

# INSPECTION REPORT

**WESTERN DOWNLAND CHURCH OF ENGLAND AIDED  
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Fordingbridge, Hampshire

LEA area: Hampshire

Unique reference number: 116387

Headteacher: Mr M Saxby

Lead inspector: Ms R Frith

Dates of inspection: 3 – 5 May 2005

Inspection number: 268229

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

|                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| Type of school:              | Primary                                  |
| School category:             | Voluntary aided                          |
| Age range of pupils:         | 4 to 11 years                            |
| Gender of pupils:            | Mixed                                    |
| Number on roll:              | 173                                      |
| School address:              | Rockbourne<br>Fordingbourne<br>Hampshire |
| Postcode:                    | SP6 3NA                                  |
| Telephone number:            | 01725 518233                             |
| Fax number:                  | 01725 518252                             |
| Appropriate authority:       | The governing body                       |
| Name of chair of governors:  | Mrs K Lintin                             |
| Date of previous inspection: | 8 March 1999                             |

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

Western Downland is a smaller than average size, voluntary aided, Church of England primary school. The school has federated status which means that it is one school based on two separate sites, two and a half miles apart. Pupils come from a wide range of social backgrounds but overall, the socio-economic status of families is favourable with a well below average percentage of pupils receiving free school meals. When children join the school, they bring with them a wide range of experiences and abilities but overall, their attainment is broadly similar to that usually seen for children of this age. However, a significant minority have below average standards in their mathematical and communication skills and a limited range of vocabulary is used. Very few have developed early writing skills and some need to be helped to hold a pencil correctly. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is broadly in line with the national average and those pupils receiving additional support have a range of learning difficulties. All pupils come from white British heritage. A number of pupils join or leave the school at other than the usual starting or leaving times and pupil mobility is higher than average in Years 3 to 6. For example, 29% of the pupils in Year 6 last year, had joined the school from Year 2 onwards. Over the last two years there has been a higher than usual change of staffing in Years 3 to 6. The school received the Schools Achievement Award in 2003, the Investors in People Award in 2004 and re-validated status of Healthy Schools, also in 2004.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Members of the inspection team |                   |                | Subject responsibilities  |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|----------------|---|
| 2490                           | Ruth Frith        | Lead inspector | Foundation Stage<br>Science<br>Geography  |
| 9163                           | Geoffrey Humphrey | Lay inspector  |   |
| 32021                          | Andrew McClean    | Team inspector | English<br>Information and communication technology<br>Art and design<br>Design and technology<br>Music |
| 24097                          | Grant Pedrick     | Team inspector | Special educational needs<br>Mathematics<br>History<br>Physical education                               |

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## **REPORT CONTENTS**

|   | Page      |
|---|-----------|
| <b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>                                      | <b>6</b>  |
| <b>PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS</b>                 |           |
| <b>STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS</b>                                       | <b>8</b>  |
| Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects                      |           |
| Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities                    |           |
| <b>QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL</b>                        | <b>11</b> |
| Teaching and learning   |           |
| The curriculum  |           |
| Care, guidance and support  |           |
| Partnership with parents, other schools and the community                 |           |
| <b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>  | <b>15</b> |
| <b>PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS</b> | <b>18</b> |
| <b>AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE</b>                          |           |
| <b>SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2</b>                                     |           |
| <b>PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS</b>                  | <b>30</b> |

## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This is a good school with many very good features.** The headteacher provides very good leadership and together with senior managers and governors has developed a school with a happy and stimulating ethos. Pupils are provided with a good standard of education because all are included well, teaching is good overall and lessons are interesting. This results in pupils achieving well. Staff are particularly effective in developing the pupils' personal and social education, which provides a very good basis for learning across all subjects. Consequently, by Year 6 most pupils are confident and articulate and reach standards that are at least above average in English, mathematics and science. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The school's ethos is very good and strongly influences the pupils' very good attitudes to school and their learning.
- Very good provision is in place to develop pupils' personal qualities and this leads to very good relationships and very good behaviour.
- The headteacher has shown very good leadership when there have been significant changes in staffing and is well supported by the two assistant headteachers.
- Pupils are presented with a good curriculum with very good opportunities for enrichment through extra-curricular activities.
- Overall, very good systems are in place to ensure that pupils are very well cared for and that the school is a safe place in which to learn.
- Staff have developed very good links with parents, the community and other schools and colleges.
- The more capable pupils do not reach high enough standards in writing by the end of Year 2.
- Throughout the school, teachers and support staff form a strong team but there are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. Teaching is good in reception and Years 1 and 2 and very good in Years 3 to 6.
- Although accommodation and resources are satisfactory overall, there are weaknesses in the provision for information and communication technology and this affects pupils' achievement.

Progress since the last inspection has been good. Programmes of work have been developed, particularly in mathematics and this has brought about significant improvements in teaching, learning and standards. Overall, the quality of teaching has improved but there are some inconsistencies, both within the infant department and between the infant and junior departments. Staff have successfully addressed the issues identified in the last report and demonstrate a strong commitment to continual development and improvement.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

| Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with: | all schools |      |      | similar schools |
|---|-------------|------|------|-----------------|
|   | 2002        | 2003 | 2004 | 2004            |
| English   | A*          | A*   | A    | A               |
| mathematics   | C           | A*   | B    | A               |
| science   | A           | A*   | B    | A               |

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

**Overall, pupils achieve well.** In the reception class, children settle well because there is a good focus on developing their personal and social skills and their attitudes to learning. By the time they enter Year 1 nearly all are at least working at the levels expected nationally for pupils of that age in all areas of learning, with most working above that in the areas of personal, social, emotional and

physical development. Pupils' progress in Years 1 and 2 is generally good so that by the end of Year 2 pupils frequently attain standards in reading, mathematics and science which are above those expected for children of this age. In writing, most pupils attain the standards appropriate for their age but there is insufficient challenge for more capable pupils. In Years 3 to 6, pupils achieve very well and when their results are compared with those of pupils in similar schools, they attain well above average standards in English, mathematics and science. Standards in information and communication technology are slightly above average by the time they leave school but are limited by the resources and facilities. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well due to the effective support provided. Higher attaining pupils similarly achieve well in most areas.

**Provision to develop pupils' personal qualities, included that for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is very good.** Pupils enjoy going to school because staff know their individual needs and care for them. Staff are particularly effective in developing pupils' confidence and self-esteem which helps pupils to enjoy their learning and achieve well. Pupils are encouraged to respect the views, feelings and values of others. This results in very good behaviour, attitudes and relationships. Attendance is satisfactory and punctuality good.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided by the school and the quality of teaching are good.**

Throughout, teachers have high expectations of pupils' personal and social development. They are particularly effective in engaging pupils' attention because the activities are interesting and pupils are keen to learn. Those with particular learning needs achieve well, because teachers and support staff match the work well to their capabilities. The curriculum is good overall although staff are restricted in what they can do by the current provision for information and communication technology. The range of enrichment activities is very good and helps pupils to develop additional skills. Staff ensure that pupils are all included, well cared for and feel supported. Pupils' views are taken seriously in lessons and through more formal forums such as the school councils. This ensures that they are included in school developments. Staff have very good links with parents and the community and work very well with their colleagues in other schools and colleges.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership, management and governance of the school are good.** The headteacher has worked successfully to ensure continuity of management and teaching during a period of change and has developed a management system which currently meets the school's needs well. He is also particularly successful in creating one school community over two sites. He is well supported by the two assistant headteachers, who lead well through example in their pastoral care and own teaching. Governors fulfil their roles well and ensure that all statutory requirements are fully met.

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

Parents have very positive views about the school. They believe that teaching is good, their children are expected to work hard and also make good progress. The consensus view is that Western Downland is a caring, family school where children gain high levels of self-confidence and self-belief. Pupils like school and talk enthusiastically about the clubs and activities. They are confident that any problems they might have will be taken seriously by staff.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Raise standards of writing by Year 2, particularly for the more capable pupils.
- Continue to focus on raising the quality of teaching and learning to that of the best, thereby eliminating any inconsistencies.
- Develop the resources and facilities for information and communication technology and ensure that these are used sufficiently across all subjects.

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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

Overall, pupils achieve well and by the time they leave school attain standards which are at least above the national average and sometimes well above.

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

- Overall, pupils achieve well because of their very good attitudes to learning, the good teaching and the good curriculum.
- In the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2, pupils achieve well. In Years 3 to 6, they achieve very well in most areas.
- In the 2004 national tests, when compared with pupils in similar schools, Year 6 pupils reached well above average standards in English, mathematics and science.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because their needs are identified early and good quality additional support is provided.
- Higher attaining pupils usually achieve well apart from in writing in Year 2.

#### **Commentary**

1. On entry to school, children have a wide variety of skills and experiences but overall, their attainment is similar to that seen nationally for children of the same age. In the reception class, staff focus on developing the children's personal and social skills and on encouraging communication. Children quickly develop very good attitudes to learning and very good behaviour because the teaching is very good in these areas and the staff have high expectations. Progress is very good and children use these skills well in all lessons. By the time they enter Year 1, nearly all children are working at levels similar to those usually seen for pupils of that age in all areas of learning and a significant number are working above that, particularly in their personal, social, emotional and physical development.
2. When compared with all schools in 2004, pupils in Year 2 attained above average standards in reading, below average standards in writing and well above average standards in mathematics. These results show an improvement in reading and mathematics standards from the previous year but a decline in writing standards. Higher-attainers in Year 2 are not sufficiently challenged in writing and consequently do not reach standards of which they are capable. The improved mathematics standards reflect the focus the school has placed on reviewing and improving the curriculum as well as the quality of teaching. When compared with schools with a similar number of pupils receiving free school meals, pupils attained average standards in reading, well below average standards in writing and well above average standards in mathematics. In the national teacher assessments for science, nearly all attained the standard appropriate for their age with a large minority attaining above this. Over the last five years, the school's trend of improvement was broadly in line with the national trend.

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

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| reading       | 16.8 (16.4)    | 15.8 (15.7)      |
| writing       | 13.8 (15.0)    | 14.6 (14.6)      |
| mathematics   | 17.9 (16.4)    | 16.2 (16.3)      |

*There were 26 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*



3. Attainment in the 2004 national tests for pupils in Year 6 was well above average in English and above average in mathematics and science when compared with pupils in all schools. Although these results show an overall decline in standards from the previous year, they reflect very good achievement for that particular cohort of pupils. The proportion of pupils gaining a level higher than that expected for their age, in all three subjects, was above the national figure and reflects appropriate challenge, particularly for the more capable pupils. When compared with pupils who attained similarly in the Year 2 National Curriculum tests, pupils attained well above average standards in English, mathematics and science. The school's rate of improvement over the last five years is above the national trend and the school exceeded its targets for English and mathematics in 2004. Overall, these results reflect the improvements in teaching and provision that encourage pupils to achieve very well.

**Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2004**

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| English       | 29.1 (30.2)    | 26.9 (26.8)      |
| mathematics   | 28.2 (30.2)    | 27.0 (26.8)      |
| science       | 29.9 (31.8)    | 28.6 (28.6)      |

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

4. Evidence from this inspection indicates that pupils develop a good grounding for their learning in the reception class and in Years 1 and 2 and the rate of achievement quickens as they move into the junior part of the school. Pupils in Year 2 are currently working at above average levels in mathematics and science and average standards overall in English. Pupils show above average standards in speaking, listening and reading but below average standards in writing. This is because the next stages in learning needed to move pupils to a higher level are not fully recognised by staff and consequently pupils, particularly the higher-attainers, are not being fully challenged. Pupils in Year 6 are only currently working at above average levels in English overall, because pupils have been affected by frequent changes of teachers and this seems to have had a greater impact on their learning in English than in mathematics and science where they are working at well above average levels. Although the school ensures that pupils make at least satisfactory progress in ICT, weaknesses in provision are restricting the levels of attainment which pupils reach. Currently, pupils in Year 2 are working at average levels whilst pupils in Year 6 are working at levels slightly above average.
5. No significant difference was noted in the achievement between boys and girls during the inspection although there have been some differences in the Year 2 and Year 6 national test results. For example, in Year 2 over the last three years, girls did better than boys in reading and writing and boys did better than girls in mathematics. In Year 6, girls did better than boys in English and mathematics although there was very little difference in mathematics. Boys did better than girls in science. However, with relatively small cohorts such as those found in this school, this sometimes changes from year to year. Staff recognise the differing styles of learning and use a wide variety of teaching styles to accommodate this. Consequently, there is no evidence of underachievement.
6. Pupils of higher attainment are usually well challenged, as the results of the 2004 national Year 2 tests show in reading and mathematics and the Year 6 tests show in English and science. Teachers usually have high expectations and set work to match the capabilities of each pupil so that all work hard and progress very well. The school has made significant improvements since the last inspection in its provision for those pupils who are gifted and talented and currently their needs are met well. Appropriate work is set in lessons and additional challenge provided through the wide range of clubs and additional activities. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because they are given very well focused support.

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

Pupils have very good attitudes and demonstrate high levels of interest and commitment towards their learning. Their behaviour and the quality of relationships throughout the school are very good. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is very good. Attendance is satisfactory and punctuality good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils quickly develop very good attitudes towards school and their learning.
- The very good relationships and behaviour throughout the school help to create a very good ethos for learning.
- Pupils demonstrate very good levels of confidence and self-esteem and this enhances their achievement.
- Pupils are very willing to contribute to the life and work of the school.

### **Commentary**

7. Pupils' attitudes towards their work are very good. They say they enjoy school and find the work interesting, challenging and often exciting. In their response to the pre-inspection survey parents confirmed this to be the case. In lessons, pupils demonstrate a lively and enquiring approach towards their learning. They are very confident and not afraid to ask questions if they do not understand something they have been told. They are supportive of each other and work and play well together. As they mature as learners they develop the ability to work independently with very good levels of sustained concentration.
8. Behaviour and relationships throughout the school are very good. Pupils say the school is a friendly and welcoming place and they like and trust their teachers. They understand the school rules and consider them to be fair. They say that if there is any bullying or other naughty behaviour it is dealt with very quickly. The implementation of the behaviour management policy is consistent throughout the school. Pupils are caring and considerate towards each other and polite to visitors. They are confident and readily engage in conversation with adults. The positive attitudes, behaviour and relationships reported in the previous inspection have been maintained.

### **Exclusions**

9. No pupils have been excluded within the past twelve months.
10. Pupils are encouraged to take on responsibilities around the school, for example by helping their teachers prepare for and clear up after lessons, by becoming involved in the preparation of assemblies and in the organisation of extra-curricular activities. Pupils also volunteer to act as 'buddies' for new pupils joining the school. There are two school councils, one for the lower school in the village of Damerham with elected representatives from Years 1 and 2 and the other for the upper school in the village of Rockbourne with elected representatives from Years 3, 4, 5 and 6. The elected councillors take their responsibilities very seriously and exercise a significant influence on school rules, sports and leisure facilities, the school environment and ethos.
11. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is very good. The spiritual dimension of the curriculum is very well planned. There are excellent opportunities for pupils to explore their own values, feelings and emotions through literacy, history, art and music. Personal and social values are strongly promoted through assemblies and the good personal, social, health and citizenship education programme. The school provides a very clear moral code with a strong emphasis on the principles of equality and inclusion. Pupils are beginning to develop the capability to act in accordance with their own principles and are becoming aware of their right to challenge things that are unfair or hurtful to others.
12. The cultural and multi-cultural dimensions of the curriculum are well developed. The knowledge and understanding of pupils' British cultural heritage and traditions are very good.

Although there are no pupils from an ethnic minority background in the school, the curriculum and reference books in the school library include a good range of information about other cultures and historic traditions. As a result pupils' awareness and understanding of other cultures, and the multi-cultural nature of some communities in Britain, are developing well. Staff have recognised the need to develop this area of the school's work further and have plans in place to do so.

## Attendance

13. Attendance is satisfactory and in line with the national expectation and morning punctuality is good. The school has good systems for monitoring attendance and is committed to reducing the current levels of absence and improving attendance even further.

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

| Authorised absence |     | Unauthorised absence |     |
|--------------------|-----|----------------------|-----|
| School data        | 5.4 | School data          | 0.1 |
| 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 quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching is good overall and pupils are supported well through experiencing a good curriculum and very good levels of care. Links with parents, the community, other schools and colleges are all very good.

### Teaching and learning

Teaching, learning and assessment are good overall.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good overall in the reception class and Years 1 and 2 and very good overall in Years 3 to 6.
- The way pupils' work is assessed is good in most areas.
- Teaching assistants support the pupils well and help them to make good progress.
- Staff generally have high expectations and provide appropriately challenging work which ensures that pupils of all abilities achieve well.
- There are weaknesses in the teaching of writing in Year 2.
- Expectations of pupils' behaviour are high and pupils respond very well. This helps to create a very good ethos for learning.

### Commentary

14. Overall, pupils make good progress throughout their time in school and achieve well. There are some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, however, and this affects the rate of learning. In the reception class, staff are very effective at settling children into school life and developing their very good attitudes to learning and very good behaviour. This forms a good basis on which learning can take place as children move into the National Curriculum in Years 1 and 2. Here, teaching is frequently good and sometimes very good. In Years 3 to 6, staff continue to develop the pupils' learning through very good teaching based on high expectations and good challenge.
15. The chart below gives an outline of the quality of lessons seen during the inspection. At this time, several teachers were new to the school and two new to teaching. Senior managers are working hard to support the new staff and they are responding well. However, there remain some inconsistencies in teaching.

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 38 lessons

| Excellent | Very good | Good     | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor   | Very Poor |
|-----------|-----------|----------|--------------|----------------|--------|-----------|
| 1(3%)     | 16 (47%)  | 19 (50%) | 2 (5%)       | 0 (0%)         | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%)    |

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

16. The focus that senior managers have placed on developing the school's teaching and learning policy is beginning to reap rewards although there are still some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. Overall, teachers' planning is good and a significant feature of the best lessons. Teachers are able to plan more effectively now because assessment practice has improved and they are now more aware of the next stages needed in the pupils' learning. There remain, however, weaknesses in the planning and teaching of writing in Year 2. Pupils' progress over time is monitored so that early intervention can take place if pupils are not seen to be achieving as well as they should. In the best lessons, teachers have a clear idea of what they want pupils to learn and share that with them at the start of the lesson. Appropriate support and challenge are provided which ensure that pupils of all levels of attainment maintain a good pace in their learning. Support staff enhance learning and are important members of the school teaching team. Teachers use their knowledge of pupils well in lessons and encourage them to improve and work harder if they think they can. Most are also effective in indicating through their marking how pupils can improve their work.
17. Teachers are developing their practices in the light of national expectations and this is helping to improve the overall quality of teaching and learning. Teachers across the school have developed their skills in information and communication technology (ICT) and this, together with recently improved resources, are beginning to extend and improve the quality of teaching and pupils' learning. The use of interactive whiteboards is providing an exciting challenge and staff and pupils are responding well.
18. The quality of relationships between staff and pupils is very good and a significant factor in how staff manage successfully the pupils in their care. Staff are encouraging and supportive, which results in pupils becoming more confident in their abilities and what they might do to improve. Pupils have the confidence to ask if they are unsure about anything, knowing that their comments will be taken seriously and their concerns addressed. Staff have consistently high expectations of behaviour and pupils respond well to these as they know what they should do. This means that time is not lost on trying to manage difficult behaviour and pupils are keen to learn. Overall, both school sites offer a stimulating and encouraging learning environment.
19. Teaching and assessment for pupils with special educational needs are good, enabling them to make good progress and to have full access to the curriculum. The individual education plans outline a good basis for teaching and support, and pupils' progress is monitored closely. The support given by support staff is also good, because they know individuals well and are usually well briefed about the learning intentions of each lesson. The school has improved its work with pupils that are gifted and talented. More capable pupils were seen being well challenged, for example in a Year 6 science lesson and two pupils in Year 6 are working on levels associated with Key Stage 3 in secondary schools. Such pupils are also able to work with others of similar capability through the Able Cluster Group formed from neighbouring schools. Additional activities are provided which develop particular musical and sporting talents. Teachers are also aware of differences that may occur in the responses and learning of girls and boys so use a good range of methods to ensure that all are included and interested.

### The curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good for all pupils and there are very good opportunities for enrichment. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory overall.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The positive strategies used by teachers and support staff ensure the inclusion of all pupils and promotion of equal opportunities.
- Pupils with special educational needs receive good support.
- Teaching assistants are very effective in supporting pupils and ensuring equal access to a wide curriculum.
- The range and quality of extra-curricular activities enrich pupils' learning very well.
- ICT is not used as a tool to support learning across all subjects.
- Links between Year 2 and Year 3 and transfer of pupils to Year 7 are very good.

### **Commentary**

20. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum which meets statutory requirements and offers a good range and quality of activities. The inclusive nature of the curriculum is a strength of the school. The skills of the support staff are very well deployed and they are key members of the school team. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and they are fully included in all lessons. Individual education plans are well written with clear measurable targets which are regularly reviewed. Provision for able pupils has developed well since the last inspection and, in the main, their needs are well met through a variety of activities and the setting of appropriately challenging work in class. This is not the case for writing in Year 2.
21. Core subjects are usually well taught, with the school's recent emphasis on improving standards in mathematics now bearing fruit. ICT has yet to be fully developed as a tool to support learning in all subjects. Curriculum policies and schemes of work are in place for all subjects. Sex, drugs and alcohol education are well integrated into the teaching of P.S.H.E. The school councils are well used as a means to obtain pupils' ideas and opinions and ensure their involvement in school development.
22. There is very good extra-curricular provision incorporating music, dance, and a variety of sports. Pupils have access to a French club, boys' and girls' football, with support for younger pupils coming from a local football club. A wide variety of in-school clubs, ranging from a grounds maintenance team to chess and typing, is appreciated greatly by pupils.
23. A school orchestra and choir enhance pupils' learning and enjoyment in the performance of concerts to a variety of audiences is evident. The school provides a wide variety of residential experiences and these leave a distinct and purposeful impression on all pupils. Transition arrangements between the infant and junior sites are very good as are the arrangements for transfer to secondary school. This ensures a continuity of learning and a feeling of security amongst pupils.
24. Accommodation is only satisfactory due to the split site arrangements and the limitations of current buildings. There is no hall in the infant building and the size of the hall in the junior building restricts some activities in PE, drama and dance. A lack of space and limited provision of ICT equipment are also weaker areas of the school's provision, although staff work hard to counter these.

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

The care and pastoral support provided by the school are very good. Pupils receive very good advice and guidance based on good assessment and monitoring information. Pupils' views and opinions are valued and acted upon.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school provides very good advice and guidance on academic, personal and social issues.
- Relationships are very good throughout the school and there are high levels of mutual trust and respect between pupils and staff.
- Procedures for child protection, health and safety are very good.

### **Commentary**

25. Staff have created an environment in which pupils feel safe and secure and where they are able to concentrate on their work and achieve to the best of their ability. The importance that the school places on the spiritual, emotional and physical wellbeing of its pupils is reflected in all policies and practices. The induction arrangements when pupils join the reception class are very good. New arrivals are very well supported while they settle into the routine of school life. There are also very good arrangements for welcoming the pupils who join the school at other times. The very good support and guidance for pupils' personal and academic development are based on good assessment and monitoring practices.
26. There is very good awareness of the needs of vulnerable pupils and their families. The arrangements for child protection are very good. The headteacher is the nominated child protection officer and all staff are well trained and vigilant. There are very good links with social services and other external agencies and children in care and those who are known to be potentially vulnerable are extremely well monitored and supported.
27. There are very good arrangements for ensuring that the school is a healthy and safe place. There is good provision for first aid on both school sites and an agreed policy guides the handling of prescribed medicines. Risk assessments are rigorous and the implementation of the school's health and safety policy is regularly monitored by the governors' buildings committee. The school also draws upon the professional expertise of the local education authority to audit health and safety procedures in practical subjects such as science, design technology and physical education. Pupils are well supervised and taught to use school equipment safely. The personal, social and health education programme encourages pupils to observe good standards of hygiene and gives them an understanding of the value of pursuing a healthy lifestyle.
28. Relationships throughout the school are very good. Pupils say that they are confident that should they have any personal concerns, or need to seek help, all members of staff will listen and respond to their needs. The two school councils meet regularly with a senior teacher and both have a significant influence on the environment, play and leisure facilities on both sites. In addition to ongoing consultation through the school councils, pupil surveys are undertaken from time to time to gain their views and ensure their involvement in the school's development. Overall the welfare and pastoral support afforded to pupils has been very well maintained since the previous inspection.

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

The school has developed a very good partnership with parents and successfully involves them in their children's learning. The links between the school and the community are very well established. Staff work very well with other local schools and colleges.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school has developed very good partnerships with parents who, in turn, have positive views about the school and what it provides for their children.
- The information provided for parents about the curriculum and their children's progress is very good.
- The school is fully involved in the wider community and many opportunities for curriculum enhancement and pupils' personal development arise from this.
- Very good links exist with other schools and colleges and these help to further the experience of staff and pupils.

### **Commentary**

29. The school has achieved a good working partnership with parents. Parents express high levels of satisfaction with the quality of education and care provided. Effective two-way communication, including surveys of parental opinion, ensures that their views are noted and any concerns dealt with quickly and effectively. Curriculum workshops and the provision of regular information about the curriculum, related topics and homework, enable parents to support their children's learning effectively.
30. The annual progress reports provide a very good overview of pupils' personal and academic development with a clear indication of progress, effort and attainment. A good feature of the reports is pupils' involvement in self-evaluation and the provision of targets to guide parents on how to help their children improve. At the consultation evenings following the distribution of reports, targets are reviewed by both parents and pupils so that there is a clear understanding by all parties of what is needed to address any issues and maximize achievement.
31. Parents support the school well. There is an active friends of the school association that organises regular social and fund raising events, many of which engage the wider community. Local businesses have been very supportive of some of the fund raising activities, the most notable being the extensive funds raised for the re-landscaping of the playing field at the Rockbourne site. A number of parents regularly volunteer to help in school, and with educational visits and extra-curricular activities. There are strong links with all four parish churches and pupils attend services at each, in turn, to celebrate the main Christian festivals. The parish priest regularly attends and participates in school assemblies. Through these and other activities, the school has developed close links with the wider community and many village organisations.
32. There are very good links with other schools and colleges. The school is part of the New Forrest Village Schools group and the Avon Valley cluster of schools. These links are used to share good practice, to plan joint professional development programmes and secure involvement in special projects and initiatives such as the emotional literacy support project. There are good arrangements for the transfer of pupils from Year 6 into Year 7 at the Burgate secondary school. There are well established arrangements for liaison between the schools on the curriculum, special educational needs and pupil performance. Overall, relationships with parents, the wider community and other schools have been well maintained since the previous inspection.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are good overall. The headteacher provides very good leadership and is well supported by the two assistant headteachers. Management and governance of the school are good.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher has been particularly effective in managing the school and providing clear leadership during the recent period of staff changes.
- Information gathered from the rigorous self-evaluation is being used effectively to help plan future developments.
- Potential difficulties which could arise from the school being on two separate sites have been addressed through the very good management of the headteacher.
- The senior management team is new, so insufficient time has passed for them to develop their roles fully.
- Good approaches to financial management are helping the school to achieve its educational priorities.

### **Commentary**

33. The good quality of education provided by the school is, in many ways, a direct result of good overall school management and the very good leadership of the headteacher. After a period of stability, the school has recently experienced frequent changes in staffing and a key feature of the headteacher's work has been to ensure that the quality of teaching and learning has been maintained during this period of change. In response to this, he has built up an enthusiastic group of teaching staff who work very well as a team. During this time he has maintained the confidence of parents and pupils by ensuring they are well informed.
34. The headteacher has a very good sense of purpose and vision for the school and, with support from staff and governors, has developed a good cycle of review and development which has kept the school moving towards its goals. He has succeeded in ensuring that both teachers and teaching assistants display a strong commitment to school improvement and share his sense of purpose. New staff have quickly adopted the school's policies and practices, and established staff continue to review the way they work in the light of recent national developments and guidance. This has been a key factor in the school's success in maintaining good standards, especially in English, mathematics and science.
35. Another key factor in maintaining standards has been the way the school tracks pupils' progress and attainment over time in order to monitor the effectiveness of teaching and learning and examine its overall performance. The information gathered has been used to review patterns of achievement and to take effective action to bring about improvements in provision when needed. However, senior managers recognise that there is still more work to be done here, in order to bring the overall quality of teaching up to that of the best. Whilst all teachers demonstrate the good basic skills of teaching and engage the pupils very well in their learning, some remain unclear about the next stages of learning which need to be addressed in order to raise pupils' attainment to a higher level. The school improvement plan sets a clear agenda and is the result of a good consultation process. There are very clear action plans for particular areas of development such as ICT where staff recognise the pupils' progress is being restricted by the current facilities. The improvement in mathematics provision and the consequent raising of standards are good examples of the school's successful work.
36. Due to the recent changes in teaching staff and, in part, the possible issues of communication within and between the two sites, the headteacher has created a management structure which during this period of change has ensured that overall, provision and teaching remain at least good. Whilst there are no specific subject leaders, the senior manager in each site takes on the responsibilities usually associated with these posts. However, the current senior management team has only been in place for a short while and, as such, the roles of individual members are still being developed. The two assistant headteachers are particularly successful role models in relation to their pastoral care and demonstrate, through their own teaching, the school's high expectations. The school has recognised the need for this structure to be reviewed at an appropriate time and to be developed when needed. The headteacher provides very good leadership across both sites and manages provision very



well. This is achieved, in part, through his frequent presence around both sites when he speaks with staff and pupils and sometimes teaches. This has resulted in pupils, staff and parents seeing both schools as one community.

37. Leadership and management of special educational needs are good and this is reflected in the good quality of provision for this group of pupils. The special educational needs co-ordinator, although relatively new to her post, has a very good understanding of her own role, the strengths of the school's provision and the areas which require further development. She helps to ensure that pupils' needs are identified as early as possible and the fullest support given to meet them. Teaching assistants are provided with regular opportunities to develop their skills and understanding which helps them to support pupils more effectively. She has also ensured that the school has developed very good relationships with the parents of pupils with special educational needs and also with outside agencies.
38. Governors are very supportive of the school in their role as 'friend and critic' and challenge appropriately when required. They have good levels of knowledge and are well informed, which helps them to be fully involved in discussions and developments. They undertake their duties diligently and fulfil their roles in a manner which reflects their desire to do the best for the children. They are helping to shape the vision and direction of the school through continued close contact with the headteacher and staff, and through regular school visits. The latter, in particular, have helped governors to build up a clear understanding of the school's strengths and those areas requiring further development. Governors, headteacher and staff have addressed the issues identified in the last inspection and continue to show a clear commitment to maintaining the pace of improvement.
39. The school has good approaches to financial management and has accrued an appropriate sum of money to pay for improvements to ICT. These have all been costed and reflect the school's drive to improve standards and provision in this area of the curriculum. These can be seen in the carry forward figure below. Finances are managed efficiently and effectively, with best value principles applied well when considering financial expenditure. The governing body ensures that financial resources, including specific grants and additional funding, are used well. Overall, the school provides good value for money because pupils achieve well, the quality of provision and teaching are both good and the ethos for learning is very good.

## Financial information

### *Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005*

| Income and expenditure (£) |         | Balances (£)                        |        |
|----------------------------|---------|-------------------------------------|--------|
| Total income               | 589,874 | Balance from previous year          | 31,329 |
| Total expenditure          | 590,084 | Balance carried forward to the next | 31,119 |
| Expenditure per pupil      | 3,410   |                                     |        |

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

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

Leadership and management are good and are reflected in the good improvements made since the last inspection so that current practice now matches national guidance well. National initiatives introduced since the last inspection have been adopted, and staff in the reception class continue to welcome children warmly to their first experience of school. This judgement echoes the comments of parents who like the school's arrangements for children starting school and the 'homely' feeling the staff have created in the building. Staff use their good knowledge of how young children learn to plan a range of activities which reflect curriculum expectations across all areas of learning and are appropriate for the age of the children and their capabilities. Support is good for pupils who have specific learning needs or for those who have medical or social issues which could affect their experiences at school. There is a good balance between the time spent on adult-led and child-initiated activities and, as children move towards learning in the National Curriculum, a more formalised approach is taken. This prepares them well for movement to Year 1, particularly with regard to their personal and social development. The Foundation Stage curriculum is good, overall, as it helps children to develop their confidence to try things out and co-operate well with others, as well as providing a good basis for children's early reading, writing and number skills. All staff assess the children's learning on a day-to-day basis through observations and use this information to build up an individual profile of learning for each child. Overall, the way staff assess children's progress and attainment, and use the information gained from this to plan appropriate work, is good. Teachers and support staff form a good team and teaching is good.

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

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

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

- The quality of teaching is very good, enabling children to achieve well.
- Most children are already working above the expected standard.
- Children are quickly encouraged to develop very good behaviour and attitudes to learning.

#### **Commentary**

40. Children develop very good attitudes to learning because they quickly adapt to school life and are interested in what they are doing. The good adult to child ratio in most sessions helps children to build very good relationships and this forms a good basis for children's learning. Children respond well to the staff because they are confident that adults will listen to them and treat them fairly. Teachers and support staff remind children of the importance of sharing and taking turns, and provide activities that promote these skills. Children are encouraged to persevere and to complete activities before moving on, and levels of concentration are usually very good. There are good opportunities for children to make choices and to develop confidence and independence. Due to very good support and teaching, by the end of the reception year, children have developed very good attitudes to learning and very good behaviour. This very good practice results in children achieving very well from their average standards on entry so that by the time they enter Year 1, most are likely to be achieving at levels above the standards expected for children of that age.

## COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning is good and this helps children to achieve well.
- Children receive good support from the support staff.
- Letter sounds are taught thoroughly, which gives children a good foundation for developing reading and spelling skills.

### Commentary

41. Staff recognise that a significant minority of pupils need to develop better skills of communication so a good focus is placed on developing children's speaking and listening skills, either through specific sessions led by the teacher or through the provision of appropriate activities. The teacher and support staff work well with small groups of children and create a good learning environment in which children generally develop confidence when speaking about what they have done. A few children are quite reserved but because of the sensitive approach taken by adults and careful questioning, they soon become involved in the activities. Children's speaking skills are also systematically developed through the provision of specific activities, such as in the imaginative play area. Those working with the lower-attaining children develop their thinking well, thereby ensuring that they have something positive to speak and write about. Children's good knowledge of letters, and the sounds that they make, helps them to spell out new words. The more capable children write short pieces of work with the aid of word books and the knowledge of key words. Lower-attainers attempt to write unaided but need additional support to complete unfamiliar words. In a few cases, average-attainers complete the work more quickly than expected and need more challenge. Consequently, teaching remains good overall but not very good. Children show interest in books and respond well to stories when they are read to the class. Most are well supported by their parents and the reading done at home enhances their learning in school. Children generally achieve well, particularly in speaking, listening and reading because the activities build systematically on prior learning and they have very good attitudes to learning. The focus staff place on building confidence and the skills to communicate result in good achievement and overall, children reach a sound basis from which they make some good advances in Year 1. Most children are expected to reach the standards expected for their age by the time they enter Year 1 and a few will achieve above this.

## MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good and help children to achieve well.
- Higher attaining children are well supported and achieve well.

### Commentary

42. Staff recognise that there are some weaknesses in children's skills, knowledge and understanding on entry to school and consequently place good emphasis on this area of learning. The children's mathematical skills and understanding are taught during specific sessions, and consolidated through daily play activities. This results in good learning and good achievement. Specific mathematics lessons start well with a session of mental mathematics, which encourages children's recognition and understanding of numbers. In one good lesson observed, children enjoy using their cards to show the answer to questions such as, "What is double 2?", "What is two more than three?" and "Show me one less than ten".

Questions are differentiated well to match the range of abilities within the class so that all can take part and the pace of learning is good. This, in particular, reflects good teaching because all children are working at the appropriate level to ensure they achieve well. Children then settle quickly and work in a group or on their own work, consolidating their recognition and writing of numbers and their understanding of 'more than', 'less than' and 'doubling'. More capable children were seen being well challenged by a member of the support staff as they worked with numbers beyond ten and used the interactive whiteboard to correctly answer addition and subtraction questions. Throughout, children behave very well because they are interested in what they are doing and they are well supported. This helps them to achieve well so that by the time they enter Year 1 most are expected to reach the standards expected for their age and a significant minority will be achieving above this.

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

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching assistants and voluntary helpers make positive contributions to children's learning.
- Visits to places of interest enrich the curriculum and enhance children's learning.

### **Commentary**

43. Teachers' planning and classroom observations show that children enjoy a good range of experiences over time. Although teaching, learning and achievement are usually only satisfactory, some very good teaching was observed which stimulated children's learning and helped them to achieve well. In one very good session observed, the children's learning was well integrated as they read and talked about the nursery rhyme 'Humpty Dumpty', sang the rhyme and then observed what happened when eggs were cooked. Good use was made of the skills of a teaching assistant as small groups of children learnt about eggs. Although a few had experience of activities such as these at home, many did not and were very keen to become involved. Teaching was particularly good as it maintained the children's interest throughout, developed their speaking and listening skills and developed their early scientific skills of observation. Also, new vocabulary was learnt and by the end of the session, children correctly used the terms *yoke* and *white* and could sequence what had happened. Health and safety issues were addressed and the children enjoyed eating the finished product! A parent helper contributed well to the activity mainly by recording children's responses and what they had learnt. A scrutiny of planning and children's work show that visits to a local farm and an arboretum extend children's knowledge and understanding well and maintain their enthusiasm for learning. Children use a range of ICT to further their learning across many areas, for example, when using a computer program to draw houses and other structures and when working through mathematics and literacy based programs. They also use tapes for story telling and to listen to music and are particularly excited about the newly installed interactive whiteboard. Overall, their skills in this area are average. Children's knowledge and skills on entry are broadly average and they achieve satisfactorily. Consequently, most are likely to attain the standards expected for their age by the time they enter Year 1.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Many children reach standards above those expected for their age by the time they enter Year 1.
- Teaching and learning are very good.
- The outdoor area is used effectively for physical play.
- Children develop their physical skills very well during formal physical education sessions.

## Commentary

44. Teaching, learning and achievement are very good overall, particularly during formal physical education lessons. Although the infant school has no hall, the school has made good arrangements to ensure children's physical development by using the village hall where equipment and facilities are very good for children of this age. Also, the use of the hall stimulates learning in other areas as children see the seasons changing as they walk from school to the hall. These formal lessons, which are planned to develop children's skills systematically over time, are very effective due to the expertise of the teacher and the children's very good attitudes to learning. Children have already reached the standards expected at the end of the reception year and are currently working at levels seen in the National Curriculum for Year 1 pupils. In one very good lesson observed, many children showed above average skills of running, jumping, landing and climbing all with good balance and control. The good knowledge of the teacher and support from teaching assistants were used well to ensure that children of all capabilities were well challenged and able to succeed. The good range of activities and the pace of learning throughout helped children to participate fully and achieve very well. Specific activities are provided which encourage children to practise their manipulative skills, such as using building kits, and many of the daily activities include an element of manual dexterity; for example, using scissors to cut materials in creative sessions. The outside areas are also used well, for example, when children ride bikes and have sessions in the very good adventure playground.

## CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children enjoy their creative work.
- Imaginative play helps to develop children's understanding.

## Commentary

45. Children are introduced to a good range of activities, which helps them to develop their creative skills. Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory but some good teaching was observed. For example, children were seen fully involved when making egg cups from clay. The teaching assistant was particularly effective in developing their skills as she talked about the material and asked the children to experiment. The children spoke confidently, describing what they were doing, why they were keeping the clay damp, how to mould a good shape and how to decorate the egg cups. Teaching was good because it developed new skills well and gave children a good opportunity to understand the positive things about clay work and the limitations. This activity linked well to the work they had done on eggs and helped children to make good progress. Children also enjoy painting and spoke enthusiastically about their work on the signs of spring when they explored colour, shape and texture when developing pictures of snowdrops and catkins. Satisfactory skills are further developed as they make a mobile for a baby and design Tunisian plate patterns. The class displays enhance the learning environment and encourage children's self-esteem through the valuing of their work. Work is at a level similar to that usually seen for children of this age and most are likely to reach the standard set nationally for children as they enter Year 1. Imaginative and creative play in the Nursery Rhyme Café result in children acting out the roles of workers and customers and also develops their literacy and numeracy skills. Children play very well together with this kind of activity and develop their speaking and social skills effectively. Children regularly develop their musical ability by taking part in sessions where they have the opportunity to play musical instruments and sing as a group. Achievement in these sessions remains only satisfactory because expectations are not that high and the pace of learning slows in parts.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

### English

Provision in English is **good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' standards in English are average in Year 2 and above average in Year 6.
- Pupils' communication and reading skills are developed well.
- Insufficient challenge is given to ensure that the more capable pupils in Year 2 reach the standards of which they are capable in writing.
- The quality of teaching is inconsistent both within the infants and across the infants and juniors.

#### Commentary

46. The school places good emphasis on developing the pupils' skills of speaking and listening and as a result of good lesson planning, with clear objectives being communicated to classes, teachers stress the need for all pupils to take part. This is further developed by questioning to specific pupils, particularly those with special educational needs. These pupils also receive good support from teaching assistants, who encourage participation whilst at the same time ensuring good behaviour. Consequently, the subject makes a major contribution to inclusion with pupils with special educational needs making good progress. This was seen in a very good Year 1 lesson, where pupils worked in groups and pairs to talk about their recent writing and the necessary improvements. Overall, teachers' questioning stimulates pupils' interest and participation. Throughout the school, pupils show great confidence and fluency in speaking and have very good listening skills due to the priority these areas are given from the earliest stages of education.
47. Early reading skills, such as learning letter sounds, are well taught and this results in very good standards of reading throughout the school. In a stimulating Year 4 lesson, from the teacher's very effective modelling of reading on the theme of Haiku poetry, pupils read their own work accurately and enthusiastically. Parental support for reading is very good which helps pupils to develop a love of a wide range of literature. This is supported by effective displays of both fiction and non-fiction in classes and school libraries, as in a Year 2 class, where a display on the voyage of Shackleton to the South Pole is visually very imaginative.
48. Pupils' achievement in writing is not so consistent. In one lesson in the infant school, a very good example of providing targets for the improvement of writing was evident, with each pupil having a target card upon which very specific steps for improvement were outlined. This is not replicated across this key stage and results in a lack of challenge in pupils' writing, particularly those of higher ability. There is limited use of such specific writing targets in some lessons but overall practice is better in the juniors. Pupils' presentation of work is varied with standards of handwriting lacking in consistency and tidiness. However, spelling and punctuation are good features of pupils' work.
49. The quality of teaching in the infants is only satisfactory because although pupils achieve well in speaking, listening and reading, there are weaknesses in the teaching of writing and this affects pupils' learning. Standards are not as good as they could be and remain below average in writing. Teaching is good in the juniors and helps pupils to achieve well so that by the time they leave school they are working at levels above those expected for their age in writing and frequently well above in speaking, listening and reading. Features of the best lessons are the detailed planning, support from teaching assistants and targeted questioning to all pupils that ensures their involvement. Currently, the quality of teaching is inconsistent and staff have recognised the need to share the findings from monitoring activities in order to disseminate aspects of good teaching practice. Overall, teaching is satisfactory in the infants and results in satisfactory achievement by pupils. In the juniors, teaching is good and

consequently, the rate of learning improves and pupils achieve well. Under the present management structure, there is not a specific literacy co-ordinator as the two assistant headteachers are developing their roles to include leadership and management of all subjects, each operating within one key stage. Some aspects of subject management still need to be developed but overall leadership and management are good. The school is yet to ensure that in Year 2, the next stages in pupils' learning are clearly defined and supported by appropriate writing activities, particularly for the more able pupils.

50. The school's emphasis on developing pupils' literacy skills results in confident and interested learners in all aspects of English. Resources for the subject are good overall although there is insufficient use of ICT. Although there are examples of some good work, the lack of ICT resources and unsatisfactory accommodation have affected the teachers' ability to plan a full, cohesive programme. For example, ICT is not adequately used to support further research in literacy, or for pupils to use their skills of inference and deduction in their reading, and then express themselves in writing. Overall, improvement since the last inspection is good.

### **Literacy across the curriculum**

51. This aspect of the subject is good with all pupils using their skills in many subjects. For example, in a very good Year 3 lesson on the Celts in Britain, pupils delivered a "news bulletin" describing the Roman defeat of Queen Boudicca. Also, in a very good physical education lesson on cricket skills, pupils discussed and evaluated their understanding of rules and laws. The school takes pride in its programme of residential visits; these are very well documented with pupils' writing and displays, typified by a display of Year 5 diaries, photos and captions of a trip to Fairthorne Manor.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Significant improvements have been made since the last inspection and these have helped to raise standards.
- The mathematics curriculum is very good and helps to stimulate pupils' interests.
- The quality of teaching in the junior school is very good and helps pupils to achieve very well. The quality is variable in the infants but is never less than good.
- There is insufficient use of ICT in mathematics.
- Good links are made with other subjects.
- Leadership and management are very good.

### **Commentary**

52. Leadership and management of the subject are very good and have resulted in good improvement since the last inspection. The school has reviewed the curriculum overall and developed practice in those areas where there were weaknesses. An exception to this is the overall inadequate use of ICT in mathematics lessons. The school has identified this as an area for development in its action plan but currently, practice is inconsistent and relies more on the work of individual teachers than on a systematic whole school plan. Inspection evidence confirms that pupils' attainment in mathematics in Year 2 is above the national average and in Year 6 it is well above. There has been a steady pattern of good achievement in the infants and very good achievement in the juniors. Pupils requiring extra help with their learning achieve well because of the support they receive from teachers and effective teaching assistants. Standards overall are now better than those reported in the previous inspection and reflect the importance the school has placed on a structured approach to improving overall provision in the subject.

53. There is now a greater emphasis on teaching mathematics through an investigative approach, where possible, and this makes learning enjoyable and interesting. Consequently, behaviour is very good because pupils are interested in what they are doing. Overall, the quality of teaching is very good but in the infants sometimes only good. Differences in the quality of teaching can be identified by a quicker pace of learning and particularly high expectations. Key strengths in the quality of teaching throughout, include the focus teachers now place on problem solving and encouraging pupils to apply their knowledge to mathematical questions. Here, teachers are particularly effective in developing pupils' thinking skills by encouraging them to explain how they found things out and arrived at the correct answers. These activities raise the attainment of all pupils, but particularly the higher-attainers who are achieving well in the infants. This is reflected in the results of the 2004 national tests for Year 2 pupils when over 50 per cent attained a level higher than that expected for their age.
54. In one very good Year 1 lesson, pupils were given a number of 'real life' problems to solve linked to their other work on *Homes and Materials*. Here, expectations were very high and pupils became fully involved in the activities as the tasks were well matched to their capabilities and they received very effective support from the teacher and teaching assistant. When some found the tasks challenging, they were reassured by the teacher that they could succeed and that "Thinking hard is O K ...that's how we learn". In this activity, standards were well above average and pupils achieved very well because the tasks were practically based and built systematically on prior learning. The higher-attainers quickly saw patterns in numbers and used a variety of strategies to add a list of numbers by doubling or seeing which numbers added to 5 and then adding these to a larger number. A few pupils found it difficult to find the difference between two numbers but were soon helped to understand this by a clear and effective practical demonstration by the classteacher. Pupils with special educational needs also achieved very well because they felt well supported and had the confidence to try new tasks. All pupils showed high levels of independence as they recognised the need to get resources such as number lines and counting beads when they needed them.
55. The school's investigative approach to teaching mathematics has encouraged pupils to develop very good attitudes to the subject and this was evident in lessons when pupils were keen and eager to learn. In one excellent Year 3 lesson, because all activities were interesting and challenging and pupils were working at full pace, excellent learning took place and pupils' achievement was very high. Work was extremely well differentiated and excellent support provided, so that all pupils made extremely good gains in their learning regardless of their capabilities. Pupils were completely involved, so much so, that pupils groaned with disappointment when they are asked to stop one part of the activity. However, enthusiasm soon returned as learning was reinforced towards the end of the lesson when pupils took part in a game along the lines of *Who Wants to be a Millionaire?*

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

56. The use of mathematics and numeracy across the curriculum is good. Subjects such as geography, history, science and design and technology are used effectively to support the practical use of mathematical skills. Very good links with numeracy were seen in a Year 6 ICT lesson when pupils entered information onto a spreadsheet and worked on the areas of rectangles and averages. This lesson was particularly well planned so that pupils developed both their ICT and mathematics skills simultaneously.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils attain above average standards by Year 2 and well above average standards by Year 6.
- There is some inconsistency in teaching both within and across the key stages but overall, teaching is good in the infants and very good in the juniors.



- Infant pupils achieve well and this rate of achievement increases in the juniors where achievement is very good, particularly in Year 6.
- Good improvements since the last inspection have helped to raise the profile of the subject and develop the curriculum.
- Pupils' attitudes to the subject are very good and they behave very well.
- Although some use of ICT is very effective, staff do not plan for its systematic use in science lessons across the school.

### Commentary

57. The subject is well led and managed and this has resulted in good improvements since the last inspection. The curriculum fully meets national requirements and the pupils' needs. Through effective monitoring, senior managers have identified key areas for development and have used expertise from within the school and beyond, to improve provision and raise standards. The recent focus on developing planning in the infants has ensured continuity and progression in learning and developments in the juniors have followed on from this. Consequently, the curriculum is now good overall, with a particular focus on investigative science, and learning which is based on practical activities. This enhances achievement and learning for all pupils but particularly the higher-attainers. This was reflected in the 2004 national tests for Year 6 pupils when over 50 per cent achieved a standard above that expected for their age. Currently, pupils in Year 2 are working at above average levels and achieving well whilst pupils in Year 6 are achieving very well and are reaching well above average levels of attainment.
58. Using the results of good assessment, the weaker areas of pupils' work are identified and appropriate attention placed on raising the quality of teaching in these areas. This has been particularly effective in Years 3 to 6 where staff share expertise to ensure the work is challenging and the pace of learning consistent. In Year 6, staff also use the information gained from assessing pupils to help them revise previously covered work in preparation for the national tests taken before they leave school. This reflects the school's drive for improvement and the desire to maintain high standards. The profile of the subject has been raised through the provision of additional activities and visits, and these have widened pupils' experiences. Pupils are well prepared for their work in the secondary schools.
59. Overall, teaching is good in the infants and very good in the juniors. The key features which distinguish very good and good teaching are the particularly high expectations of staff, the challenging questions and tasks set which match the abilities of all pupils, the very good pace of learning and the use of a range of effective teaching methods. Most pupils in the school respond very well to the way science is taught and enjoy the practical nature of the tasks. In a very good Year 1 lesson, pupils were very interested in investigating a range of materials that would be found when building houses. This activity linked very well to the pupils' work in geography when they looked at local housing and to mathematics when they calculated the cost of building a wall. Pupils could distinguish between roofing slates and tiles and also introduces the idea of a straw roof which one pupil identified as thatch. Investigative skills were further developed in Year 2, when pupils compared a range of water samples and recorded their results. When asked, these younger pupils say they like 'doing science' and see it as a very practical activity.
60. Some very good teaching was seen in the junior school site, where again, pupils were given scientific questions and asked to make a response. In Year 4, the teacher was particularly effective when encouraging pupils to work in small groups to find out which type of shoe created the most friction. Pupils shared their knowledge and expertise well and organised their own investigations, solving problems along the way with confidence. Pupils used mathematics well to ensure that all shoes weighed the same and literacy skills were also used well to describe what they were doing and to record their results. Pupils had a particularly good understanding of what was meant by a *fair test* and used this information well when planning their own work. Achievement was very good in this lesson because the teacher had

high expectations, maintained a very good pace of learning and provided a good range of resources. Throughout, pupils' behaviour was very good because they were too interested in what they were doing to waste time. Similarly, in a very good Year 6 lesson, the teacher skilfully managed to maintain the pupils' enthusiasm for the topic of electrical currents and resistance whilst revising this previously covered topic in preparation for the national tests. The last part of the lesson was used very well to assess understanding, confirm learning points and provide additional challenge so that pupils had a clear understanding of series and parallel circuits.

61. In some lessons, such as those mentioned above, resources are used well to stimulate pupils' learning but there is a lack of planning to ensure that ICT skills are used systematically in science lessons across the school.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

Provision in ICT is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- A comprehensive plan is in place to address the future direction of teaching and learning in ICT and to ensure that ICT will be used more thoroughly to support learning in other areas.
- Teachers' willingness to learn and develop the subject is evident.
- Pupils are enthusiastic in their approaches to ICT learning.
- The current level of resources and facilities restricts the range of activities that can be provided.

### **Commentary**

62. The school has in place a very detailed plan to address the current weaknesses in teaching and provision. This reflects the recent significant improvements in leadership and management and the school's commitment to improving this area of its work. Leadership and management are now good but insufficient time has passed for many of the areas identified in the plan to have been fully addressed. Whilst teaching of ICT lessons shows continuity across the whole school, pupils are not challenged to use their skills in lessons in the other subjects. Problems with accommodation and the logistical difficulties of a split site school make teaching of the subject difficult. Effective use of interactive whiteboards is varied, with some classes actively engaged in their use whilst other classes see them used merely as an extension to a normal whiteboard. Overall, the staff have taken the first important steps to improve provision and raise standards to the level of those in other subjects but currently, they remain similar to those seen during the last inspection.
63. Standards in ICT are average in Year 2 and pupils achieve satisfactorily. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is generally satisfactory and pupils make sound gains in their learning. Although there is evidence of regular use of computers and other ICT resources, this is not planned for in a systematic way across the key stage curriculum so the rate of pupils' learning is inconsistent. Standards are slightly above average for a significant minority of pupils in Year 6 and most pupils achieve well. Those pupils who regularly use computers at home benefit from the development of keyboard skills, the use of different programs and electronic mail and access to retrieving information from the Internet. This helps them with their learning, enhances the standards they achieve and accounts for the slightly above average standards. Overall, the quality of teaching in Years 3 to 6 is good and pupils develop their learning at a more even pace. Due to well planned lessons, pupils receive a balance of direct teaching of new skills and opportunities for exploration of the technology available. In a very good Year 6 lesson, pupils demonstrated their abilities to calculate the mean pocket money and teachers' heights in the school by using spreadsheets. In a very good Year 3 history/ICT lesson, all pupils benefited from their teacher's imaginative use of digital photography to record their work on the Celts. Modelling and demonstrating by teachers of specific aspects of ICT are well used, such as the use of spreadsheets and mathematical formulae in Year 6. Teaching assistants

provide good support for those pupils with special educational needs which ensures that they make similar progress to their peers. Pupils enjoy ICT lessons and, because they are interested, behave well. They co-operate effectively and lots of animated discussion takes place during lessons.

64. Computers in classrooms are less well used to support learning in other subjects, particularly opportunities for independent research and inquiry. During the inspection, very few opportunities were evident where pupils used their ICT skills in support of other subjects. Whilst software resources are good, the use of these has yet to be integrated into all teachers' planning as a tool to support learning.

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

65. In the majority of lessons seen, pupils do not use ICT to support their learning. Some use of digital cameras is made to record local visits and events, such as trips to places of local interest and an outdoor education trips with all pupils, as well as to record sports and team games. Pupils use the technology to produce effective slideshows in support of their healthy school campaign. Cross-curricular ICT is most evident in the word processing of pupils' writing, with poems, stories and reports of current events being covered. Few opportunities are present for pupils to use the Internet in their work and to develop the ability to carry out independent research.

### **HUMANITIES**

66. Inspectors observed two history lessons but no geography lessons were being taught during the inspection period. Inspectors also looked at pupils' work and teachers' planning and spoke with staff and pupils. It was not possible to make overall judgements on provision in geography or history.
67. Evidence from this inspection indicates that provision in **geography** has generally been maintained since the last inspection and pupils' progress is good. Discussion with the younger pupils and samples of their work show that they develop a good understanding of their immediate environment and benefit greatly from walks where they distinguish between various features and look at types of local housing. ICT is used well, for example, by retrieving information about the weather from the Internet and using a digital camera and dictaphone for recording observations on the village walk. They develop basic map making skills which are developed in the juniors, for example, in Year 4 when pupils look at the school site and also focus on a comparison between Dorchester and Fordingbridge. Pupils study different countries, such as India in Year 6, and this helps them to develop an understanding of cultures different from their own and a range of social geographical features. In addition, it encourages them to respect values and ways of life different from the familiar. Literacy skills are used well as pupils show a good knowledge of the country as they write a letter from India or as they enter into a debate about rubbish sites and other environmental issues. The very good range of residential visits also helps pupils to gain first-hand knowledge and understanding of different geographical locations and features.
68. Evidence from an examination of school planning, observation of lessons and pupils' work confirms that the requirements of the National Curriculum for **history** are taught throughout the school. Displays of work are prominent and include a good range of work, covering writing, photographs and art. The marking of pupils' work is usually good and comments help pupils to improve. Generally, pupils take care with the presentation of their work, particularly the older pupils. In a very good Year 3 lesson, pupils gained a good insight into Roman Britain as they entered the hall which had been changed through music and lighting so that an atmosphere was created, and the story of the revolt of Icene was told. The teacher's good use of questions ensured that pupils participated very well and could later retell the story well in their own words. All achieved very well because they were interested in what they were doing and wanted to learn.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

69. Two lessons were seen in art and design, one in music, and three in physical education. No design and technology lessons were observed. Inspectors also spoke to staff, analysed the school's curriculum provision and evaluated pupils' work and displays around the school. It was not possible to make an overall judgement on any of these subjects.
70. Pupils take part in a good range of **art** activities which enhance their creativity and systematically develop their skills. Displays of pupils' art work in classrooms and around school are of a good standard. They help to enrich the environment as well as helping to raise pupils' self-esteem when they see that their work is valued. Good links are made between art and design and other subjects, for example, religious education. Also, pupils' drawings of their residential trips are of a wide but generally good standard, enabling them to record in the visual medium, memorable experiences of school life. In both of the lessons observed, pupils showed enthusiasm for what they were doing and achieved well. In Year 2, one group developed their observational drawing as they sketched sea shells, an anchor and rope block from a sailing ship. These interesting objects maintained their interest well. Others worked very well together creating a collage whilst a third group used the class computers. In Year 5, pupils developed their skills of blending colour using watercolour pencils to create seaside paintings and sunsets. The finished pieces were of a good standard because teacher expectations were high and pupils were well supported and challenged. The use of a graphics computer program was also used very effectively by some of the pupils in this class because they realised its capabilities and were keen to succeed.
71. **Design and technology** makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' learning and reflects the National Curriculum guidance for the subject. Pupils in Year 3 make models of dragons and clay tiles and skills are developed further in Year 6, when pupils design and build models of fairground rides. In a very enjoyable example of food technology, with very good support from adult helpers, a group of Year 1 pupils made scrambled eggs for the rest of the class. A good range of materials and techniques is evident in school displays.
72. **Music** is a major aspect of school life and pupils are actively involved in a wide variety of activities. Pupils' enthusiasm for the subject was evident in each of the activities seen. In the one lesson observed, teaching was very good and pupils made very good gains in their learning as they played a variety of percussion instruments such as triangles, bells and cymbals. Pupils listened attentively to aspects of Holst's Planets Suite and, through discussion, compared and contrasted the style of each piece. Using this information, pupils then composed, played and recorded their own highly entertaining percussion interpretations of the Romans landing on the shores of Britain. This work was of a very high standard and pupils thoroughly enjoyed their learning. A very accomplished school orchestra makes regular performances both in school and within the local community, led by a very able and gifted teacher/conductor and supported by staff members and parents. Pupils also have opportunities to receive brass tuition. Music also supports many religious celebrations throughout the year.
73. Most of the **physical education** teaching seen was good and in one Year 5 lesson, it was very good. This quality helps pupils to generally achieve well. In Year 2, pupils quickly became actively involved in a lesson effectively planned to develop their bowling and batting skills. All participated fully because they were interested in what they were doing and wanted to succeed. Good teaching enhanced their skill development and pupils shared tips on how to be more successful. In Year 4, the lesson planning was linked to work done previously in science which was related to muscles and stretching. This was a good bringing together of the theoretical and practical aspects of sporting activity. This aspect was also addressed during a very good Year 5 lesson when pupils learned about the effects of exercise on their heart rate. This lesson was particularly effective in the way pupils' specific skills and techniques were developed and put to good use in a game of kwik cricket. By the end of the session, all pupils had learnt how to apply specific rules to the game situation and the

importance of control in batting and fielding. In all lessons, time was used well so that learning moved at a good pace and pupils remained active throughout.

74. There is a broad range of activities in which the pupils can participate and this generates their enthusiasm. Pupils have good opportunities to take part in a range of sporting activities outside of school hours and the school participates in some competitions. The outside environment has been developed in the juniors to increase the possibilities for physical education and encourages pupils to be active. The school makes good use of the village hall for indoor games and PE for the infant children as the school does not have a hall. However, resources and equipment in the village hall are very good and help pupils to achieve well.

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

75. This area of the school's work was sampled through the observation of daily practice and outcomes, discussions with pupils and staff and observation of two lessons. Work in this area links well with the school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and has a particularly high profile in the infant school. All classes cover aspects of development relevant to the age of the pupils within personal, social, health education and citizenship lessons or during formal lessons such as science and literacy. The school meets its responsibilities in relation to providing sex and relationship education and drugs awareness. In a very good Year 4 lesson, pupils made some very valuable comments during a discussion on the dangers of smoking and how to resist peer pressure.
76. The subject has been well managed and co-ordinated and due to the hard work of staff, the school has recently received re-validation of Healthy Schools status. In relation to this, class rules help to ensure a safe and supportive learning environment and pupils are involved in a range of activities to maintain a clean and safe school. They also are involved in addressing issues of recycling. Pupils readily take responsibility and develop a very good understanding of their own role within the school community. This was seen in the way pupils accept a variety of responsibilities in their classrooms and throughout the school.
77. Personal and social education is also implicit in all aspects of school life. Pupils talk confidently to adults and know that their ideas are valued. The school councils within each school site introduce pupils to the concept of democracy, and are giving them the opportunity to become involved in the development of the school. All pupils have very good understanding of the concepts of right and wrong. They conform cheerfully to school and classroom rules, and are very friendly and respectful to their peers, teachers and visitors.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

| <i>Inspection judgement</i>   | <i>Grade</i> |
|---|--------------|
| <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  | 4            |
| 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   | 3            |
| How well the curriculum meets pupils needs                            | 3            |
| 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                   | 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  | 3            |
| The leadership of the headteacher                                     | 2            |
| The leadership of other key staff                                     | 3            |
| The effectiveness of management                                       | 3            |

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