

INSPECTION REPORT

Cranborne CE (VA) First School

Cranborne, Wimborne

LEA area: Dorset

Unique reference number: 113797

Headteacher: Mrs Judith Hall

Lead inspector: Dr Colin Lee

Dates of inspection: 6th – 8th December 2004

Inspection number: 272032

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First school
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4-9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	100
School address:	Water Street Cranborne Wimborne Dorset
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Cllr Mrs Linda Bright
Date of previous inspection:	1 st February 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Cranborne is a small first school with 100 pupils on roll. Pupils come from a wide area with half of them living in villages other than Cranborne. Around ten per cent of pupils join or leave the school at times other than the start of a school year and this mobility is close to the average for primary schools. The broad mix of housing and backgrounds of pupils results in their socio-economic circumstances being average. All pupils, except three, are of white British heritage and all have English as their first language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is above average and two pupils have a statement of special educational needs. The special needs cover a spectrum of general and specific learning and physical difficulties. Attainment on entry is average overall. Pupils are taught in four mixed-age classes. The school's work has been recognised by recent awards, such as a 'School Achievement' award in 2003, and a 'Walk to School' award in 2004.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21854	Dr Colin Lee	Lead inspector	English Science Art and design Design and technology Music Physical education English as an additional language
31754	Mrs Charlotte Roberson	Lay inspector	
20846	Mr Alan Wilson	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Personal, social and health education Geography History The Foundation Stage curriculum Special educational needs

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Cranborne First School is a very effective school, with some excellent features, where pupils achieve highly because of the very good quality of education that the school provides. Very good teaching helps them to attain standards that are usually above and, in some subjects, well above national expectations. All staff work very effectively as a united team and are highly committed to ensuring that all pupils receive a high quality of education that fully meets their needs. The headteacher's very good leadership and management have a significant impact by improving the school's overall effectiveness. The school is providing very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils' achievement is very good because of the very good teaching, learning and assessment.
- Standards in all aspects of English are well above national expectations, throughout the school as a result of outstanding features in teaching and subject leadership.
- The headteacher's excellent sense of purpose and high aspirations are at the heart of the very good overall leadership and management of the school.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good, due to the very good provision for their personal development.
- The curriculum is good, overall, but there is not enough planning of opportunities for pupils to develop their learning in information and communication technology, or to use and apply their mathematical knowledge.
- Teaching assistants make a very significant contribution to the overall quality of education.
- All pupils are treated equally and the inclusion of all pupils in all aspects of school life is excellent.
- Links with parents are excellent.

The school was previously inspected in February 1999. The main weakness identified at that time has been fully rectified by improving the quality of teaching of pupils in Year 1. The minor issues of improving aspects of pupils' annual reports and increasing opportunities for pupils to learn about cultural diversity have been attended to conscientiously and successfully. Standards in English and mathematics have risen significantly since the previous inspection. The quality of teaching throughout the school is much better, as is the overall leadership and management of the school. Together, these factors are the major reason for the very good improvement in the school's effectiveness.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
Reading	A	A	A	C
Writing	A*	A	A	B
Mathematics	A	B	B	D

Key: A - very high; A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average
Similar schools are those with a comparable proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals.*

Pupils throughout the school achieve very well. Results in national tests must be treated with caution, due to the small numbers of pupils taking the tests each year. Nevertheless, in 2004, pupils in Year 2 exceeded nearly all the challenging targets that had been set for them in the tests.

The pupils currently in Year 2 are on track to attain the equally demanding targets set for them in the 2005 national tests. Their standards are well above the national expectations in reading and

writing and above expectations in mathematics and science. Standards of speaking and listening are very high throughout the school. In mathematics, in all classes, standards in the use and application of mathematical skills are not as high as in other aspects of the subject. Pupils in Year 4 provide a similar picture of standards, although science is now well above expectations for the year group. In all years, standards in music are well above national expectations and standards in art and design and design and technology are above expectations. Throughout the school, standards in history and physical education are at expected levels. There is insufficient evidence to make secure judgements about standards overall in information and communication technology and geography, although the limited work seen meets expected levels. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well. The high quality of the support for these pupils from the learning support assistants is a major reason for the pupils' very good progress. Higher-attaining pupils achieve very well because teachers provide well-judged challenge to extend their learning. Children in the reception year are also making very good progress. The children start school with average attainment and are on track to exceed the goals they are expected to reach by the end of the reception year, by attaining standards that are well above expectations in their personal, linguistic and mathematical development, and above expectations in knowledge and understanding of the world and physical and creative development.

The quality of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Their attitudes and behaviour are very good. Attendance rates are well above average and punctuality is very good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is very good, reflecting very good teaching, learning and assessment, a good curriculum and equality of opportunity for all pupils. Teachers' planning is a significant strength, especially the thorough planning of learning activities that are matched to the needs of pupils of different abilities. The school shows very good concern for the care, health and safety of pupils. There is very good support for pupils with special educational needs. The school has developed an excellent partnership with parents and carers, providing very good information about their children's education and how they can help. Links with the community are very good and links with other schools and colleges are good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good overall. The headteacher provides an excellent vision and sense of purpose and other staff perform their subject leadership roles very well. Governance is very good and the governing body ensures that all statutory requirements are met. Management is very good overall. Financial management is very good and the school secretary makes an excellent contribution to the day-to-day management of the school.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents hold the school in very high regard. They are unanimous in their praise of the headteacher's leadership, the quality of teaching and the fairness with which all pupils are treated. They feel very comfortable about approaching the school with any concerns that they might have. They appreciate the high expectations that the school has of its pupils and they are very pleased with levels of progress and the standard of behaviour. Pupils are very positive about the school. All pupils say that there is at least one adult that they can go to if they have any worries. Above all else, they enjoy their learning.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Increase the opportunities for pupils to acquire knowledge, understanding and skills in information and communication technology.*
- Extend opportunities for pupils to use and apply their mathematical skills.*

* *This area for development has already been identified by the school in its current improvement plan.*

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement is very good overall. It is consistently very good in reception and Years 1 and 2. It is very good in some subjects in Years 3 and 4 but is good in these years overall. Children start the reception year with average attainment but, by Year 2 and later in Year 4, standards exceed national expectations in many subjects.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's very good progress in the reception year raises their standards to above expected levels in all areas of learning.
- Outstanding features of the provision for English result in pupils achieving very well and standards being well above national expectations.
- Pupils' good achievement in mathematics results in standards that are above national expectations overall, but vary in different aspects of the subject.
- High standards in music have been maintained since the previous inspection.
- Achievement is very good amongst all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs.

Commentary

1. The attainment on entry of the majority of children who start in the reception class is at the expected level for four-year-olds. They attend part-time for the autumn term and, from the outset, achieve very well in all areas of learning. This very good achievement owes much to the very good quality of teaching and the way that thorough assessment is used to plan the next stages in children's learning. The children are on track to exceed most of the early learning goals that are set for the end of the reception year. Their standards are well above expected levels in personal, linguistic and mathematical development and above expectations in knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development.
2. Achievement continues to be very good overall in Years 1 to 4, although progress particularly accelerates in Year 1, again due to the overall quality of teaching of this year group. The achievement of specific groups of pupils is in line with that of their classes overall. Thus, pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as their classmates and make similar progress because they are given expert, additional help to ensure they know, understand and can do the work expected of them. The same is true of higher-attaining pupils, including the gifted and very able, because learning activities are planned with these pupils' specific needs in mind. There are no significant differences in the performance of girls and boys.
3. The very good achievement of pupils in Years 1 and 2 is reflected in the standards seen in lessons and in the school's past results in the national tests at the end of Year 2.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	17.1 (17.1)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	16.4 (17.3)	14.6 (14.6)
Mathematics	16.8 (17.4)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 22 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

4. Whilst such test results must be treated with caution, due to the relatively small numbers of pupils involved, the school's results over time show a rising trend and are consistently well above those in other schools. This level of performance has been maintained, even though the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties has increased steadily. This proportion is now higher than is found in most schools. In 2004, the school was involved in a trial where pupils were assessed by teachers rather than by taking the tests. These assessments placed pupils at well above the national average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics. The pupils' standards in science were assessed as very high, placing the school in the top five per cent of schools nationally. Compared with schools where pupils come from similar backgrounds, the results matched the average for such schools in reading, were above average in writing, below average in mathematics and very high in science. The good attention paid to the needs of higher-attaining pupils is seen in the proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 3. This was well above average in writing and science, above average in reading, and average in mathematics.
5. The work of the pupils currently in Year 2 shows that they are generally maintaining the standards attained by their predecessors. The quality of their work is well above the national expectations in reading and writing and above expectations in mathematics and science. However, continuing commitment to raising standards, demonstrated by the headteacher and the staff, is seen in the action planned within the current school improvement plan for improving these standards still further by the end of the year. Compared with the pupils' past attainment, these standards are higher than could reasonably be expected. By using very thorough assessment of pupils' learning to plan the next stage in learning for individual pupils, teachers are helping pupils of all abilities to achieve very well.
6. Throughout Years 3 and 4, pupils continue to make progress, although not quite at the rate seen in Years 1 and 2. As a consequence, their achievement in Years 3 and 4 is good, overall, although there are areas where they have still made very good progress since they started in reception. For example, standards in Year 4 are well above national expectations in reading, writing and science and above expectations in mathematics. This continues the rising trend in standards that is seen in the optional national tests taken each year at the end of Year 4. Although there are no national figures for comparison, the school's results are consistently well above those in other schools in the county.
7. The very good standards in all aspects of English are the product of innovative features of whole-school provision. The emphasis placed on the learning of speaking and listening skills, alongside a highly-structured progression in learning the skills of reading, helps pupils to be successful writers. Some of the specific strategies used by the school, such as the resources for helping pupils to learn the sounds of letters, are outstanding. These, like the guidelines for provision of much of the English curriculum, are the work of an excellent literacy subject leader. Standards in mathematics are not quite as high as those in English. The school recognises that this is because pupils have less experience of activities requiring the use and application of mathematical skills, such as investigations or problem solving, than they do of other aspects of the subject. However, when compared with standards at the time of the last inspection, both English and mathematics show significant improvement. Standards then, in Year 2 and Year 4, were average in both English and mathematics.
8. At the time of the last inspection, the overall picture of pupils' standards across the whole curriculum was of them being satisfactory; now it is good. The previous strength in music has been maintained and standards are well above national expectations throughout the school, due to the very good specialist teaching. There is improvement in both art and design and design and technology, where standards across the school have risen from expected levels to above national expectations. The quality of work in history and physical education remains in line with expectations. In this inspection there was insufficient evidence to make secure judgements about standards overall in information and communication technology or geography. However, the quality of the limited amount of work seen in these subjects matched expected standards.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils behave very well and have very good attitudes to learning and to all the activities in which they become involved. Their personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is very good. Consistently high levels of attendance are achieved and pupils arrive very promptly in the morning.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Behaviour is very good because pupils are stimulated, motivated and really enjoy themselves during lessons and throughout recreation times.
- The school's strong emphasis on Christian and moral values effectively promotes many personal qualities.
- Relationships at all levels are excellent and contribute much to the school's many successes.
- Pupils' attendance is very good and parents are very supportive in getting their children to school on time every day.

Commentary

9. Pupils are exceptionally happy in this school because, from their first day, they pick up on the very warm and comfortable atmosphere, which is so evident. Under the watchful eye of all adults, but especially the headteacher, they learn to behave very well and older pupils demonstrate many very positive qualities. They are exceptionally good at listening to each other and to adults and take on new challenges with relish. They play and work very happily together and the youngest pupils are trying hard to behave sensibly all the time. Pupils work hard and love being praised for all their achievements in and out of school. They show high levels of interest in all school activities. The very good quality of learning activities in lessons serves to motivate pupils of all abilities and a love of learning is very evident in all pupils. They are very polite and well mannered and the older ones treat the younger ones very kindly on the playground. A "friendship bench" exists, to which pupils when they feel in need of attention, be it from another child or an adult. However, they rarely have to stay there for more than a few seconds before they are noticed and encouraged to join in once again. Bullying or wilful naughtiness are very, very rare and any occurrence is dealt with promptly and successfully. There have been no exclusions in the past school year.
10. Assemblies make a very positive contribution to pupils' personal, social and spiritual development and pupils say they enjoy them very much. Thorough planning for this daily act of worship ensures that, throughout the year many topics are covered and there is a clear focus on Bible stories and the aims of the school. Behaviour during assemblies is excellent because all pupils join in, listen so well and display a high level of respect. Their cultural awareness has improved since the time of the previous inspection and older pupils can talk with maturity about other cultures, faiths and religions and the contribution of other cultures to life in Britain. In addition, they are acquiring a very clear understanding of what is right and wrong and a real appreciation of what their school has done for them.
11. Pupils get along together very well and are very sociable. Adults working in the school also work very closely together and the very good relationships help pupils to feel very secure. Adults are very good role models. They are compassionate and very kind towards all pupils and give them each, in turn, a sense of identity and of belonging to the school community. No one is ever left out and, by the end of Year 4, pupils have turned into very interesting and interested young citizens proud of their school and of their many achievements. Pupils and their families raise significant donations for many charities every year.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.7	School data	0.0
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

12. Levels of attendance were much higher than in similar schools last year at 95.3 per cent and so far this term have even exceeded that very good figure. Very thorough monitoring and recording of attendance by the secretary help maintain high levels of attendance. Unauthorised absence is rare, but occurs very occasionally because some families take more than 10 days holiday within a year. The vast majority is however very supportive of the school and many pupils rarely miss even a day. Lessons start on time and are not interrupted by late arrivals because, on the whole, punctuality is also very good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a very good quality of education through very good teaching, learning and assessment. There is a broad, rich curriculum. Care, guidance and support for pupils are very good. There is an excellent partnership with parents and carers. Very good links have been established with the community and there are many good links with other schools.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good quality of teaching has a significant, positive impact on pupils' achievement and standards.
- Pupils' learning is very good overall because teachers make very good use of information from the assessment to plan what pupils of all abilities should learn next.
- Teaching assistants are used very well to support the learning of pupils, particularly those with special educational needs.

Commentary

13. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall, with the greatest consistency and highest proportions of very good practice being seen in reception and Year 1. However, all teachers demonstrate some of the very good features that make teaching such a significant strength of the school. These include high expectations, class management and lesson planning. The quality of planning is high because it is related so accurately to the needs of pupils of different abilities. By matching learning activities to the differing needs of pupils, teachers ensure that pupils are learning what they are ready for, through activities that have just the right amount of challenge to help them to progress. In lessons across the whole curriculum, pupils of different ages work together because their ability and stage of learning are seen as the important factors rather than chronological age. Pupils know exactly what they are intended to learn from each learning activity because teachers identify this very clearly and specifically when planning and then ensure that this is the first thing shared with pupils before they start lessons and the learning activities. This attention to detail is particularly evident in teaching and learning of the Foundation Stage curriculum in reception, and in literacy throughout the school. Both of these are areas where the rates of pupils' progress are especially impressive. Such detailed planning makes a very good impact on the quality of

learning. Pupils strive to meet their teachers' expectations, have very positive attitudes and sense of purpose, and enjoy all that they are asked to do because they are successful.

14. A further common feature of very good teaching is the high level of the teachers' subject expertise and a passionate enthusiasm for the subject that captures pupils' attention and imagination. This was evident in the teaching of literacy and music. All teachers have benefited from the guidance of the literacy subject leader and the exemplary nature of her teaching was seen in teaching reading to a group of Year 1 pupils. The resources developed to develop pupils' knowledge of phonics (the sounds of letters) are unique and contribute enormously to the rapid progress in the development of pupils' reading skills. Similarly, the music teacher's enthusiasm, the rapid pace of her lessons and the guidance given to pupils to help them improve, help pupils of all ages to perform at levels well above expectations.
15. The effectiveness of teaching and learning is influenced by the thoroughness of assessment. This, like the overall quality of teaching, has improved since the last inspection. The good assessment at that time has developed into very good assessment now. Most crucially, any information arising from assessment is used to help plan the next stage in learning. This is true of the data that is analysed after pupils have taken national tests and the reading and other tests taken throughout the year. However, it is the high quality of day-to-day assessment through observation, discussion and marking that has the most immediate impact on pupils' progress. One very successful use of this sort of information is the setting of short-term targets. Pupils have a very clear understanding of what they need to do to improve. This comes from varied sources, such as the constructive marking of their work, the guidance given during lessons, the use of reading focus cards that remind each pupil of what they are to focus on when reading at school or at home. The oldest pupils discuss maturely the aspects of their work that they wish or need to improve.
16. Teaching assistants play a vital role in all aspects of teaching, learning and assessment but have especially good impact on the life and work of pupils with special educational needs. The assistants are briefed thoroughly by teachers on the intentions and presentation of learning activities. They have good observational skills that help them to make an important contribution to assessment. They are well trained and know the pupils with whom they work so well that they frequently show initiative in extending pupils to the next stage of learning, or providing further consolidation of something not fully understood by a pupil. The excellence of relationships between pupils reflects the excellence of the professional partnership between teachers and teaching assistants.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 24 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
1	10	11	2	0	0	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

The curriculum

There is a good curriculum for the children in the Foundation Stage and for the pupils in Years 1 to 4, enriched by a good range of additional activities, during and beyond the school day. Resources are good, the accommodation is satisfactory and there is a very good supply of experienced and well qualified teaching and non-teaching staff.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a high level of commitment to enable all pupils to have equal access to the curriculum.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- Access to the computer suite is too limited and restricts the use of information and communication technology in subjects across the curriculum.

- Planning of learning opportunities in mathematics places insufficient emphasis on the development of pupils' independent thinking.
- There are very good arrangements for the transfer of pupils to the next stage in their education.
- The time allocated to teaching in Years 3 and 4 is below the recommended minimum.

Commentary

17. The curriculum for children in reception class prepares children very well for a gradual introduction to the National Curriculum in Year 1, whilst successfully providing a practical and creative ethos for learning suitable for children in the Foundation Stage. This is achieved because a very strong and capable team skilfully assess children's progress towards the early learning goals that have been set for children to reach by the end of the reception year. An additional strength is that staff from the Foundation Stage teach pupils in the afternoons of their first term in Year 1, further contributing to a seamless transition between the stages.
18. There are many strengths in the curriculum for pupils in Years 1 to 4. For example, very good provision in English, music and science enables pupils to achieve standards well above national expectations in those subjects by Year 4. Pupils also achieve well in art and design and mathematics, although the curriculum in mathematics does not include sufficient opportunities for the development of pupils' independent thinking skills. Good links with partner schools enable teachers to enrich the curriculum by planning a rolling programme of annual themes in collaboration with secondary school colleagues. The formal planning of links between subjects across the curriculum, on the other hand, is in the early stages of development. The organisation of the timetable results in pupils in Years 3 and 4 having less than the recommended minimum weekly teaching time and this is a potential constraint on long term curriculum development.
19. A particular area for development is the use of information and communication technology across the curriculum. Since the last inspection, the school has taken the positive step of improving resources by providing a computer suite and this has enabled teachers to ensure that pupils learn the appropriate technical skills. However, this good facility is timetabled to be in use for only a small portion of the week. Consequently, teachers are missing many opportunities to plan further use of information and communication technology to support teaching and learning in subjects across the curriculum. In other respects, the school makes very good use of the accommodation and resources. The spaces for teaching both the Reception and the Years 1 and 2 classes are limited in size, but are particularly well organised and managed in a way that minimises the restriction of lack of space. The areas above the remaining classrooms have been imaginatively developed to create very good, well-stocked class libraries since the last inspection. A small hall has been created that is used primarily for music lessons and assemblies. However, it is not large enough to enable parents to join assemblies, a fact that is regretted but understood by parents. The accommodation is very well maintained by the caretaker and cleaner and this enhances the overall quality of the learning environment.
20. A significant factor contributing to the very good achievement of pupils is the number and quality of teaching and support staff employed at the school. The range of subject expertise has significant impact on the curriculum. Collectively, staff have a very good capacity for self-evaluation that has led to a clear awareness of future needs in curriculum development. The very strong teamwork also accounts particularly for the very good care for and progress of the pupils who come to the school with a wide range of special educational needs.

Care, guidance and support

The school takes very good care of all pupils equally and provides them with very good guidance and support. Good account is taken of pupils' own views and feelings.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All adults contribute fully to the very good standards of pupils' welfare and wellbeing throughout the day.
- Pupils' personal development, including their achievements, is promoted very well and carefully monitored.
- Pupils express themselves freely to staff and know that they are listened to.

Commentary

21. Standards of care and support have improved further since the time of the previous inspection under the strong direction of the headteacher especially in Year 1. The headteacher leads by example, has a very thorough understanding of good practice and ensures that all adults working in the school understand their roles and responsibilities. Routines are very well established, policies regularly reviewed and, more importantly, training revisited in many areas such as child protection and first aid. Parents are right to place their faith in the school when they say they know their children are looked after very well. Those with medical needs are supported exceptionally well. Governors undertake their responsibilities properly when reviewing health and safety procedures.
22. The school has a fully inclusive approach to supporting all pupils, equally, in what is a very caring community. Teaching assistants make a very valuable contribution to pupils' care and wellbeing, as do the teachers and midday supervisors. However, it is also the headteacher, herself, who, over the years, has been instrumental in the establishment of the positive relationships throughout the school. Her attention to detail is impressive and a main reason why standards of care are so high.
23. Staff know each pupil very well and parents recognise and appreciate that they are all treated as individuals. Information is shared informally and very frequently among staff, so that needs are met, and each teacher also tracks and monitors personal development very carefully, which promotes further standards of support and guidance. Links with many parents, as well as those with outside agencies, are secure and adults work consistently together so that each pupil can progress. Induction into the school is very good, both for the children preparing to join the school in the reception class and also for those pupils who join the school during the school year. Regular checks on academic progress are made and assessment is also a very positive feature of the school, which contributes to the very good learning, and the good achievements made. Issues such as bullying are addressed in class discussions, when a need arises, and pupils are always encouraged to share any worry with an adult, which they do.
24. Plans are firmly in place to establish a school council next term. The headteacher has actively sought the pupils' ideas and views, through questionnaires, and their opinions about the playground organisation and equipment have been taken on board. Pupils know that their views matter and are not slow in expressing them to staff and visitors.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has an excellent partnership with parents. It has many very good and well-established links within the community and strong and developing links with other schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents hold the school in very high regard and appreciate its many strengths.
- Home-school liaison is excellent because all staff work together to fully inform and involve parents.
- Very close links are in place with the pre-school group in the village.

Commentary

25. This very popular school has been chosen specifically by the 50 per cent of parents who live outside the catchment area. The majority of parents expressed their views in person or

through questionnaire responses. They are exceptionally supportive of the school and the headteacher in particular, who they believe works tirelessly to really keep them properly informed and involved. Parents are thrilled with their children's achievements and the way the school nurtures all pupils equally. They have complete trust in staff and value very much all the school does for them from the time they first step foot inside the door. Open and regular communication is excellent and a key reason why the school is so effective in maintaining such strong links with parents.

26. Home visits before children start school get the school's partnership with parents off to a very good start. All parents receive very good information and plenty of opportunities to meet with staff formally and informally. The website is kept up to date and is used well to share news. Newsletters, the prospectus, the annual report from governors, and other statutory information, have many strengths and are always very well written. The crèches that are routinely organised for evening meetings are an aspect of provision that parents greatly appreciate. Parents are keen to get involved as governors and this is indicated by elections being required whenever a vacancy arises. The Parents' and Friends' Association is very successful and plays a big part in the life of the school and successfully draws in many members of the community as well as parents. Views are very routinely sought through questionnaires, adjustments made, and parents then kept fully informed of changes they may have instigated, for example, to the homework policy. All staff work together on the same lines in their drive to work closely with all parents to meet all needs properly. Parents are very supportive of learning at home. The school's links with parents are excellent overall.
27. The school is at the heart of its community and works very effectively with many community groups and organisations including the church. Many visits to the church are made including on Sundays. The vicar is a weekly visitor to the school and pupils enjoy his assemblies very much. News is shared every month in the parish magazine and pupils' work displayed in the church itself. Since the previous inspection, there have been further improvements in community involvement and the use community groups make of the school. The headteacher is very outward looking and takes up offers from local businesses and groups who want to show their support. A local garden centre helps sponsor the children's Christmas calendar and offers practical help when pupils make changes to their garden environment. Links within the community are, on balance, very good.
28. Links with the local playgroup which meets in the Village Memorial Hall, adjacent to the school, are very good. Links with other schools in the cluster groups are good and joint projects take place, for example, in science. Links with the middle school in the village are well-established and pupils use physical education facilities there every week. Transfer arrangements are developing very soundly and pupils have opportunities to complete topic work in art and English jointly in Year 4 and 5. Although good, further development of links with the middle school is currently a priority target in the school improvement plan.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good. The headteacher leads the school very well and her leadership has several excellent features. Governance is very good and key staff lead and manage their subjects very effectively.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher's very good leadership is held in the highest regard by all members of the school community.
- There is an excellent commitment to equality and inclusion of all pupils in all aspects of school life.
- A shared vision of the school's ambitions and goals is guided by very good strategic planning to which a very good governing body makes a significant contribution.
- Successful delegation of subject leadership and other responsibilities has led to very good leadership and management by the staff involved.

Commentary

29. The very good improvement in the school's effectiveness, since the last inspection, is seen in pupils' higher standards, better teaching and more effective leadership and management. The headteacher is the driving force behind this development of a high quality of education provided by a close-knit team of teaching and non-teaching staff. Central to the team's work is the collective determination to ensure the promotion of equality and concern for the needs of individuals. This commitment to inclusion is excellent and permeates everything that the school does. Aspects of the headteacher's caring, yet dynamic, style of leadership are similarly excellent. She has high aspirations that are shared by staff, governors and parents because she makes improvement happen by developing and using the strengths of all members of the school community. The high quality of her leadership shows itself particularly in the strong commitment to the continuing professional and personal development of staff and in her thorough knowledge of each pupil in the school.
30. The headteacher's excellent clarity of vision of the school's short- and long-term aims is informed by thorough self-evaluation, commitment to raising pupils' standards, and determination to seek constant improvement in the quality of education that the school provides. School improvement planning reflects this by using all available evidence to identification priorities for the next stage in school development. A very effective consultation process precedes annual school improvement planning. This enables staff, governors and parents to review progress and to contribute ideas for future priorities. Governance of the school is very good and ensures good strategic planning for the medium and long term. The governing body reviews constructively the school's performance in national tests and has a good awareness of recent trends. The governors ensure that all statutory requirements are met. They benefit from the leadership of a comparatively new chairperson whose expertise has developed rapidly. She personifies the very good awareness that governors have of the school's strengths and weaknesses. This understanding is also influenced by the constructive monitoring and evaluation of the school's work carried out by a hard-working curriculum committee. The individual expertise of governors is used well, for example, in relation to special educational needs where a close partnership between the link governor and the staff is very beneficial.
31. All teachers have responsibility for leadership of several subjects. The quality of their leadership and management of their areas of responsibility is very good and has significant impact on pupils' standards and the overall quality of education. Leadership of literacy is excellent and the subject leader's expertise has been recognised beyond the school in her work developing a common style of handwriting in the county's schools. Subject leaders know their priorities very well because they have very detailed knowledge of strengths and weaknesses in pupils' work and the quality of teaching of their colleagues. This leads to the setting of clear, specific targets for each year, with insightful action planning that identifies how improvement is to be achieved. Beyond the work that subject leaders do as individuals, the effectiveness of the teamwork of teachers and teaching assistants is very high because there is constant, collective monitoring and evaluation of all aspects of the school's work.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	306,646
Total expenditure	327,640
Expenditure per pupil	3,276

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	35,198
Balance carried forward to the next	14,204

32. The school's financial management is very good because it ensures that the principles of best value are applied effectively to management and the use of resources. This is achieved through appropriate consultation, comparisons of performance, the school challenging itself, and ensuring the best possible service through competition. The carefully controlled expenditure reflects the school's specific priorities in improving the overall quality of education. This quality, and the resultant high levels of achievement by pupils, means that the school is providing very good value for money.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision in the Foundation Stage is **very good**.

33. All children in the reception class have been attending for the morning session since September and will begin full days from January 2005. The majority of children have received pre-school experience and enter school with abilities that are broadly typical for this age. Children of all abilities settle very quickly and achieve very well, due to exceptionally good relationships and very good teaching and care. The school has successfully maintained the strengths reported in the previous inspection, has improved achievement in mathematical development and has further developed procedures for the transition of children from the reception class to Year 1, reflecting good overall improvement.
34. The reception class teacher, the nursery nurse and teaching assistant, form a very strong team who establish very positive relationships, through home visits, and contact with pre-school agencies, and provide a very useful series of opportunities for children to visit and become acclimatised to the school before they are admitted. They introduce children to a rich range of activities with many opportunities for purposeful play, during which they carefully assess the progress of all children towards the early learning goals¹. The thoroughness of these procedures enables them to identify those who need additional help so that children of all abilities quickly gain confidence and achieve very well. Inspectors fully share the parents' views that the professionalism and the approachable nature of the team give their children a very good start to their education. In addition, the Foundation Stage team continues to teach children in the afternoons during their first term in Year 1, ensuring a very smooth transfer from one stage to the next.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Excellent relationships between adults and children create an atmosphere where all children are valued and learn to extend to others the degree of care which is shown to them.

Commentary

35. The importance of social development and caring for others underpins the Christian ethos of the school. The adults who work with the children throughout the morning have the strongest impact on the very good achievement that they make in this area of learning. Not only do they have high expectations of how the children should interact with and behave towards others, they also present excellent models for the children to emulate through their patience, tolerance and reliability. This is very effectively supported by well planned activities which encourage children to cooperate and support each other. The success of these activities is clearly reflected in all aspects of school life by the way that children share and celebrate each others' successes, wait their turn to use equipment, or show responsibility and independence when putting things away. Consequently, whilst a very small minority are occasionally uncooperative, or cannot always work independently without adult support, the vast majority of the children will achieve well above the expected standards for their age by the end of the reception year.

¹ The early learning goals set out what children should achieve by the time they reach the end of the reception year in primary school.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A strong emphasis is placed on the development of children's communication, language and literacy skills and children progress very well as a result of very good teaching.

Commentary

36. Children have already made rapid strides in all three key areas of learning during their first term at school. Many have already attained the early learning goals and a significant minority are achieving well above the expected standard for their age. The very good links between the school and parents, allied to children's very well developed social skills, are a significant factor in this achievement. Parents are very keen to support the school's efforts and offer their own encouragement and support at home to develop reading skills. In school, the friendly relationships that have developed result in children regularly sharing and enjoying books together. The class teacher has successfully developed the daily practice of inviting groups of three children to read aloud to the rest of the class. Less confident children receive very good support from adults to practise before they take their turn and the result is that every child in the class has the confidence to read aloud from a shared book, many doing so completely without help. The rest of the class take delight in listening to their friends read and these sessions make a very good contribution to the development of speaking and listening skills. All three adults are constantly assessing children's development and plan opportunities to introduce new words related to a particular activity.
37. The introduction into reception class of teaching the school's own very successful handwriting scheme is having a significant impact on standards in writing. Children rapidly develop confidence in using it initially by overwriting their own names and more able children are now writing sentences to describe the stimulating day-to-day activities that are planned for them. Children soon become familiar with this style because it is used for all labels and displays around the classroom.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching is clearly focused on mathematical development through practical activities and enables children to achieve very well.

Commentary

38. The very good assessment systems in place enable the reception class teacher to set practical tasks at precisely the right level of difficulty for individuals and groups of children. Consequently, each of the three adults has a clear plan of what they expect children to learn during the session and assesses progress as they work. This is positive and largely successful practice, but there are occasions when adults intervene too much and, consequently, prevent opportunities for children to work more independently. The activities are imaginative and exciting and successfully capture the interest and concentration of the vast majority of children, such as when constructing a street of houses with odd and even numbers or weighing and sorting objects in the 'post office'. More able children count confidently in twos to 20, or beyond, using odd or even numbers and the majority demonstrate understanding of 'lighter' or 'heavier' by weighing objects on a balance. Most children have already attained the early learning goals and many are on track to achieve well above the expected standards by the end of the reception year.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A very well planned range of activities is provided to develop this aspect of children's learning.

Commentary

39. The good quality and range of the day-to-day activities, provided by the staff in the reception class, fully engage children's curiosity and interest. Most children have already attained the early learning goals and are on track to achieve standards above those expected by the end of the reception year. Activities range from working with their parents to compile a photographic and written history of their own lives, using computers to construct faces, to assembling the ingredients to make a vegetable soup. A significant strength of the teaching is the clear communication with children and the ability to assess their understanding by their response. All children are made to feel that their contribution is valued, which not only reinforces their understanding and retention of the content of the lesson, but also helps considerably to build self esteem and confidence.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teacher makes good use of limited space to ensure children's physical development.

Commentary

40. The reception class teacher has good subject knowledge and provides imaginative and challenging activities which enable pupils of all abilities to achieve well. Particular care is taken to ensure that children who need physical support are fully included in lessons. Most children have already attained the early learning goals and will achieve above the expected standards by the end of the reception year. There is limited space in the school hall, but the class teacher makes very good use of parent helpers and support staff to enable children to develop skills using apparatus, although there remains a need to regularly remind children of the need for safety in a confined space, which, very occasionally, restricts freedom of movement for more adventurous performers. Nevertheless, the vast majority use the space around them safely and independently and the more able children have already mastered a sequence of three flowing moves on apparatus. Adults encourage independence in all aspects of the subject and children get themselves changed for lessons unaided, although the process is still quite slow for some. Children are also confident and cooperative when using adventurous equipment outdoors. There are many opportunities during lessons for children to manipulate a range of tools, including brushes, pencils and scissors, which they do with increasing dexterity.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Creative development is successfully promoted across all areas of the Foundation Stage curriculum.

Commentary

41. The quality of teaching and learning is good, children are achieving well and indications are that the majority will exceed the expected standards by the end of the reception year. All classes in the school are named after a famous artist. The reception class is known as 'Lowry Class'. The class teacher has made good use of the Lowry theme to develop both children's painting skills and their knowledge and understanding of the world. Thus, many children know about the artist's life and recognise his work. All children have had experience of mixing colours and painting matchstick figures which they have cut out, a minority needing adult help, and mounted on a background of terraced streets. Thoughtful planning of the curriculum enables children to learn songs, which they sing well, and to express themselves imaginatively through role play in the 'dark cave' or the 'post office'.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject leader provides excellent leadership and management.
- The quality of teaching is very good overall, helping pupils to achieve very well and attain standards well above national expectations.
- An excellent range of innovative resources is used very effectively to develop pupils' reading and writing skills.
- Although the range of learning opportunities is very good overall, information and communication technology is not used sufficiently as a tool to extend pupils' learning.

Commentary

42. An outstanding feature of provision in English is the high quality of subject leadership. This is knowledgeable, innovative and is a role model that has been used very successfully to inspire teachers and teaching assistants. As a consequence, the whole school's common approach to the development of pupils' skills results in uninterrupted progress in learning by pupils of all abilities. The subject leader has produced detailed guidelines for the teaching of cursive (joined) handwriting that are now adopted throughout the county. Teachers in the school have responded very positively to the subject leader's ideas on teaching and learning in drama, reading and writing. The resultant high quality of teaching, learning and assessment have raised pupils' standards to well above national expectations, which is very good achievement in relation to their past attainment. This is a significant improvement in provision since the last inspection, when standards were at expected levels and teaching was good.
43. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve very well in all areas of learning in English and, as a consequence, standards are high. Throughout the school, standards in speaking and listening are very high and standards in reading and writing are well above the national expectations for their ages. This is due to the consistently very good quality of teaching and learning. Teachers are so successful because of their understanding of how pupils learn. This is the foundation of all their planning and presentation of lessons.

Pupils' learning is constantly being assessed and this drives the planning of what they need to learn next. This means that pupils have very definite short-term targets and know exactly why they are doing an activity. They also know, from the teacher's feedback during a lesson, or from the marking that is very constructively carried out by all, exactly how well they are succeeding. The fact that learning activities are matched so carefully to the needs of pupils or small groups of different abilities means that success is a common experience for all pupils.

44. Teachers, teaching assistants and parents work together very effectively. Good communication ensures that teaching assistants know the very specific intentions of activities that they teach. Parents know why joined writing is taught from the moment their child starts in reception. Pupils are confident learners. From reception onwards, pupils read aloud to their classmates. This conclusion to lessons, when pupils read from their books or their writing, develops pupils' speaking and listening skills very successfully. Teachers take opportunities during all lessons to encourage pupils to think first before answering questions or expressing ideas and then to speak clearly and be ready to explain what they are saying. Such clarity of speech was demonstrated very well by pupils in Years 3 and 4 in a science when they described the differences between types of electrical circuits. The wonderful expression in the voice of a pupil in Year 1, as she adopted the character of a pirate, when reading the class a short excerpt from her reading book, showed how well she had learned from her teacher's guidance during a lesson.
45. The teaching of reading is excellent. It follows a very detailed progression in the skills of reading that has been devised by the subject leader. The learning of the sounds of letters is central to the approach and it links automatically to the learning of writing. Throughout the school, pupils have a series of short-term targets in reading. These are written on bookmark cards so pupils are constantly aware of them. Pupils' book bags are testament to the love of reading that is developed for it is not uncommon for pupils to have four or five books on the go at the same time. From Year 1 onwards, most pupils read at well above the expected levels for their age because they read with expression, are developing an interest in favourite authors, and are comfortable reading non-fiction books as well as stories. Each class has a well-organised and well-stocked library, so access to a book is immediate and this is especially useful in lessons, such as science or history, when a need to find out something suddenly arises.

Example of outstanding practice

Target-setting is aided by high quality resources to support a very well-structured progression in pupils' learning of the sounds of letters, the specific skills of reading and the features of good writing.

The subject leader has developed a wide range of high quality resources to support teaching and learning. One of the most successful is a set of 'Reading Focus cards' in the form of bookmarks that state a specific target for a pupil's current reading. Examples from the early stages, to be talked through with the pupil, are "I need to look carefully at the first letter to find out what sound the word starts with", or "I must pause at full stops when reading". Later it may be "Take a note of speech or question marks and show them when you read aloud". There are three versions of each card, one at the pupil's level, an adult version that is placed in a book that is taken home to inform parents of current targets, and a larger version for group reading activities in lessons with small groups of pupils who have the same target. As reading proficiency develops, reading extension targets give a focus to pupils who may be beyond the reading scheme. These promote knowledge and understanding that pupils can apply to their own writing, for example "How are the characters described? Find examples which show their appearance or personality". At all stages of learning, these resources provide pupils with clear targets to help them progress. They delight in the knowledge of that progress. To them, speaking, listening, reading and writing are all the same thing, a world of words where they are very much at home.

46. The focus on the sound of letters in reading is developed very successfully in the teaching and learning of writing. Standards of handwriting are high and this promotes a pride in their work amongst pupils. Teachers and teaching assistants also reinforce this respect for pupils' work, for example, through the high quality of presentation of collections of pupils' writing that are made into a class book. Pupils are given writing guides to help them focus on specific features of writing such as different ways of starting stories, alternative words, selecting from 'banks' of

adjectives or adverbs, according to stage of learning. This develops good vocabulary, an understanding of different styles of writing and a firm foundation of grammatical understanding. The quality of writing is high, whether it is non-fiction book reviews by pupils in Year 1, extended stories by pupils in Year 2, where seven pages is not an uncommon length, or well-structured reports of scientific investigations by pupils in Year 4. Pupils have occasional, but not enough, opportunities to word-process their writing. Their handwriting style can be reinforced by the computer software that has been developed by the subject leader but, again, this is underused. However, improvement in the use of information and communication technology is a priority target in the current school development plan as a consequence of the school's self-evaluation identifying it as a current weakness.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

47. The school very successfully promotes the development of speaking, listening, reading and writing in all subjects across the curriculum. Very good links in pupils' learning are established when, for example, their work in drama is related to themes in personal, social and health education or religious education. In Year 1, pupils have produced a very high standard of writing and art work to illustrate their drama on the Nativity theme. A 'Dictionary of Food' by pupils in Years 2 and 3 is very good application of use of reference books in science. In lessons in many subjects, teachers remind pupils of how their current targets in reading or writing can be applied and this means that every opportunity is being taken for reinforcement and development of pupils' literacy learning.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well and attain standards that are above national expectations in Year 2 and Year 4.
- Very good systems are in place for assessing and tracking pupils' progress.
- The quality of teaching is good and pupils throughout the school achieve well.
- Pupils' ability to solve problems independently is not sufficiently developed.
- Mathematics is led and managed well.

Commentary

48. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is broadly average. The consistently good quality of teaching throughout the school enables pupils of all abilities to achieve well and standards are above national expectations by Year 2 and Year 4. This reflects good improvement, since the last inspection, when standards were judged to be in line with national expectations at both stages.
49. Most pupils in Year 2 achieve standards well above national expectations in their knowledge and use of number, quickly recognising patterns and applying their understanding to new situations, whilst a small minority need support from an adult. By Year 4, many pupils have successfully developed their use and understanding of some algebraic symbols and know the properties of common geometric shapes, which is clearly above national expectations. The majority use a variety of strategies to solve problems involving number at the expected level for their age, but have some difficulty in independently tackling new tasks across the wider aspects of mathematics.
50. The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school. The significant strength of teaching is the consistently accurate use of assessment to measure pupils' progress, set clear targets for improvement and to track progress towards them. Teachers use their good knowledge of pupils' individual strengths and weaknesses to set work which, in the main, is at the right level of difficulty for the different ability groups within the class. Introductory sessions

to lessons are sharply focused and prepare pupils well for the next activity. However, it is at this point in some lessons that the pace of learning, although good overall, slows for individual pupils and could be better. This happens when a teacher gives the class sets of problems to work through, related to the lesson focus, for much of the remaining time. This means that some pupils spend over-long periods completing repetitive examples which they either find too difficult or too easy. In the lessons seen, some teachers were quick to spot that some pupils, for example, found the problems too easy and moved them on to a harder set, although this merely meant that the pupil began another repetitive exercise rather than have the opportunity to attempt a fresh challenge. Pupils are conscientious and have good attitudes to learning because the initial teaching is well planned and enthusiastic, although some show signs of restlessness when the activity becomes too repetitive.

51. The subject leader is providing good leadership which has resulted in the improvements in pupils' standards and the quality of teaching and learning since the last inspection. Her development plan for the subject acknowledges the need to improve pupils' confidence to independently solve new problems. This is necessary because teachers do not always intervene frequently enough during the activity session to provide tasks which challenge pupils' thinking and successfully develop these qualities.

Mathematics across the curriculum

52. The use of mathematical skills is not consistently planned for in other subjects and is an area for future consideration. However, there are many good examples of these skills being widely used across the curriculum, for example to find co-ordinates on the island of Cull in geography, and to measure the distance travelled by a projectile in a science lesson on forces.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievement is very good overall and standards are above national expectations in Year 2 and well above expectations in Year 4.
- Teaching and learning are good and assessment is very good.
- Subject leadership and management are very good.

Commentary

53. Pupils achieve very well in relation to their prior attainment. As a consequence, their standards are above the national expectations in Year 2 and well above expectations in Year 4. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs are achieving as well as their classmates and attaining similar standards. This is due largely to the positive impact of support staff on their learning. Often the levels of knowledge and understanding of pupils with special educational needs are as high as those of other pupils, but the quality of recording is lower amongst those with learning difficulties in writing. However, a consistent feature of pupils' work is the good use of scientific vocabulary. This is evident in oral work, when answering questions in lessons, and in much of the written work. From clear labelling of diagrams and drawings in Years 1 and 2, to well-structured accounts of investigations in Years 3 and 4, pupils are using and understanding the correct terminology. The precise explanations, given by pupils in Year 4, of differences between parallel and series electrical circuits, were evidence of the good quality of their learning.
54. Teaching is good and a significant feature of the activities planned by teachers that leads to good learning by pupils is the provision of learning activities that are matched well to the needs of pupils of different abilities. Strong emphasis is placed on developing pupils' good understanding of scientific enquiry through a consistent 'hands-on' approach. In all the science lessons seen, pupils were involved in exploration, experiments and challenges which

encouraged their thinking and evaluation skills. Teachers prepare resources carefully, use teaching assistants effectively, and constantly challenge their pupils to draw scientific conclusions. Learning activities are often imaginative, such the identification, by pupils in Year 3, of all the different types of force used when riding a bicycle. The challenge set for pupils in Year 4 to make a Christmas card on which a parallel circuit was incorporated, in order to make tree lights, was a similarly stimulating task. Such learning activities promote thought and discussion which is consistently extended by teachers as they encourage pupils to use what they know to find out what they do not know. Teachers constantly challenge pupils and develop their scientific thinking through good questioning. They are always well prepared for extending pupils' knowledge when ready. Thus particularly able pupils are moved forward well in their learning.

55. The contribution of science to the development of pupils' speaking and listening skills is very well developed because teachers constantly ask pupils to explain their reasoning and use correct scientific vocabulary. Such features of lessons aid teachers' assessments of pupils' ongoing progress and this awareness of what pupils know and what needs developing is strengthened by good quality, informative marking and very good procedures for more formal assessment of their learning, for example, at the end of a topic. This information is used very well in planning future work.
56. The leadership and management of science are very good. The subject leader produces purposeful annual action plans and used the last academic year, when science was a priority in the school improvement plan, for gaining a thorough evidence of the quality of teaching and pupils' standards throughout the school. This has led to good refinement of provision, most noticeably in teachers' planning of tasks that are matched to the needs of pupils of different abilities. This has had good impact on pupils' standards, which are now higher than at the time of the last inspection, and which are an indicator of the good improvement overall since that time.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

No direct teaching of **information and communication technology** was observed and, therefore, no overall judgement on provision can be reached. An up-to-date computer suite has been developed since the last inspection and teachers throughout the school plan an extended weekly session which is mainly devoted to the teaching of the skills required by the national curriculum. The limited samples of previous work seen and the discussions with pupils, while they demonstrated their computer skills, and their understanding of information and communication technology, indicate that pupils in Year 2 and Year 4 have adequate confidence and skills for their age. The discussion also confirmed that opportunities to use computers and other technology in the classroom were infrequent. Discussion with members of staff confirmed that the suite is only timetabled for use during the second part of the school week. This clearly indicates that this potentially very useful facility is under-used, so that opportunities for the use of information and communication technology across the curriculum are very limited.

HUMANITIES

No lessons were seen in **geography** and, therefore, no overall judgement on provision could be reached. Very little of the current year's work was available due to the organisation of the timetable, but a study of the work of pupils in the previous year's Year 2 and Year 4 indicates that there is an adequate curriculum in place with an appropriate balance of attention to subject knowledge and technical skills. **Religious education** was not a part of this inspection, as it is inspected separately by a team from the Diocese.

History

Provision in history is **satisfactory**.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Teaching makes a positive contribution to the development of speaking and listening and writing skills.

Commentary

57. STANDARDS IN YEAR 2 AND YEAR 4 ARE IN LINE WITH NATIONAL EXPECTATIONS AND PUPILS ARE ACHIEVING SATISFACTORILY. THE SAMPLES OF WORK SEEN FROM ALL CLASSES INDICATE THAT THERE IS ADEQUATE COVERAGE OF THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM OVERALL. PUPILS BEGIN BY GAINING AN APPRECIATION OF THEIR PERSONAL HISTORY AND BY YEAR 2 HAVE A REASONABLE KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF SIGNIFICANT EVENTS FROM THE PAST, SUCH AS THE GREAT FIRE OF LONDON AND THE FIRST WORLD WAR. BY YEAR 4, MOST PUPILS' RESEARCH SKILLS ARE SUFFICIENTLY DEVELOPED, FOR EXAMPLE TO ENABLE THEM TO USE REFERENCE BOOKS OR THE INTERNET TO OBTAIN INFORMATION RELEVANT TO THEIR WORK ON THE ANCIENT EGYPTIANS. AT THIS STAGE, THE MAJORITY ACCURATELY PLACE THE ANCIENT EGYPTIAN PERIOD ON THE HISTORICAL TIME LINE AND ARE AWARE OF THE ROLE OF ARCHAEOLOGISTS IN UNCOVERING FIRST HAND EVIDENCE.
58. Taking full account of pupils' previous work and the lessons seen, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. A lesson seen in Year 1 was very good. This was because the teacher had made very good use of positive relationships with the community to invite pupils' grandparents to complete a questionnaire about homes then and now. They had responded very well and had also sent in an interesting range of objects for the class to look. These prompted lively and articulate discussion from the entire class. The observations and work sampling also indicated that teachers throughout the school encourage pupils to write at length and in their own words, which successfully supports the development of writing skills. On the other hand, pupils' previous work also shows a lack of depth in the coverage of some topics and this is clearly an area for future development.
59. Leadership of the subject is satisfactory. There are many positive features within teaching and learning, throughout the school, and there is clearly good potential to improve. Teachers are taking an investigative approach to the subject by making good use of human resources and artefacts and by arranging visits to places of interest such as Dorset Museum. Insufficient time is devoted to the teaching of history, limiting the depth at which the subject is covered.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

There were no lessons in **art and design** and **design and technology** during the period of inspection, therefore, no overall judgements have been made about provision. However, the evidence of pupils' work and the high quality of the broad range of learning opportunities provided indicate that these areas of the curriculum have significant strengths.

60. In **art and design** the work of all pupils of all ages, including those with special educational needs, is above expectations. This is an improvement on the last inspection when standards matched expectations. In Years 1 and 2, pupils demonstrate a strong sense of pattern, good control of line and colour in sketches and paintings, and a well-developed ability to create imaginative artwork with different materials. Pupils experiment confidently with design, as was seen in the evolving designs for book illustrations and occasion cards designed by pupils in Year 2. In Year 1, pupils have used initial designs for a play park successfully for creating models. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 are learning techniques well. They make good use of a task such as colour mixing to place 12 shades of a colour in order, from light to dark, when they sketch, print and paint with media such as water colour, chalk and pastel.

61. Teachers plan a wide range of learning opportunities within school and beyond. The local environment is used well, not just as a stimulus for art, but also as a venue for celebration of pupils' work. Locations, such as the local church and garden centre, have display boards for pupils' work and are one of the many very good links with the community. The school involves pupils in local and national initiatives whenever possible. A collage has been displayed at the National Gallery following the school's participation in a national project. The naming of each class after a well-known artist is another indicator of the prominence of art and design in the life of the school.
62. In **design and technology**, a scrutiny and analysis of teachers' planning, pupils' past work and classroom displays, indicate that standards are above national expectations in Years 2 and 4, which is an improvement on the last inspection when they matched expectations. Planning is comprehensive and follows the recommendations of national guidelines that ensure appropriate progression for pupils across the age groups. Pupils experience a good balance between design, making and evaluating their products in order to consider how they might be improved. In Year 2, pupils' learning about mechanisms such as axles and wheels in vehicles and wind-up mechanisms is consolidated well. This is achieved by thoroughness in the different processes, for example at the design stage, where ideas are recorded, materials listed and stages in production identified, and at the production stage where good skills are evident in the quality of the finished model. In Year 2, pupils' vehicles and articulated human figures are evidence of this good quality. Good links with other curriculum subjects, for example, mathematics, literacy and science are evident in planning and pupils' work.

Music

Provision in music is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good teaching by the specialist teacher has good impact on pupils' achievement and standards.
- Pupils achieve very well and their standards are well above national expectations throughout the school.

Commentary

63. The very good provision at the time of the last inspection has been maintained. A part-time teacher is temporarily teaching all classes. The quality of teaching and learning is very good and a broad, well-planned curriculum is provided. Teaching is enthusiastic and lessons proceed at a lively pace that captures pupils' attentions very effectively. Expectations are high, yet realistically matched to stages of learning. The recognition of when pupils need more time, further repetition, or guidance on how to improve, is a key feature of teaching. This ensures that learning builds successfully step-by-step and pupils flourish in an environment where they are helped to achieve success. Learning activities provide a good balance between listening, performing and evaluating and pupils are given good opportunities to work collaboratively, which has very good impact on their social development.
64. High standards are evident in all age groups and especially so in singing. Unaccompanied singing, by small and large groups, is of a particularly high melodic and expressive quality. Pupils develop a very good knowledge and understanding of the elements of music. This was evident in a lesson in which pupils in Years 3 and 4 were in two groups, with each group composing accompaniments to a song on tuned and untuned percussion instruments. Each composition had prescribed elements and had to include a range of features such as a two or three note chord, a particular rhythm, a certain texture. The songs were then performed simultaneously, an activity made possible because both were in the same scale and the varied elements were complementary. This was skilful, knowledgeable planning by the teacher. The resultant performance, after a short period of group discussion, experimentation

and practice, was of a very high standard and indicated the very good quality of pupils' past learning as well as the immediate intentions of the lesson. The quality of teaching contributed much to these high standards. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, achieved very well in the course of this lesson, with their learning about music and their performance skills advancing significantly.

65. The very good provision for music includes a very good range of resources and good opportunities for additional music activities outside class lessons. These include a choir, a recorder group and instrumental tuition is offered on violin and trumpet. The curriculum guidelines used by the teacher provide opportunities for pupils to experience a very good range of music from different cultures, both as a listening activity and as a stimulus for their own music making.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good.

Commentary

66. The good features of provision at the time of the last inspection have been maintained and the overall quality of teaching has improved. This is now very good overall, being particularly effective with pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3. The school successfully overcomes its physical limitations by making good use of facilities in the nearby Middle School hall and gymnasium, as well as the village hall adjacent to the school, and the village playing field. By working so hard to compensate for its lack of facilities, the school achieves good provision for the subject. In the lessons observed, pupils' good achievement was evident as they attained standards that, in Year 1, exceeded expectations for this age group in gymnastics. In Years 2 and 3, standards matched expectations in games and, in Years 3 and 4, standards matched expectations in dance. The very good attention to the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs, including visual impairment and physical difficulties, enabled these pupils to achieve as well as their classmates. Often, this was made possible by the very good work of teaching assistants, but also by the pupils in all classes who showed very good levels of co-operation and willingness to provide help and support.
67. The very good teaching and learning was epitomised by a gymnastic lesson with pupils in Year 1. This had characteristics of very thorough planning, a teacher's very good level of subject knowledge, and clear explanation of the purpose of activities in terms of what was to be learned. Additionally, by carefully observing and selecting individual pupils to demonstrate their work, the teacher presented the class with appropriate visual models of how actions should be performed. This observation, and subsequent practice, had very good impact on pupils' learning. This, like all lessons, had well-structured periods of warming up and cooling down and there was good emphasis on the principles of health-related exercise in the teacher's questioning and in pupils' activity. In all lessons, the very good contribution of teaching assistants was observed. Working with small groups in a games lesson with pupils in Years 2 and 3, teaching assistants overcame cramped conditions with good organisation and had the confidence to modify skill practices for individuals or pairs. This confidence resulted from the teacher's very good briefing on what pupils were to learn from the activities. Knowing this, teaching assistants showed good initiative in their guidance to and organisation of pupils.
68. Good leadership and management by the deputy headteacher are being strengthened by the school's involvement in the local schools sports co-ordination scheme. This provides good opportunities for teachers to develop their already good subject expertise still further.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

No lessons with **personal, social and health education** as a principal focus were observed, therefore, no overall judgement can be made on provision. On an informal level, there is a very strong commitment, on the part of all adults, to foster a sense of responsibility among pupils as members of the school community. The school has recently established a more formally planned programme for personal, social and health education to ensure step-by-step development from year to year. The scheme enables pupils to explore a range of social and moral issues and to make important choices about their contribution to both the school and the wider community as they grow older. It incorporates regular visits to the school from relevant members of the community.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	2
How inclusive the school is	1
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	2
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	2
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)	2
Attendance	2
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	2
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	1
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

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