were above the local education authority's figures in reading and writing with over three-quarters of the pupils attaining Level 4, which is the expected level for eleven-year-old pupils. Pupils' achievement is good.
52. Achievement in speaking and listening is good overall for pupils by the ages of seven and nine and the majority of pupils reach the expected levels by the end of Year 2 and Year 4. All pupils listen carefully when others are speaking. Higher-attaining junior pupils discuss their learning maturely and sensibly, with a good awareness of speaking and listening conventions. Teachers and support staff work hard to ensure that pupils understand specific words in texts and encourage pupils to respond to questions in full sentences. All teachers encourage pupils to discuss their learning together with a 'talk' partner, which promotes good speaking and listening skills.
53. Pupils' achievement is very good in reading. Higher-attaining pupils in Year 2 and Year 4 reach well above average standards in reading and all pupils, including those with special educational needs, enjoy books and listening to stories. Pupils are very enthusiastic about books and older pupils know how to skim and scan texts for information. Some pupils with special educational needs read competently, but their comprehension skills are weaker and they find it hard to use inference and deduction to see beyond the facts in their stories. Year 2 pupils enjoy reading very much and are skilled at using letter sounds to deduce new vocabulary. The school's decision to hold a reading workshop every morning in each class makes a significant contribution to pupils' very good achievement and effectively improves their comprehension skills.
54. Pupils' attainment and achievement in writing have improved dramatically since the last inspection. Standards are above average at the end of Year 2 and Year 4. Good subject leadership, renewed enthusiasm and expertise have improved writing

standards. Teachers' planning is very good and has improved considerably as writing tasks are skilfully provided which match pupils' varying levels of ability. Junior pupils write in a variety of different ways and produce impressive poetry and interesting narratives. However, some parents expressed a view that some older pupils' handwriting and presentation of their work required improvement and inspectors support these views.

55. Teaching and learning were good overall in the lessons seen. Teaching assistants provide very good support in literacy lessons, particularly for pupils with special educational needs and those from traveller families, as they ensure that pupils understand the task and explain any unfamiliar vocabulary, rephrasing information when necessary. Teachers' planning is very detailed and clear. Teachers share simplified learning objectives with the pupils so that they know exactly what they are going to learn. Expectations for work and behaviour are very high and teachers provide interesting and enticing activities which ensure pupils are motivated and enthusiastic and work very hard. Teachers are extremely skilful at using ICT in literacy lessons. For instance, Year 3 pupils achieve very well when learning about writing text with the correct speech marks and punctuation because of the teacher's highly effective use of the interactive whiteboard, which inspires and fascinates the pupils. Teachers are also highly adept at providing pupils with very useful checklists for ensuring pupils have included the correct features when writing speech (Year 3) or when learning how to sequence instructions (Year 2).
56. The co-ordinator provides good leadership and management. She leads by example with her own outstanding literacy teaching and enthusiasm. She has monitored literacy lessons and has studied test results to identify areas for improvement. She has achieved a good deal since January 2004 and has correctly identified the next steps to improve English even further. The school has made very good improvement since the last inspection, particularly in terms of tracking pupils' progress and in improving and maintaining above average standards in reading and writing at the end of Year 2 and Year 4.

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

57. The use of language and literacy across the curriculum is very good throughout the school. Pupils are encouraged to record their work in their own words in all subjects and very few worksheets are used. The skills taught in literacy lessons are used well in other subjects. Pupils produce well-written accounts in history and Year 4 pupils are developing a clear style for recording their observations in science relevant to the investigation being undertaken. All pupils use speaking and listening skills well in class discussions and with their 'talk partners', knowing and adhering to conventions of speaking such as turn taking and asking relevant questions. This was very evident in a Year 4 PSHE lesson where pupils maturely and sensibly discussed what they had learnt about keeping safe after a visit to 'Streetwise' in Bournemouth.

### **MATHEMATICS**

Provision for mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are rising because of high quality teaching.
- The new leadership and management of the subject are good.
- Resources are being improved.

## Commentary

58. The scrutiny of pupils' past work indicates satisfactory achievement over time, resulting in average standards by the end of Years 2 and 4. However, in lessons now, pupils' achievement is good and they are demonstrating above average standards in their current work.
59. The overall quality of teaching is good. In Year 3 it is excellent. Teachers make very good use of the interactive whiteboard and computers to enhance pupils' understanding, for instance of equivalent fractions. The best teaching includes clear aims, a strong sense of purpose, a lively pace and high expectations. Lessons end with evaluations checking pupils' views about what they have learnt. Pupils enjoy their lessons and work hard because their work is planned very well to meet their needs, including those with special needs and those who are more able. Teaching assistants are well deployed in supporting small groups or individual pupils. Pupils' presentation of work in Year 1 is satisfactory. Elsewhere it is good overall but in Year 4 it is very good. Teachers' marking is good and good use is beginning to be made of assessment and tracking systems with pupils' targets in place.

## Example of outstanding practice

In a Year 3 lesson of outstanding quality, pupils contribute very confidently and accurately when learning about equivalent fractions. The main aims of the lessons are made very clear to all pupils, as are the teacher's high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour. Pupils' subsequent learning and high achievement is remarkable, taking into consideration the challenging level of the lesson. The commanding initial delivery by the teacher, the very brisk pace, the probing questioning to challenge and assess all pupils and the very skilled use of an interactive whiteboard inspire all children to concentrate with avid interest and achieve to the highest level of which they are capable. The end of the lesson is used very well to explore and extend pupils' understanding of fractions in a very positive and encouraging manner.

60. Leadership and management of mathematics are good. The new headteacher has just taken over the leadership and management of the subject. She has taken swift action to raise standards through conducting a thorough review of the curriculum and monitoring the quality of teachers' short-term planning. Resources for mathematics have improved considerably since the last inspection. There is a clear action plan with targets to plot future development in the subject. Good assessment and tracking systems are newly established and are beginning to be used effectively in setting targets for pupils to achieve. Improvement since the last inspection is good.

## Mathematics across the curriculum

61. The use of mathematics in other subjects is good. In history and geography, pupils make good use of number lines and graphs. They construct tables and charts in science to record results and write interpretations of their findings. In music, pupils are encouraged to count accurately and in information and communication technology they make good use of their mathematical knowledge to interpret pie charts, calculate money sums and compare equivalent fractions.

## SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a very good focus on developing and extending pupils' investigation skills.
- Very good use is made of pupils' literacy skills to record their science work.
- Teachers are very skilled at ensuring pupils understand specific scientific vocabulary.
- Assessment procedures are not yet fully developed.

### Commentary

62. Standards attained by the current Year 2 and Year 4 pupils are above average and achievement is good. No significant difference is noted between the attainment of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs and those from traveller families achieve well in relation to their ability. In the 2004 teacher assessments almost all the pupils in Year 2 attained the expected Level 2 with a quarter of the pupils attaining the higher Level 3, representing good achievement.
63. The quality of teaching is good and, as a result, pupils' achievement and learning are good. Teachers in all classes teach science lessons with a high proportion of practical and investigative activities, which have a clear focus in teachers' very detailed planning. As a result, pupils are developing a good understanding of living things, materials, forces and light and sound. They are successfully learning to predict what might happen when they investigate and to explain why things happen in their results. Teachers plan exciting activities, such as investigating sources of light in a dark place, which capture pupils' interest so that they are keen and very enthusiastic about science. In discussions, Year 2 pupils recalled, with obvious enjoyment, learning where different materials come from.
64. Teachers and teaching assistants provide good support for pupils with special educational needs and those from traveller families. They are skilled at keeping pupils with special needs interested and motivated by asking and clarifying questions to make them think. As a result, these pupils achieve well in their science work. Teachers work very hard to make sure the correct scientific vocabulary is used in lessons and that pupils understand what the words mean and put them into context, which accelerates pupils' learning. For instance, Year 3 pupils achieved very well when recalling and correctly defining words such as 'waterproof,' 'absorbent' and 'translucent' when learning about the various properties of different materials. Pupils record their science work carefully in their own words. This offers them very good opportunities to practise their literacy skills. Some junior pupils' handwriting and presentation is rather untidy.
65. The co-ordinator provides satisfactory leadership and management. She has developed a clear and effective action plan which focuses on raising pupils' attainment and achievement even further. Monitoring of teaching and learning is not yet in place and the school is currently developing assessment procedures in science so that pupils' attainment and achievement can be tracked from year to year. Pupils use their information and communication technology skills very well in science lessons. There has been good improvement to the science curriculum since the last inspection.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision for information and communication technology is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Resources, standards and subject leadership have all improved considerably since the last inspection.
- The use of information and communication technology in other subjects is very good.
- Pupils enjoy information and communication technology and are eager to learn.

### **Commentary**

66. The provision for information and communication technology is a strength of the school. Pupils in Year 2 and Year 4 achieve very well and are reaching standards of attainment that are above national expectations. Standards of attainment are consistently above expectations throughout the school because the quality of teaching is either good or very good and new resources are attractive and sufficient to support whole class work.
67. The high quality of teaching comprises clear aims, high expectations, a strong sense of purpose and timely intervention to encourage or help pupils. Lessons end with good summaries, leaving pupils with a strong sense of achievement. Teachers make very good use of a new interactive whiteboard to enhance their teaching. They confidently demonstrate new skills that pupils then practise on their own keyboards, but also use the whiteboard very successfully to illustrate other subject areas. For instance, pupils' learning is secured and their progress accelerated when studying equivalent fractions because the teacher's excellent use of the whiteboard makes her explanations crystal clear.
68. The high quality of teaching means that pupils make rapid progress and achieve very well in all strands of the ICT curriculum. Their skills are being built upon securely so that they gain confidence and willingly rise to demanding challenges that their teachers place before them. The frequent lessons devoted to computer studies provide pupils with a wide range of skills that they confidently transfer to other subject areas. For example, reception children explore composing tunes using the mouse with increasing skill to alter the pitch of their instrumental music. Pupils save and retrieve their work, change the size, colour and type of font, and import pictures to enliven their work. They seek information from databases and make good use of CD-ROMs and the Internet to enhance their learning, for instance in history when comparing seaside holidays in the past with those of today. They exchange email with a neighbouring school, have set up a lively website and make good use of cameras to record their activities, for example on study trips and in extra-curricular events like concerts and plays.
69. Pupils are very keen and interested in their work and their achievement is very good. Their progress in lessons is accelerated because they are highly motivated. Their behaviour and attitudes are very good. Pupils take turns, co-operate and collaborate extremely sensibly, showing appreciation of others' efforts. They show respect for the resources and handle them with care; for instance, the digital camera is treated properly.

70. The quality of leadership and management is good. The co-ordinator has very good subject knowledge and her action plan has clear targets for future development. Every teacher has clear guidelines to ensure continuity between classes and to secure the use of information and communication technology in other subjects. The new assessment systems are good but are not yet fully used in all classes. Improvement since the last inspection, when standards were judged to be unsatisfactory, has been very good.

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

71. Very good use is made of ICT in other subjects. Teachers plan very carefully how they will use information and communication technology in all their lessons. Consequently pupils quickly learn that ICT skills can support their work in other subjects. Pupils' work reveals that they can use computers in a considerable number of ways: for presentation of work, investigations, research and data management. Teachers, support staff and pupils make particularly good use of digital cameras in many subjects. For instance in religious education, Year 1 pupils have produced an attractive book about the local church using digital photographs and word processed text.

## **HUMANITIES**

### **History and geography**

72. These subjects were sampled because no lessons were seen in either subject and there was insufficient evidence to make a judgement about provision overall. Pupils' work in exercise books and on display in both subjects was analysed. Standards in history by the age of seven and nine are above national expectations and pupils' achievement is good. Year 1 pupils enjoy comparing the seaside today with that of 100 years ago. Year 2 pupils learn about Guy Fawkes and write sensitive pieces of work about Remembrance Sunday. Pupils in Year 3 learn about the Romans and the Saxons, whilst Year 4 pupils thoroughly enjoyed a World War Two day when staff and pupils dressed in 1940s clothes and made carrot cookies using wartime recipes. Members of the local community shared their wartime memories with the pupils, who enjoyed asking them questions. Pupils record their history and geography work in their own words and there are very few worksheets used, which accelerates pupils' overall attainment and achievement in literacy.
73. Pupils attain above the national expectations in geography and their achievement is good. Good use is made of the local environment to further pupils' geographical skills. Pupils are very interested in learning about the physical features of their immediate locality and Year 2 pupils, after conducting a traffic survey, have written to the local authorities to ask if a zebra crossing could be installed outside the village shop. Junior pupils also investigate the local area and study a village in India. Coverage of the curriculum in each subject is good and very good use is made of pupils' ICT skills in both subjects.

### **Religious education**

The provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Attractive displays in classrooms and around the school enhance pupils' learning.
- There are few visits to different places of worship.

## **Commentary**

74. Standards overall are in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus at the end of Year 2 and Year 4 and pupils' achievement is good.
75. Teaching and learning are good. Year 2 pupils achieve well when learning about Advent and realise why it is important to Christians. They clearly enjoy making a class Advent calendar, particularly when adding glitter to their pictures! They have also made attractive Hanukah cards. Teachers are very skilled at enabling pupils to think and reflect carefully about 'What matters to a Christian'. For instance, Year 3 pupils displayed very good speaking and listening skills when they interviewed a visitor from Dorchester Family Church about what things are important to him. They learn that it's not money or pretty girlfriends but doing what God wants.
76. There are good links between religious education and music. Each class is encouraged to perform in the Christmas concert, using the knowledge and skills learnt during their music lessons and hymn practices as a basis for their contributions. Parents, governors and pupils report that these concerts are very popular events. Attractive and thought provoking religious displays such as a very striking Year 2 display about Remembrance Day enhance the curriculum. Good use is made of pupils' literacy skills to record their work and ICT is used well for research and word processing.
77. The co-ordinator provides satisfactory leadership and management. The co-ordinator monitors teachers' planning effectively and is currently devising assessment systems and awaiting the new local authority agreed syllabus next year. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. The school makes very good use of the local church in religious education lessons but there are very few visits to or visitors from other world faiths, which restricts pupils' multicultural education.

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

### **Art and design**

78. During the inspection no lessons were observed in art and design. Evidence gathered from looking at displays around the school, pupils' sketchbooks, photographs and art work in other subject areas indicates that standards are in line with national expectations by the end of Years 2 and 4 and pupils' achievement is at least satisfactory. ICT is used very effectively to enhance pupils' experience of the art of different times and cultures.

### **Design and technology**

79. No lessons were observed so it is not possible to make a judgement about the quality of teaching and learning. The evidence in pupils' planning books in Years 2 and 4, and

in displays around the school, indicates that standards are in line with national expectations and that pupils' achievement is satisfactory.

## Music

The school's provision for music is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The co-ordinator has good subject knowledge and teaches all classes.
- Pupils have very good opportunities to learn to play a variety of musical instruments.
- Pupils who are learning instruments do not have enough opportunities to play together.
- Assessment systems are not yet fully operational.
- There are only limited opportunities to record, evaluate and improve pupils' performances.

### Commentary

80. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in music throughout the school and standards are in line with national expectations. A strength in the music provision is the effective deployment of the music co-ordinator. She is enabled to share her expertise with her colleagues by teaching their classes. This is in tune with the school improvement plan, which includes a determination to share expertise. By observing her in action, her colleagues gain confidence as well as having good opportunities to improve their own knowledge and understanding of musical elements like pitch, pulse and rhythm.
81. The quality of teaching in the reception class is good and in the rest of the school it is satisfactory. The good teaching includes clear objectives that are made explicit at the start of the lesson, a strong sense of purpose and a lively pace, and a good ending that evaluates what has been learnt. Well-planned activities follow thick and fast and there is a strong sense of enjoyment. Pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated and receive good support from class teachers.
82. The quality of singing is satisfactory in assemblies. It is accurate and controlled, but lacks dynamics and tone. Pupils learning instruments such as percussion and keyboards are invited to play in assemblies, but there are limited opportunities for pupils to play together to develop their understanding of working together as an ensemble. The quality of peripatetic teaching is very high because teachers have very good subject knowledge, lessons proceed at a fast pace and pupils are very motivated. On-going assessment enables their progress to be accelerated during the course of each lesson and homework reinforces new learning.
83. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. A good start has been made in providing colleagues with files of information but assessment systems are not yet embedded and the use of information and communication technology in appraising pupils' compositions is limited.
84. Extra-curricular opportunities are good. There are recorder clubs at lunchtimes when pupils learn to read standard notation. The school presents lively concerts to parents and takes part in local musical events in the church and in the middle school.



## Physical education

85. No lessons in physical education were observed during the inspection, so it is not possible to make secure judgements about provision. It is clear that the school works hard to overcome the limitations of its small hall and lack of a playing field by making good use of the facilities of the nearby middle school and also by taking the pupils to the local recreation ground. From looking at planning and discussions with staff and pupils, it is evident that all strands are taught during the school year. There are good opportunities for pupils to enrich their experience through a selection of extra-curricular activities, many of which are led by enthusiastic and talented parents. Physical education makes a positive contribution to pupils' personal and social education.

## PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision in personal, social and health education and citizenship is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is very good at raising pupils' self-esteem and confidence.
- Pupils have many good opportunities to take on responsibility.

### Commentary

86. The school places considerable emphasis on developing pupils' personal development. It is extremely good at making the most of pupils' well-developed social and personal skills when they start school and developing those even further. Throughout the school there are frequent opportunities for pupils to grow in confidence, to be motivated in their learning and to succeed in all they do. During the school day, there are many opportunities for pupils to take responsibility, which they do with great eagerness, helping out in their own classes and with assemblies and lunchtimes.
87. The provision for pupils' personal development is very good and the consequences are that the pupils respect each other and they play and work together in harmony. Older pupils enjoy supporting the reception children, helping them to settle happily and confidently into school. The playground council ensure that breaks and lunchtimes are happy and harmonious. It is organising a tabletop sale to raise money to buy more outdoor and indoor play equipment.
88. There is a good programme for drugs and sex and relationships education firmly in place. All pupils enjoy and achieve very well when visiting the county's 'Streetwise' centre in Bournemouth where pupils learn about many aspects of keeping safe.
89. The school is currently working towards achieving a second 'Healthy Schools' award and pupils are made very aware of recycling issues. Waste paper is collected for recycling. The outcomes of the provision are positive, as seen in pupils' good attitudes and very good relationships. These are positive features in helping to raise attainment and achievement.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

### Inspection judgement

### Grade

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>                       | <b>3</b> |
| How inclusive the school is  | 2        |
| How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection | 3        |
| Value for money provided by the school                               | 3        |

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

|   |          |
|---|----------|
| <b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)</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>3</b> |
| The quality of teaching  | 3        |
| How well pupils learn  | 3        |
| The quality of assessment  | 4        |
| How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs                      | 3        |
| Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities | 3        |
| Accommodation and resources                                      | 4        |
| Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety                         | 3        |
| Support, advice and guidance for pupils                          | 3        |
| How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views              | 2        |
| 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               | 2        |

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>The leadership and management of the school</b> | <b>3</b> |
| The governance of the school                       | 4        |
| The leadership of the headteacher                  | 3        |
| The leadership of other key staff                  | 4        |
| The effectiveness of management                    | 3        |

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