

INSPECTION REPORT

ST MARY'S CE VC FIRST SCHOOL

Charminster, Nr Dorchester

LEA area: Dorset

Unique Reference Number: 113784

Headteacher: Mrs M J Davies

Reporting inspector: Mrs D Zachary
2940

Dates of inspection: 27th – 30th September 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 707232

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First
Type of control:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	Four to Nine
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	West Hill Charminster Dorchester Dorset DT2 9RD
Telephone number:	01305 263880
Fax number:	01305 251436
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr B Moger
Date of previous inspection:	7 th – 9 th May 1996

This report is © Crown Copyright 1999 but may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated. Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school.

Under the Education (Schools) Act 1992 and the Education Act 1993, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Deborah Zachary, Registered Inspector	Science Design and technology Information technology (IT)	Attainment and progress Teaching The curriculum and assessment Leadership and management Staffing Accommodation and learning resources Efficiency of the school.
Gill Anderson, Lay Inspector		Attitudes, behaviour and personal development. Attendance Support, guidance and pupils' welfare Partnership with parents and the community Equal opportunities.
Anthony Green	Mathematics History Geography Religious education (RE), Physical education (PE).	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
Tom Richardson	English Art Music	Special educational needs, under-fives.

The inspection contractor was:

QAA
Herringston Barn
Herringston
Dorchester
Dorset DT2 9PU

Telephone 01305 251591

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints which are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Registrar
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

MAIN FINDINGS

Paragraph

- What the school does well
- Where the school has weaknesses
- How the school has improved since the last inspection
- Standards in subjects
- Quality of teaching
- Other aspects of the school
- The parents' views of the school

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

INTRODUCTION

- Characteristics of the school 1 - 3
- Key indicators

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Educational standards achieved by pupils at the school

- Attainment and progress 4 – 11
- Attitudes, behaviour and personal development 12 – 16
- Attendance 17

Quality of education provided

- Teaching 18 – 26
- The curriculum and assessment 27 – 33
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development 34 – 38
- Support, guidance and pupils' welfare 39 – 43
- Partnership with parents and the community 44 – 47

The management and efficiency of the school

- Leadership and management 48 – 51
- Staffing, accommodation and learning resources 52 – 54
- The efficiency of the school 55 – 58

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

- Areas of learning for children under five 59 – 66
- English, mathematics and science 67 – 88
- Other subjects or courses 89 – 117

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

- Summary of inspection evidence 118 - 119
- Data and indicators

MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

- Standards in English, mathematics, science, religious education (RE) and information technology (IT) are above average by the time pupils leave the school. They also make good progress in design and technology and physical education (PE).
- Pupils have very good relationships with each other and the teachers, and their personal development is very good.
- The teaching is good – teachers set clear targets for pupils and question them well.
- The school is led well.
- The school makes very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development – for example it promotes good behaviour very well.
- Pupils are cared for well and parents are greatly involved in the work of the school.

Where the school has weaknesses

- I. The school has no very important weaknesses.

In the context of the school's many strengths there are no key weaknesses to be included in the governors' action plan. However there are a small number of minor weaknesses identified in the full report, which should be considered as a basis for the plan. The governors' plan will be sent to all parents or guardians of pupils at the school.

How the school has improved since the last inspection

The school has made a good improvement overall since the last inspection. The school's response to it was good and the resulting action plan shows that staff and governors gave careful thought to the best way to proceed. Good improvements have been made over the last three years, especially in teaching quality, and with a particularly impressive rise in standards since 1998. The key issues have all been addressed at least satisfactorily, and big improvements have been made on the school development plan, in assessment and planning, and in monitoring. Very effective management systems are now in place and overall the school has a good capacity to improve still further.

Standards in subjects

The table shows the standards achieved by seven year olds in 1998 based on the National Curriculum tests:

Performance in	Compared with all schools	Compared with similar schools	Key
Reading	C	D	<i>well above average</i> A
Writing	D	D	<i>above average</i> B
Mathematics	D	D	<i>average</i> C
			<i>below average</i> D
			<i>well below average</i> E

The information shows, for example, that while standards in reading were average, they were not as good as those in similar schools. However there have been important improvements over the last year.

II.The 1999 National Curriculum test results showed a significant improvement in reading and mathematics.

III.Standards are now above average in English, mathematics and science at seven and when pupils leave the school.

IV.Standards in information technology and religious education are not tested nationally at seven. However inspectors judged that these standards are also above average at seven and when pupils leave the school.

V.Pupils make good progress in design and technology and in physical education.

• **Quality of teaching**

Teaching in:	Under 5	5 - 7 years	7 - 9 years
English	Good	Good	Good
Mathematics	Satisfactory	Good	Good
Science	-	Satisfactory	Good
Information technology	-	Good	Satisfactory
Religious education	-	Good	Good
Other subjects	Good	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

Teaching was satisfactory or better in 97 per cent of lessons seen, and unsatisfactory in three per cent. About 56 per cent were good or very good, with 22 percent being very good.

Teachers usually identify exactly what they want pupils to learn, and question pupils well.

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that strengths outweigh any weaknesses.

• **Other aspects of the school**

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Behaviour of pupils in and around the school is good. School runs in an orderly way. Pupils courteous and very trustworthy.
Attendance	Good - above the national average. Pupils punctual.
Ethos*	Good. Working relationships are good and school is popular. School meets its aims well.
Leadership and management	Good at all levels. Head provides good management with a very perceptive understanding. Governors bring a wealth of expertise. Financial resources used well.
Curriculum	Broad curriculum includes all required subjects. Planning is sound – clearly shows what pupils should learn. Good range of strategies for assessing pupils' attainment and progress.
Pupils with special educational needs	Good progress when supported in small groups because of expertise of staff. Satisfactory progress overall – in whole-class lessons support is often through questioning rather than adapted work. Management and provision good overall.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Very good provision overall. Strengths in spiritual, moral and social development. Cultural satisfactory overall. Best at promoting local cultures but not yet effective in promoting understanding of British multicultural society.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Good number of experienced teachers and well qualified classroom support staff. Very well organised programme of professional development. Accommodation and learning resources satisfactory.
Value for money	Although costs above average, results are good. Good value for money.

* *Ethos is the climate for learning: attitudes to work, relationships and the commitment to high standards.*

• **The parents' views of the school**

What most parents like about the school	What some parents are not happy about
VI.The school is approachable VII.It encourages parents to play an active part VIII.Their children like the school IX.The school gives a clear understanding of what is taught X.It enables children to reach a good standard of work	XI.A small number were concerned about too much variation in homework XII.A small number wanted more extra-curricular opportunities

The inspectors agreed with the strengths the parents mentioned. They found that the quantity of homework is appropriate this term, though there was some inconsistency last year. They found that the extra-curricular opportunities were sound.

· **KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION**

There are no key issues for the school to address. However, in the context of its many strengths, there are some minor points for improvement to be considered as the basis for an action plan.

These are indicated in paragraphs 20, 33, 38 and 53.

· **INTRODUCTION**

· **Characteristics of the school**

1. St Mary's First School is small compared to other schools, with 148 pupils on roll. Children begin school in the September of the academic year in which they will be five. They attend the Reception class part-time throughout the Autumn term and attend full-time from January. Of the pupils on roll, 20 were under the age of five at the time of the inspection. This latter group are described as under-fives, rather than pupils at either key stage. There are about the same number of boys as girls, and no pupils from ethnic minorities. The school is set in a village but draws its pupils from a wider area. The pupils' social and economic backgrounds are average, with about 15 per cent entitled to free school meals - though not all of the pupils entitled to do so take up a meal. This is an increase compared to the last inspection. The attainment of pupils who enter the school is average overall. It covers a range of levels, but with many having below average speaking skills. Aspects of their knowledge and understanding of the world, however, are above average. There are comparatively high numbers with special educational needs. Twenty-seven pupils in the school have these needs (on the register at Stage 2 or higher), and three have Statements of Special Educational Need.

1. **Summary of aims and priorities:**

2. The school aims to be:

- a school where high quality teaching takes place;
- a school which promotes a friendly, safe and caring atmosphere;
- a school where everyone is valued;
- a school that develops in all its children an appetite to know and a capacity to learn;
- a school that is an integral part of a supportive community and develops the Christian ethos within the school.

3. Priorities for development 1999-2000 are:

- curriculum – numeracy, ICT, review of National Curriculum, reviewing boys' achievement, additional literacy support at Key Stage 2, implementing new schemes of work for art, music, and physical education;
- personnel – induction of new staff and review of acting deputy head post and associated staffing;
- administration – review value for money of providers in the light of new delegation of services;
- buildings and grounds – some replacement work, work on main entrance, courtyard project;
- pupil care – monitor special educational needs work;
- community – continue courtyard project.

• **Key Indicators**

• **Attainment at Key Stage 1¹**

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1998	15	14	29

• National Curriculum Test/Task		Reading task	Writing	Mathematics
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	11	12	13
	Girls	12	11	11
	Total	23	23	24
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	79	79	83
	National	80	81	84

• Teacher Assessments		Reading	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	12	14	15
	Girls	12	12	12
	Total	24	26	27
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	83	90	93
	National	81	85	86

• **Attendance**

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year:

		%
Authorised absence	School	4.6
	National comparative data	5.7
Unauthorised absence	School	0.2
	National comparative data	0.5

• **Exclusions**

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during the previous year:

	Number
Fixed period	0
Permanent	0

• **Quality of teaching**

Percentage of teaching observed which is:

	%
Very good or better	22
Satisfactory or better	97
Less than satisfactory	3

¹ Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

· EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

· Attainment and progress

1. The results of National Curriculum tests taken by seven year olds in 1998 (SATs) were below the national average in writing and mathematics. They were in-line with the national average in reading, as were the teachers' assessments of pupils' standards in science. The results that year, however, were below average compared to similar schools. Results of the two previous years had been about the same. A significant improvement in results took place between 1998 and 1999, however, as a result of a number of strategies the school put into place. One of the key factors was the introduction of target setting and a focus on the most able pupils. Standards for the majority were at least maintained and there was a very significant improvement in the percentages of pupils who reached higher levels. These improvements have been maintained and inspection evidence shows that standards are now above average at the end of Key Stage 1 overall, and in English, mathematics, science, information technology and religious education. This is a significant improvement on the last inspection.
2. Pupils in Year 4 have also taken national tests, which are optional for schools. In 1999 the results showed that the pupils were reaching average standards in writing, but above average standards in reading and particularly in mathematics. The judgement of the inspection team is that by the time the pupils leave the school standards are above average overall. They are also above average in English, mathematics, science, information technology and religious education. This is consistent with the assessment results and is again a significant improvement on the last inspection. The current pupils and those in last year's Year 4 have made a particularly praiseworthy improvement compared to their Year 2 results. This has largely been because of the quality of teaching they have received.
3. Pupils enter the school with average attainment and leave it with attainment that is above average. Most make good progress in both key stages and when they are under five years old. By five years old they attain the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning. They reach above average standards in personal and social development, knowledge and understanding of the world, and in aspects of physical development.
4. The pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their prior attainment when they are supported in small groups. This is as a result of the high level of expertise of the staff who work with them. They make satisfactory progress overall, as do the very highest attainers, as there are a number of lessons in which they are given the same work as a whole-class, rather than something slightly adapted to be more supportive or challenging. There is no significant difference in the progress made by boys and girls.
5. Pupils make good progress through the school in English. Pupils reach above average standards in reading by the end of Key Stage 1 and Year 4, and have made good progress. By Year 2, most pupils read a simple text accurately and can decipher new words in a variety of ways. Pupils in Year 4 look ahead in their reading to take note of punctuation; this helps them read with appropriate expression. Most of these older pupils read with fluency and enjoy reading for pleasure at school and at home. The pupils make satisfactory progress in their writing and spelling. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils write with joined up script and use capital letters and full stops. Pupils in Year 4 show progress in their spelling and punctuation, but a large proportion do still need to refer to other texts to write words such as 'because' with accuracy. Pupils can use their literacy skills in a variety of subjects. In science in Year 3, for example, they use subject specific vocabulary such as 'dispersed' and 'scattered' to describe the way seeds are spread. By the end of Key Stage 1 and Year 4, the pupils' speaking and listening skills are average. During Key Stage 1 they communicate their ideas with a growing vocabulary, using and understanding sentences containing several key words and ideas. By Year 4 most can confidently discuss the books they are reading, using coherent sentences, and they can extend their arguments with clear logic.
6. Pupils make good progress in all areas of mathematics. By the end of Key Stage 1 the majority can identify odd and even numbers and add and subtract small numbers. The more able can add and subtract three digit numbers. By the end of Year 4 pupils remember number facts well and can add, subtract, multiply and divide. The more able can multiply three figure numbers by two digits. The pupils can also describe their mental strategies for recalling number facts. The pupils' numeracy skills support their work in other subjects, and in other areas of

mathematics.

7. Progress is satisfactory in science through Key Stage 1 and it is good through Key Stage 2. In both key stages progress is strongest for middle attaining pupils. The pupils do well in both their knowledge and understanding and in their investigating. In information technology, progress is good through Key Stage 1 and satisfactory through Key Stage 2. Even as early as the start of Year 2 a typical pupil is already using the information on a CD-ROM purposefully. During Key Stage 2 the pupils extend their knowledge of how a computer may be used throughout the curriculum subjects - for example to organise text and create effective posters. Pupils also make good progress in Key Stage 1 and sound progress overall in Key Stage 2 in religious education. By the end of Year 4, they understand the importance of religious beliefs to all people.
8. In the other subjects, progress is at least satisfactory and it is good in design and technology and in physical education. In design, for example, they initially work through drawing pictures of what they want to do. By Year 2 they move on to making a series of sequenced instructions - for example for a recipe. By Year 4 they understand that plans have to be redrafted and adapted as they develop. In physical education, by the end of Key Stage 1 pupils display a good range of suppleness and control when balancing and jumping. By the end of Year 4 pupils work purposefully to produce improvements and they make good use of practice and repetition in order to refine performance.

11. Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

1. The attitudes of the pupils under five, and in both key stages, are good overall. Attitudes in physical education are very good in both key stages. Pupils respond well to questions and are keen to answer. Pupils concentrate well and even those under five years of age stay on task. They work as part of a group and are eager to explore new learning and solve practical problems. Occasionally, if the pace is slow, and activities too long, pupils can become fidgety as the lesson progresses. Pupils with special educational needs have good attitudes to their work and try hard to improve their reading and writing.
2. There have been no exclusions in recent years, and the behaviour of pupils in and around the school is good. The community runs in an orderly way, with classroom routines established early. At the time of the inspection, Reception children had been in school for only three weeks, but already understood conventions such as sitting quietly on the carpet and waiting their turn. Pupils are courteous, very trustworthy and respect property. Resources are handled responsibly - for example in science where pupils were very interested in seeds, and keen to touch, but handled them carefully.
3. The relationships between pupils, and with teachers and adults are very good. In physical education, for example, pupils are very supportive of each other including those with special educational needs, responding with help and praise and ignoring inappropriate behaviour. As a result those pupils with Statements of Special Educational Needs are confident to take part in class activities. In science in Year 4 they were very supportive and clapped each other. In English, pupils work well collaboratively, developing the ability to discuss work constructively with one another, and respecting each others' contributions.
4. The personal development of the pupils is very good. They are particularly good at independent working, for example in mathematics and in information technology. Here, even at the start of Year 2 pupils load up a disk and log on. The pupils show initiative and persevere well. They show pride in their work, which they are happy to show to visitors. They give good support to charity for those less fortunate than themselves. They are able to listen quietly to music, and explain how it makes them feel – even in Reception. When pupils share their news after a weekend they listen to each other, and often show a genuine interest.
5. The good attitudes and behaviour of pupils identified at the last inspection continue to have a positive impact on standards, and the very good relationships remain a strength of the school.

16. Attendance

1. Since the last inspection attendance has remained good and above the national average, with unauthorised absence below the national average. Pupils are punctual at the start of the school day and for lessons. Attendance makes a good contribution to attainment and progress.

17. QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

17. Teaching

2. The quality of teaching is a strength of the school. It was satisfactory or better in virtually all lessons observed during the inspection, and it was good or very good in more than half of the lessons seen. More than one in five lessons was of very good quality. The last inspection found no very good teaching and 15 percent of lessons were unsatisfactory. Weak planning, in that lesson objectives were not clear, was a key feature then, and there was not enough teacher intervention. Both lesson objectives and the use of questions are now particular strengths, and they have had a major impact on the way standards have risen throughout the school. Well-focused professional development and improved monitoring of lessons have been particularly effective in improving the quality of the teaching.
3. There is no significant difference in the quality of teaching in the different key stages. The teaching is good overall in English, mathematics, religious education, physical education, science and information technology. It is satisfactory in art and music. There were examples of very good teaching in a variety of different subjects during the inspection. There was not enough evidence to make an overall judgement of teaching in design and technology, history or geography.
4. Pupils who have special educational needs are taught well when they are withdrawn for extra help. They are also taught well in class where their needs are explicitly considered - for example when teachers plan for them to work in a group, and prepare activities matched effectively to their needs. In both these situations the pupils make good progress. Teachers deploy assistants well to work with pupils. These assistants are highly skilled, provide good quality tuition and are an asset to the teaching team in each class. However, in some whole-class situations pupils with special educational needs and those who are higher attainers are given exactly the same lesson as the majority. Teachers always try to support or challenge with questioning, and this usually ensures that the pupils make satisfactory progress. Generally, however, where work is aimed at the middle, the progress of the majority is better than that of pupils with special needs or the most able.
5. The teaching of pupils who are under five years old shows a good understanding of the learning needs of young children. Expectations are high, and children are managed well. Lessons are planned satisfactorily to include a mixture of class tuition and small group or individual tasks. Activities are organised effectively so that the teacher and support staff can make good use of all opportunities for learning. Support staff and parents are deployed well to help with group activities and assessment.
6. The quality of literacy teaching is good. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of how best to extend pupils' literacy skills. Lessons are planned well within the framework of the National Literacy Strategy and the teachers explain clearly so that all pupils know what it is they are expected to learn. They organise the class into groups well, and the work set for each group is effectively matched to their needs. This enables pupils with higher attainments to extend their knowledge in literacy. Teachers use plenary sessions well to review what pupils have learnt and to show what they will be learning next.
7. The quality of numeracy teaching is also good. This is an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection report. Introductions are usually well paced and practical activities well chosen. Time is generally used well at the end of lessons for pupils to review and explain their work and so share and refine their understanding. The good standards of discipline in the school, and its emphasis on independent learning skills, stand teachers in good stead in both literacy and numeracy teaching.
8. Lesson plans are well linked to half-termly plans and show exactly what pupils are expected to learn during lessons. These learning objectives are often shared with older pupils at the start of the lesson. In a Year 4 mathematics lesson, for example, objectives were recorded both on the board and on worksheet(s) and pupils were encouraged to help each other to gain the necessary understanding. As a result of the clear learning objectives, teachers focus closely on the things they want pupils to learn and their questioning of pupils is often of a very high standard. The questioning also enables teachers to assess how well pupils have understood the lesson, and to give support where needed. As well as having good basic lesson skills like planning, many teachers are able to communicate their enthusiasm to the class in a way that entertains. In a Year 1 mathematics lesson the pupils even cheered when they were given their work.

9. The teachers usually use resources very well to stimulate pupils' interest. For example, in a Year 1 science lesson the teacher had collected a wide variety of examples of seeds to ensure that each pupil would have the opportunity to investigate different textures, colours and sizes. As a result the pupils were engrossed in their work, and their concentration led to good progress. The teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach, and this enables the discussions they have with pupils to range widely in lessons and helps the lessons to flow smoothly. Lessons also flow smoothly because the teachers manage pupils well. Very occasionally the lesson timing becomes out of balance, for example with too long an introduction.

10. Marking and homework are both satisfactory. Work is corrected and in some cases useful comments are added to help pupils improve. Parents were concerned that in the last year there were inconsistencies in the way homework was used – for example that an older year group had more homework than a younger. There is some evidence that this was the case, but this year the homework is appropriate.

26.

The curriculum and assessment

1. The school provides a broad curriculum that includes all National Curriculum subjects together with religious education. Appropriate health and drugs education and sex education are given through personal and social education lessons and through science and religious education. All subject programmes fully cover what is required, and they are generally well balanced. In mathematics and science, for example, investigational approaches are integrated well, and in design and technology attention is given to teaching the methodology of design as well as skills of cutting and constructing. The curriculum for pupils who are under five years old is soundly based on the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning and links effectively with the National Curriculum.
2. There is a satisfactory provision of extra-curricular activities, given the size of the school. Older pupils have opportunities to participate in music activities such as the recorder club, and there is also a gardening club. At present there is no extra-curricular sport other than swimming in the summer. Should the opportunity arise this is something several parents would welcome.
3. The Literacy Hour has been introduced well and is having a positive effect on standards. The school provides a full curriculum that is based securely on the National Literacy Strategy. It has made a carefully thought through adjustment to recommended time allocations by timetabling guided reading separately to allow more time for extended writing as part of the literacy hour. Planned opportunities are provided well in other subjects to extend the literacy skills of pupils. The school is also introducing the Numeracy Hour, in common with others across the country. As yet, as expected, this is still being developed, and numeracy is less well covered across subjects other than mathematics than is literacy. However, in mathematics, long and medium-term planning for numeracy is good and clearly identifies learning objectives.
4. The provision for pupils with special education needs is good, but outcomes are best for those who are withdrawn or supported in small groups. Here the skills of assistants and staff are maximised and the pupils make good progress. They are given good quality individual education plans, with generally clear targets set for pupils to attain, and these are reviewed well.
5. The planning system is sound with subject-specific guidance providing a long-term framework. These subject plans are then combined into half-termly or termly units for the different year groups; these units identify what exactly should be taught and when. The specific learning outcomes that are identified week by week help the teachers to produce well-focussed lesson objectives, a key development since the last inspection. The long and shorter-term planning for English, physical education and religious education is of a good standard. In English, weekly plans for literacy are based on the National Literacy Strategy and are, again, explicit in the notes that are made about what pupils should learn. Teachers also record how those learning points will be achieved on these weekly plans.
6. The school has successfully put a good range of strategies for assessing pupils' attainment and progress in place. The inclusion of learning objectives in planning has meant that teachers are able to identify in advance what they want to assess, and the current procedures represent an improvement since the previous inspection. The system of keeping notes on the back of planning sheets is effective. It is supplemented by more detailed procedures in English, mathematics and science, which give a good framework in these subjects. Individual targets are identified for numeracy and literacy, and this makes particularly good use of the assessment data. Assessment in other subjects is adequate, with strengths developing in physical education and religious education. Longer-term assessment, such as national tests, is appropriately carried out and the results are analysed well at co-ordinator and senior management level. Results of Key Stage 1 National Curriculum assessments in earlier years, for example, showed that the school was not getting enough pupils to the higher levels in writing. A close focus on this was the result, and the percentage reaching the higher level rose from 0 per cent to 10 per cent in 1999.
7. The initial base-line assessment for the youngest pupils is very thorough. It is completed in the autumn term and results are used appropriately to plan what each child should learn. It provides an initial way of identifying pupils who may have special educational needs as well as clarifying what the majority need to learn next. Parents are consulted appropriately and children can be placed on the register of special educational needs, where their progress is monitored closely. External advice is sought where necessary and the school acts upon

this effectively to support each pupil. The school expresses genuine concern for the learning needs of every pupil. However, this results in a higher than expected number of pupils being placed on the register of special educational needs at its lowest levels, and in some cases pupils are not moved down the stages quickly enough. Some pupils are being catered for separately when their needs could be met with well targeted work in whole class sessions.

33. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

8. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall. The school has a great strength in the opportunities it creates for promoting spiritual, moral and social development. The 1996 inspection report found pupils' personal development to be good, spiritual development sound, moral, social and cultural development to be good. Overall, there has been an improvement since the previous inspection.
9. The very good opportunities for spiritual development are provided through well planned acts of collective worship and religious education, and a variety of moments of reflection in other subjects. The quality of collective worship is very good. Through appropriate stories, prayers and music pupils are encouraged to reflect on the wonders of the world and to perceive their place in it. For example, during the inspection week class, year group and whole-school assemblies followed the same theme of 'creatures great and small'. This included discussion of and reflection on classical music about 'The Swan'. During the inspection, however, no opportunities were given for pupils to sing hymns. During the school day moments are set aside in the classroom for prayer and reflection. Planned activities in lessons provide useful opportunities for pupils to express their inner feelings and broaden their spiritual experience. Other world faiths and beliefs, such as Hinduism and Judaism, are explored well in religious education. The majority of the classrooms use attractive displays to stimulate and celebrate pupils work.
10. The school develops pupils' moral awareness very well. The approach and attitudes of the headteacher and staff provide pupils with very good guidance on right and wrong and on the values of fairness and honesty. All staff act as very good role models. School and class rules are well known by the pupils and discussed at the start of each term. Assemblies to celebrate good work encourage good behaviour and a sense of pride and self-esteem. Pupils learn from an early age the difference between right and wrong and have a clear sense of these values. In Year 3 pupils learn about the moral dilemmas caused by human activities on the environment. This includes a visit from a puppet theatre and its 'waste monster'. The pupils are encouraged to be honest, diligent and trustworthy through the responsibilities they are given daily.
11. The school promotes the social development of pupils very well. From beginning school, pupils are encouraged to relate well to each other, to take turns and to share willingly. The daily activity of choosing a special person in Reception is particularly beneficial. Each member of the class gives a positive description of the person chosen and this helps to raise children's self-esteem and makes every individual feel valued. Examples of the very good provision elsewhere are seen in the many times that pupils are asked to work in pairs or groups, usually by mixed gender. Class activities encourage independence. Older pupils have a range of responsibilities such as preparing the hall for assemblies, ringing the school bell, working the tape recorder in assemblies. Two Year 4 residential visits promote pupils' social development very well. A visit to the Carey Outdoor Education Centre, for example, includes team-building activities.
12. Provision for cultural development is satisfactory overall. It is good at promoting local cultures but is not yet effective in the ways it promotes understanding of the multicultural society that exists in Britain. The school works hard to broaden the pupils' experiences of the traditions and customs of their own culture. For example, in physical education pupils learn Dorset folk dances, and in geography and history they learn about the village of Charminster and make comparisons with the town of Weymouth. In history, pupils study Grace Darling and Florence Nightingale and visit an Iron Age settlement. In religious education, pupils visit the village church and celebrate the stories and beliefs of Christianity, Hinduism and Judaism. However, insufficient emphasis is placed on the existence of a variety of cultures in Britain, as opposed to overseas, and on the way these cultures contribute to life in Britain today.

38. Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

13. The provision for the support, guidance and welfare of pupils is good and this has been maintained since the last inspection. The school is successful in its aim to promote a friendly, safe and caring atmosphere. Staff are

accessible and responsive and give pupils good support, and parents recognise that their children are well looked after in school. Pupils with special educational needs are supported effectively and the progress they make against the targets set in their individual education plans is monitored well. The school has a good range of links with external specialists, such as teachers for the hearing impaired and the local education authority support service for literacy and numeracy. Both groups provide good quality advice and support for pupils with special educational needs.

14. The procedures for monitoring and promoting academic progress are good. Assessment by class teachers is frequent and notes are tracked by the headteacher. Teachers identify pupils causing concern and this is shared with parents early, before problems develop. The assessment records are used to set targets for all pupils, not just those with special educational needs. Pupils know their targets, which are specific and achievable. This is a key feature in the contribution assessment and monitoring has made to raising standards. The procedures for monitoring and promoting personal development are also good. Liaison with parents is close and children, seen as individuals, are involved in discussions. The headteacher is available and approachable and teachers are sensitive and aware.
15. The procedures for monitoring and promoting discipline and good behaviour are very good. The behaviour policy was developed with children, staff, parents and governors and it is included in the home/school agreement. It reinforces positive behaviour, and each child has a copy which they decorate, sign and share with parents. It is revisited with children when they misbehave, but sanctions are rarely needed. Where there are problems these are shared with parents and notes are made of what is agreed. Bullying is rare and not an issue. The ethos of the school promotes a climate of good behaviour where praise is more important than censure.
16. The procedures to monitor and promote attendance are well developed. Good attendance is promoted through newsletters and the Annual General Meeting. Individual concerns are followed up with parents but the support of the educational welfare officer is rarely needed. Some parents stated a concern that the speed with which absence is followed up was sometimes too slow. However, the inspection team found no evidence of this. Requirements for recording and reporting attendance are met.
17. The procedures for child protection and promoting pupils' well being, health and safety are good. Child protection procedures are effective and known by staff. The headteacher takes responsibility and has good liaison with social services. A commercial programme called 'Good Sense Defence' and the school's own circle time provide good strategies to help pupils protect themselves. The health and safety policy is very comprehensive and responsibilities are identified. There are good strategies in place to support the policy. The policy for the conduct of visits is good, as are first-aid arrangements with three qualified first-aiders.

43. **Partnership with parents and the community**

18. The partnership with parents and the community is good. The school has maintained the strengths of the last inspection and improved the quality of the annual reports on pupils. It provides good quality information for parents, and their involvement in their children's learning is very good. The school's links with the community make a good contribution to pupils' attainment and personal development. They are used to enrich the curriculum and make it more relevant and meaningful.
19. The prospectus, newsletter and annual governors' report are well presented, comprehensive and readable documents. Parents are given good help to understand and support the teaching of the school. Newsletters include curriculum issues, currently spiritual, social, moral and cultural development. Curriculum information specific to each year group is sent out with newsletters and includes how parents can help. The Annual General Meeting has a curriculum focus and involves children, thus ensuring very good attendance. Annual reports on pupils are good and include specific and achievable targets. These are sent out to parents a few days before their individual meetings, in the Summer term. These include their children and are very well attended. There are parents meetings in the Autumn term, and in the Spring term there is an open evening when children bring their parents into school to show them their work.
20. All the parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire agreed that they would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with their child(ren). They also felt that the school encourages parents to play an active part in its life. Inspectors agreed with these views. For example, home/school link books are used well for dialogue, especially where pupils travel by bus. There is consistently good use of reading

books for homework and targets are shared with parents. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are invited to attend the reviews of their child's progress and contribute effectively to help pupils meet the targets set. The school association is very active and gives good support, contributing to joint working parties on school issues. The headteacher keeps the association well informed on educational issues, including the school development plan. A number of parents and local volunteers make a good contribution to the school by helping in class.

21. There are church visits in religious education, and visitors to the under-fives include a vet, dentist, nurse and policeman to show how they use writing for a purpose. The Millennium Courtyard project is making good progress with good community support to transform the centre of the school and improve access for the physically disabled. A greater understanding of society and citizenship is fostered through fund raising, visiting speakers, and outside visits. Pupils are encouraged to share and help each other and work collaboratively to develop skills for life. The pyramid liaison is very strong and effective and reflected in the quality of liaison with the receiving school and feeder play groups. The cluster of local schools makes a significant contribution to a variety of school activities and provides equipment for the youngest children which is shared between schools.

47. **THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL**

47. **Leadership and management**

22. The leadership of the school is good at all levels. The headteacher provides good management in which a very perceptive understanding of the needs of staff, pupils and parents is supported by well thought through systems. The recent rise in standards at the school demonstrates the effectiveness of her approach. She is well supported by the acting deputy head, who has a strong role in the forward development of the school through her oversight of both professional development and assessment. In the short time that she has been in post, she has achieved much, particularly in these areas.
23. Co-ordinators are enthusiastic and all are involved in monitoring their subjects. This shows a good response to the key issue on monitoring from the previous report. There are particular strengths in the management of English, mathematics and information technology. In all of these subjects the co-ordinators have had to implement great changes in a short space of time. They have risen to the challenge, supported their colleagues and developed a good overview and understanding of what needs to be done next. Standards have risen significantly. The special needs co-ordinator provides good leadership and effective structures have been established to manage this area of work. The provision is monitored effectively.
24. The chair of governors and other members of the governing body successfully bring a wealth of expertise to the school and are also very supportive. Committees are well-organised and individual responsibilities, such as for literacy or special needs, are allocated well. Minutes show that meetings are effective. Procedures are in place to allow the governors to monitor the work of the school and governors are in general well informed. They are developing a sound focus on the importance of raising and maintaining standards. All statutory requirements are met, other than a minor omission in the Governors' Annual Report to Parents.
25. The school development plan is a detailed and achievable document. The criticisms of it in the previous inspection report have been addressed well. It is appropriately constructed in consultation with staff and governors and identifies the needs of the school clearly. The school is also a member of a local partnership of schools and contributes effectively to development planning in this context. The school's response to the last inspection was good and the resulting action plan showed that staff and governors had given careful thought to the best way to proceed. Good improvements have been made over the last three years, especially in teaching quality, and with a particularly impressive rise in standards since 1998. The leadership of the school has a good insight and staff are committed to raising standards. Very effective management systems are in place and overall the school has a good capacity to improve still further. Working relationships are good and the school is popular with both parents and pupils. The school meets its aims well and its ethos is strong.

51. **Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**

26. The school has a good number of experienced teachers, which means that the ratio of pupils to teachers is comparatively low. It also has a very high number of well qualified classroom support staff, who make a significant contribution to the progress made by the younger pupils and those with special needs. Both of these aspects have improved significantly since the last inspection. The good ratio of adults to children means that it is

easier for the staff to challenge individuals with questioning and so support pupils' learning. All support staff - classroom, administration, lunch-time and premises staff - make a much valued contribution to the school's success. Staff are supported by a very well organised programme of professional development and induction. New staff, for example, can be offered the chance for a visit prior to taking up their post, paid for by St Mary's. Several support staff are working towards or have gained additional qualifications. Recent national initiatives such as training for literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology have been implemented appropriately. Very good training has been provided for the special educational needs co-ordinator and support assistants. The benefit of this is seen in the good quality of the provision. The school balances the demands of National Government, its own development plan and individual needs, identified through appraisal and monitoring, with great care.

27. A number of improvements to the school's accommodation have been made since the last inspection. New classrooms have been built and a courtyard project is under way. The accommodation is satisfactory overall but with strengths and weaknesses. The buildings and grounds are effectively maintained and provide a pleasant environment in which to work. There are enough rooms for the number of classes, and some useful shared areas such as the library and the music area. Physical education facilities are good, with a field, fitness trail and outdoor swimming pool as well as a reasonably spacious hall. However the access for disabled parents, helpers and pupils is inadequate because of steps up to and inside the building. The school is aware of this and its hopes for improvements are identified within the development plan.
28. The school has sufficient learning resources to deliver the curriculum. A number of subjects, including English, benefit from a wide range of good quality books that have a positive effect on the pupils' learning. Music and physical education equipment are of good quality. Pupils who are under five have access to large outdoor play equipment, but some of this, for example wheeled toys, is shared with other local first schools.

54. **The efficiency of the school**

29. Financial control is very good. Procedures are backed up by clear documentation and expenditure is carefully tracked – administrative staff, headteacher and governors all take appropriate parts in this. The system for placing and paying for orders is smoothly operated, and the school gives good attention to ensuring that the resources are obtained at the price that is best value. Funds the school receives for supporting pupils with special educational needs are used appropriately and other specific grants are also carefully allocated and tracked. Recent examples of these are the funds the school has received for information technology resources and training, and the support for numeracy training. The funding provided for pupils with special educational needs is used to provide support assistants, teachers' time and additional learning resources.
30. Resources in general are used well. Major items, such as computers, have been allocated sensibly to the different classes. Teaching staff are working with classes and subjects that make the most of their expertise. They are released from teaching to carry out essential management roles as needed. Support staff are well used to enhance the provision for special needs and to support younger pupils as they learn to be more independent. The school accommodation is used well and displays of work enhance pupils' learning in a variety of areas.
31. Financial planning is good overall. All the actions on the school's development plan are appropriately costed and the three year plan takes into account likely future pupil numbers and income. Aspects of long-term budgeting such as the maintenance of the building are also considered as a three year programme. A key issue from the previous report was that the school should develop more rigorous strategies for evaluating effect of spending. The school made a very good initial response and this has had a very positive effect on the way it ensures that resources are purchased at a good price. As part of the development of the action plan a number of staff became very involved in analyses of target setting and what makes an effective school. This work has had a very significant impact on raising standards. At the moment the governors' curriculum committee closely oversees the standards side and the finance committee is deeply involved in a consideration of value for money in purchasing. Both committees are effective but there is, as yet, limited formal reflection that draws on the expertise of both to evaluate the way spending has affected standards.
32. The school achieves above average standards and good progress for its pupils. It offers a good quality of education and delivers this in an efficient way. Although the costs are above average, the outcomes are such that it offers good value for money.

58. **PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS**

58. **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE**

33. Children begin school in the September of the academic year in which they will be five. They attend the Reception class part-time throughout the Autumn term and attend full-time from January. At the time of the inspection, 22 children were attending, mornings only, 20 of whom were under the age of five. There are very good procedures for the formal assessment of children's development on entry. The attainment of pupils who enter the school is average overall. It covers a range of levels, but many have below average speaking skills. Aspects of their knowledge and understanding of the world, however, are above average. The previous inspection judged the progress of children under five to be satisfactory. Standards, since then, have improved and the school now makes good provision. The children make good progress and attain the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning by the time they reach the age of five. They reach above average standards in personal and social development, knowledge and understanding of the world, and in aspects of physical development.

34. The teaching is of good quality and shows a good understanding of the learning needs of young children. Expectations are high, children are managed well and activities are organised effectively so that good use is made of opportunities for learning. Lessons are planned satisfactorily to include a mixture of class tuition and small group or individual tasks, all based on a related theme. For example, the rhyme 'Hickory Dickory Dock' was supported by investigation of clockwork, painting an illustration, making working models with cog wheels and studying the words that rhyme. Assistants and parents are deployed well to help with group activities and assessment. Base-line assessment is thorough and completed in the Autumn term. The outcomes are verified with parents and are used appropriately to plan what each child should learn. This assessment is updated routinely and used effectively to determine when each child is ready to move on. The curriculum is soundly based on the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning and links effectively with the National Curriculum. A good feature is the involvement of people such as policemen and vets, who visit the children and demonstrate how they use writing to support their work. Children under five have a good start to their education and are well prepared to enter Year 1.

60. **Personal and social development**

35. The children are confident and settle quickly into school. They make good progress. At the time of the inspection, children had been in school for three weeks but gave the impression of having been at school for much longer. They understand the conventions of class routine, such as sitting quietly on the carpet and waiting their turn. They work as part of a group and are eager to explore new learning and solve practical problems. Children in collective worship listen quietly to music with their eyes shut, then explain how it makes them feel. They know right from wrong and are polite and respectful of one another. For example, when telling the class of their weekend activities, they are genuinely interested in what each has done and listen patiently while others have a turn. The daily activity of choosing a special person is particularly beneficial and leads to further good progress in social development. Each member of the class gives a positive description of the person chosen and this leads directly to the raising of self-esteem and the valuing of the worth of every individual.

61. **Language and literacy**

36. The children make good progress, particularly in their development of early reading and writing skills. They enter the school with speaking and listening skills that are just below the level expected for their age. They offer contributions to class discussion and respond to questions with understanding. Most children use sentences that contain up to three main items, they enjoy listening to stories and joining in with songs, rhymes and poems. In whole-class reading activities, they know the title of the big book, are aware that rhymes exist, follow the text and try to read familiar nursery rhymes aloud. Two thirds of the children select words correctly to rhyme with target words set by the teacher. Children know that names have capital letters and already, in the Autumn term, recognise their own names. In the 'office' corner, they practice writing using pictures, shapes, familiar letters and words to convey their meaning. Through this activity they show awareness of a wide range of purposes for writing, such as compiling shopping lists, sending postcards, writing letters and writing stories. When interacting with adults, children listen to the vocabulary used and try to bring the same words into their conversations.

62. **Mathematics**

37. The children make satisfactory progress in their acquisition of mathematical skills and language. There are occasions, such as when working as a group with an assistant, where children make good progress in response to challenging questions that extend their thinking. Children recognise red, yellow, blue, circle and square. They point to shapes that are not a square and match objects and pictures appropriately. The majority of children count to five and some continue to eight. They use their knowledge of colour and shape to describe the colours of circles, squares and triangles. Children apply their number skills successfully in other lessons - for example in physical education where they form themselves correctly into groups of two and three without help.

63. **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

38. The children make good progress in their knowledge and understanding of the world. In their accounts of the weekend they talk about their environment, their families and past and present events in their lives. They are eager and interested to look closely at, for example, the internal mechanism of a clock and talk to one another about their observations. During the inspection, children constructed mechanisms with interlocking cog wheels and, with good questioning from the teacher, quickly learnt cause and effect to make them work effectively. In other tasks, they responded to the challenge of how to make a water wheel turn fast or slow by pouring water with control or using a sprinkler instead of a spout to slow the flow of water. The children learned directly from their experimentation and also from one another. They watched closely how others, for example, constructed cog wheeled mechanisms and tried the same tactics in their own work. The children are aware that computers can be used to convey messages and make good progress in using a mouse to create changes on screen.

64. **Physical development**

39. In physical development, the children make good progress. They benefit from their physical education lessons, opportunities to play outside, and the activities provided in the classroom to extend their fine motor control. They control their bodies and balance effectively. Children play 'follow my leader', copying actions well to stop with control and use big strides. They stand in a line and find a space, walking in and out of spaces in response to a tambourine. Children move at the required speed, march and avoid bumping into each other. The majority of children change their clothes independently and demonstrate ability above that expected for this stage of their education. They grip pencils and hold paint brushes appropriately and use construction materials with confidence and control.

65. **Creative development**

40. Children make satisfactory progress in creative development. They use the 'home corner' effectively for imaginative play and use props such as dressing clothes and kitchen utensils to effectively extend their play. Children listen to music and stories and look closely at pictures, using their imagination to consider their emotional response. Children use brushes to apply paint effectively, keeping them clean, to produce paintings of, for example, 'Hickory Dickory Dock'. They use a widening range of materials, tools and instruments, enjoy singing, and learn to express their ideas and communicate their feelings.

66. **ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE**

66. **English**

41. Standards in English have improved since the last inspection. This change has accelerated within the academic year 1998 to 1999 due to the successful implementation of the National Literacy Strategy and the determination of staff to raise the attainment levels of pupils. For pupils at the end of Key Stage 1, the results of national assessments in 1998 show that, in reading, their attainments were broadly in-line with the national average. Their attainments in writing were below the national average. The provisional results for 1999 show an improvement in both reading and writing. Comparison with national figures cannot be made as, at the time of the inspection, the 1999 averages were not confirmed. Significant improvement was made in the proportion of pupils who attained the higher Level 3 for reading - this figure rose from 14 per cent of pupils in 1998 to 41 per cent in 1999. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 3 for writing also improved from nought per cent in 1998 to ten per cent in 1999.

42. For pupils in Key Stage 2, the results of the optional national tests in 1999 show that, in reading, 78 per cent of pupils in Year 4 attained the expected Level 3 and above; impressively 37 per cent of pupils in Year 4 attained Level 4 for their reading. This is the standard usually expected of pupils at the end of the key stage, in Year 6. In writing and spelling, the 1999 tests show that more than half of all pupils in Year 4 attain Level 3 and above and 25 per cent of pupils attain the higher Level 4 for their writing. These results are lower than those for reading, but are within the standards expected for pupils at this point in Key Stage 2.
43. Observation of pupils in class, the scrutiny of their written work, discussions with pupils and hearing a representative sample of pupils read confirm that the 1999 results are an accurate reflection of the attainment levels of pupils in the school. Inspection also confirms that standards are being sustained and that improvement is set to continue. Standards in English overall are above average at the end of Key Stage 1 and when pupils leave the school. Pupils make good progress overall in English, but particularly in reading where standards are significantly above average by the time they leave the school. There is no significant difference in the progress of girls and boys.
44. Pupils enter Key Stage 1 with attainment in speaking and listening that is just below the level expected for their age. They communicate their ideas with a growing vocabulary, using and understanding sentences containing up to four key words and ideas. Pupils listen attentively and respond with understanding to songs, rhymes and poems. By the end of Key Stage 1, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, have made good progress and their speaking and listening skills are at the average expected for their age. They converse together at a level appropriate to their age, answer questions with clear sentences and expand upon their answers to clarify them to the class. Skills continue to improve at a satisfactory rate, so that most pupils in Year 4 are confident to discuss and analyse their reading, using coherent sentences and extend their arguments and ideas with clear logic.
45. Pupils make good progress in reading. They enter the key stage with average levels of ability and attain above average levels at the end of Key Stage 1 and Year 4. Pupils with special educational needs make at least satisfactory progress in their reading skills and some individuals make good progress, in response to the support they receive, so they no longer need to be included on the school's register of special educational needs. Pupils in Year 1 understand the purpose of books, recognise similar spelling patterns and use their growing phonic knowledge to decipher short new words. By Year 2, most pupils read a simple text accurately and use context clues as well as their phonic skills to decipher new words. Pupils with higher attainment are reading fluently and with expression. In Year 3, pupils have a clear understanding of the difference between fiction and non-fiction and use their skills effectively to find information from the contents, index and alphabetical order of reference books. They draw effective conclusions, for example, in deciding that a chapter on 'Large meat eating dinosaurs' would be likely to contain reference to Tyrannosaurus Rex. Pupils in Year 4 look ahead in their reading to take note of punctuation and read with appropriate expression. For example, they know to give emphasis to phrases followed by an exclamation mark and give the appropriate intonation when reading questions. Most pupils read with fluency and enjoy reading for pleasure at school and at home.
46. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in their writing and spelling. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils write with a joined cursive style in coherent sentences defined with capital letters and full stops. The majority of their spellings are phonically accurate. Pupils in Year 4 show clear improvement in their spelling and punctuation but a large proportion still need to refer to other texts to write words such as 'because' with accuracy. Most pupils write with well formed letters and a cursive script that is easy to read. They use their writing for a range of purposes and change their style successfully when, for example, writing a letter to a friend or writing instructions for a recipe.
47. Teachers make good use of the opportunities provided in other subjects to extend the literacy skills of pupils. For example, in mathematics in Year 1, pupils write the words for numerals and focus on the initial sounds of each word and the spelling of endings such as 'teen'. In science in Year 3, pupils focus on reading and understanding specific vocabulary, such as when they used 'dispersed' and 'scattered' to describe seed distribution.
48. Pupils have good attitudes to their English and literacy lessons. They are interested in books and enjoy sharing the information they gain from them with one another. Pupils stay focused on their writing and discuss their work constructively with their classmates. They listen well and participate in class discussions with confidence. Relationships between pupils are good and children enjoy the praise they receive from their peers when teachers

comment on the good work they have done. Pupils support one another well. A good example of this was observed in Year 4, where pupils worked in pairs and gave and accepted help from each other with maturity.

49. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subject and of how best to extend pupils' literacy skills. Lessons are planned well and presented effectively with the learning objective clearly explained so that all pupils know what it is they are expected to learn. Class discussions are well managed so that all pupils contribute. Teachers demonstrate their high expectations by asking challenging questions and using the correct grammatical vocabulary. They give warm praise for correct answers which raises the self-esteem of pupils and motivates them to try harder. Teachers organise the class into groups well, giving good regard to the social development of their pupils as well as their academic attainment. The work set for each group is effectively matched to their ability and enables pupils with higher attainments to extend their knowledge at an appropriate rate. Pupils with special educational needs and lower attainment are supported effectively and receive direct teaching from either the class teacher or an assistant. The quality of support provided by assistants is very good and pupils benefit from their skilful intervention and guidance. Teachers use plenary sessions well to review what pupils have learnt and to show what they will be learning next. Work is marked very well, and the comments teachers write show clearly what pupils can do to improve. Very good use is made of assessment through marking and observing pupils at work to set targets for each child to achieve in their writing. These are placed in pupils' writing books, reviewed routinely and new targets set as others are achieved. This very good practice is most effective - teachers know what to teach next and pupils know how they must improve. Homework is set appropriately and used effectively to extend the work in class. There are occasions when introductions to lessons are too long and children become uncomfortable on the carpet.
50. The school provides a full curriculum that is based securely on the National Literacy Strategy. Satisfactory adjustment has been made to recommended time allocations and guided reading is timetabled separately to allow more time for extended writing in the literacy hour. Assessment procedures are good, thorough and consistently applied. The information gained is used very well: to help teachers know what to teach next; to set targets for each child to achieve; to measure the attainment level of pupils; to provide data for measuring the progress of pupils; and to enable the school to monitor improvements in standards. The National Literacy Strategy has been implemented well and is having a positive effect on standards. This is the result of good work by the literacy co-ordinator who provides very clear leadership to the development of literacy in the school. Good professional development has been provided for staff and a good range of new books and other resources has been purchased. These developments are raising standards and the school is successfully implementing its good quality long-term plans to sustain this improvement.

76. **Mathematics**

51. Results of the national tests in 1998 showed pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 to be below the national average. However the 1999 Key Stage 1 national test results show a significant improvement and are above the provisional national average. The optional Year 4 national test results for 1999 showed that pupils' attainment was significantly above average. Here a very impressive 47 per cent reached higher standards than expected for their age. By Year 4, using and applying mathematics, shape, measure and data handling are all above national expectations. Since the last inspection there has also been an improvement in numeracy at both key stages.
52. Pupils enter Key Stage 1 with average mathematical skills. They make good progress in all areas of the subject and inspection evidence confirms that, by the end of the key stage, their standards are above average. Standards are also above average at the end of Key Stage 2. This also represents good progress in all aspects, as the cohort of pupils in this year and last year's Year 4 were overall only average or below at the end of Key Stage 1. A key reason for their significant progress is the good teaching they have received. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is good. Work is appropriately matched and they receive good support from classroom assistants. There is no significant difference in the progress of girls and boys.
53. By the end of Key Stage 1 the majority of pupils can identify odd and even numbers, complete number patterns, add and subtract small numbers, identify halves and quarters, understand place value of hundreds, tens and units and tell the hours, quarter and half hours on a clock. The more able can add and subtract three digit numbers, recognise right angles, measure with accuracy and round numbers to the nearest ten and tell the time in five minute intervals. By the end of Year 4, pupils have a good recall of number facts and the four rules of number. They can count on and back in a regular sequence, know the relationship between addition and subtraction and

can multiply three figure numbers by one digit. The more able can multiply three figure numbers by two digits, subtract hundreds, tens and units from hundreds tens and units, using the decomposition method of subtraction, and know the relationship between multiplication and division. Pupils can describe their mental strategies for recalling number facts. For example, Year 4 pupils were observed explaining their strategies for finding the sum and difference of numbers generated by the throw of a die. In both key stages opportunities for pupils to select their own resources for mathematical activities are good. The pupils' numeracy skills support their work in other subjects, but there is little explicit teaching of numeracy across the curriculum. As yet, this integration of numeracy into other subjects is not formally planned.

54. In their work on shape, space and measurement, Key Stage 1 pupils can describe common two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes, are aware of shapes in the environment and find lines of reflective symmetry. By the end of Year 4, pupils use appropriate mathematical language when describing three-dimensional shapes. When data handling Key Stage 1 pupils can sort objects using a variety of reasons and draw and interpret simple bar charts. For example, Year 2 pupils can interpret graphs of the distribution of birthdays in the class. At the end of Year 4 pupils are able to produce bar and line graphs and compare their results. Year 4 pupils who attend a residential centre also use sensors for monitoring and produce graphs of their results.
55. Pupils' response to lessons is good throughout the school. In a Year 1 class pupils attitudes were, at times, very good. Pupils cheered when they were given number fans to use at the start of the lesson. Pupils respond with enthusiasm to questions, work well together, share willingly and treat resources with care. Older pupils especially are eager to share mental strategies during numeracy sessions. They do so in a spirit of support and encouragement from their peers. They are not afraid to offer answers and strategies, which may be incorrect. In doing so they learn from their mistakes. Pupils work independently as required. Relations between pupils, and between pupils and adults, are good.
56. In both key stages the quality of teaching is good. This is an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection report. In Year 1 and Year 4 the quality of teaching is very good. For example, there was a very good lesson in Year 1 on counting to 30 and addition of money. The introduction was well paced and used number fans to ensure all pupils took part. Pupils were motivated by good questioning and practical activities, which matched their differing abilities. Through good questioning and discussion, the teacher encouraged pupils to use mental strategies to add and subtract money. She made good use of the classroom assistant who role-played purchases in a shop with lower attaining pupils. In Year 4 a very good lesson on the inverse operations of addition and subtraction was observed. Pupils were encouraged to discuss and share their strategies for addition and subtraction, and to share their methods with the class. Good use was made of number cards and well matched worksheet(s). Teachers make good use of resources in both key stages. At the end of lessons time is used well for pupils to recap and explain their work and so share and refine their understanding. Throughout the school, teachers' marking is good with meaningful comments used to take the pupils on to their next stage of learning. Good use is made of support staff. They are given good guidance by the class teacher but are able to use their initiative, as needs dictate. They use open ended questions skilfully and effectively.
57. The curriculum is broad and balanced. A sound start has been made on the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. Long and medium term planning is sound and clearly identifies learning objectives. The co-ordinator gives very good leadership for the subject and supports staff well. She is a very good role model for the teaching of mathematics. Teaching, planning, and a cross section of pupils' work is regularly monitored. Good procedures are in place to assess pupils' understanding of work covered. The use of information technology to support mathematics is good. By the end of Year 4 pupils are showing results of their work by using pie charts, bar charts and line graphs. Well briefed classroom assistants make a good contribution in practical activities and supporting low attaining pupils. Since the previous inspection, there has been an improvement in the attainment of pupils because of the improvement in teaching, regular monitoring of the subject, the appointment of an enthusiastic and able co-ordinator and the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy.

83. **Science**

In the 1998 National Curriculum assessments teachers' assessments showed the Year 2 pupils to be above average in the number reaching levels expected for their age, but few reached higher standards. In 1999, however, the numbers reaching expected levels increased and a significant number of pupils reached higher standards. This mirrored improvements in mathematics and English. Standards overall were above average. Standards are now above average at the end of Key Stage 1 and when pupils leave the school at the end of Year 4. This represents a good improvement since the last inspection when standards were average.

The pupils enter the school with above average standards of knowledge and understanding of science. Progress is satisfactory through Key Stage 1 and is good through Key Stage 2. Here high expectations and well focused teaching have helped the current Year 4 pupils to make significant gains in their knowledge and understanding since achieving the average results of 1998 in Year 2. In both key stages progress is strongest for middle attaining pupils. Progress is satisfactory both for higher attainers and for those with special needs, who are encouraged by good questioning from staff but are seldom given work explicitly aimed at the level they have reached as individuals. There is no difference in the progress made by boys and girls.

The pupils do well in all aspects of science. Their past work shows that they are learning to investigate science practically and record their work effectively, as well as being taught the knowledge they need. During the inspection week the use of a 'concept map' as a way of recording ideas and understanding was very effectively developed with Year 4 pupils. The pupils worked independently but supported each other, often through a more able pupil working with a less able friend. This demonstrated the good attitudes the pupils throughout the school have to their science work. They behave well and are very interested in what they are doing, and are particularly interested in handling and exploring resources the teachers provide. During the inspection week pupils in both key stages were studying living things, and the teachers used resources particularly well to stimulate enthusiasm.

The teaching is good overall, with strengths in the management of pupils and in questioning, which assesses what pupils know and what they need to know next. Teachers are very clear on what they want pupils to gain from the lesson and this, combined with a sound scheme of work, ensures pupils move on in their learning from year to year. In Year 1, for example, the pupils were examining seeds, and they were aware that the seeds would grow into new plants. In Year 2 they showed a growing vocabulary for describing plants and parts of plants and were starting to develop their understanding of the range of living things that can live on a tree. In Year 3 pupils had a confident grasp of the basic life processes of a plant and were able to discuss in detail the ways in which seeds are dispersed. By Year 4 they not only identified some key characteristics of different animals and plants but confidently described how these characteristics help the living thing survive in a particular environment or habitat.

The co-ordinator has developed a range of assessment methods and staff are currently trialling these. The exercise has been very useful in ensuring that both staff and pupils have a way of concentrating on key learning points. The next stage for the school is to ensure that the information the assessments give on pupils' understanding is used more often to plan work that stretches the most able or supports the least able, as well as taking the majority of the class forward briskly.

88. OTHER SUBJECTS

88. Information technology (IT)

63. Standards in information technology are above average at the end of Key Stage 1 and at the end of Year 4; pupils make good progress through Key Stage 1 and satisfactory progress through Key Stage 2, maintaining and building on the good skills they have learnt. The school has adopted an effective system of teaching information technology. Pupils are introduced to new software or skills as a whole class, and they are then given carefully timetabled individual or paired work to make sure they understand. These paired or individual sessions are often taught by support assistants or parents and are very effective – the pupils are encouraged to load and save work from an early stage and develop good independence. The use of information technology to support other subjects is good.
64. The school has adopted a nationally produced scheme of work that ensures a progressive development of skills. In Year 1, for example, they are starting to recognise how a computer responds to clicking the mouse, and use the computer to support their phonics work. Even as early as the start of Year 2 a typical pupil is confident enough to load a disk unaided, log on, and use the information on a CD-ROM purposefully. During Key Stage 2 the pupils extend their knowledge of how a computer may be used – they learn to use information technology to organise text and create effective posters. They also understand that the software can save time in drawing graphs in mathematics and science, and this helps them to develop their understanding of how graphs communicate information.
65. The pupils respond well to information technology. Even in whole class introductions, where their involvement is necessarily limited, they behave well and concentrate. They are helped by the teachers' good use of questions, which focus closely on the new skills being introduced. These skills are pitched at a comparatively high level and these high expectations are also key factors in the overall good teaching the school gives in the subject. Both teaching and support staff have been greatly helped by the very well planned professional development they have received in the subject over the last year. The co-ordinator has planned the development of the subject very well and supported staff effectively. Effective technical help is also given by the school's administrative staff.
66. The co-ordinator has identified a number of appropriate areas for future development, including improvement of assessment. At the moment this is sound, with teachers keeping a number of notes about individual progress. However there is no formal structure to support teachers or involve pupils in recording what they can do. This makes it harder to refine the individual work the pupils are carrying out, to ensure that work is accurately pitched to meet their needs.
92. **Religious education (RE)**
67. The attainment of pupils at the end of Key Stage 1, and by the end of Year 4, is above the expectations set out in the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1 and sound progress overall in Key Stage 2. Knowledge is systematically built upon. The scheme of work from the locally agreed syllabus ensures that the curriculum is broad and balanced.
68. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have a good knowledge of the life of Jesus through relevant Bible stories and know the main features of the Christian faith based on the celebration of festivals such as Christmas, Easter and Harvest. Pupils know stories from two other religions, Hinduism and Judaism. They are able to make suitable contributions from their own experiences and understand the importance of, for example, keeping a promise or being a good friend. In Year 1, for example, pupils have a good understanding of the story of 'Joseph and his coat of many colours'. They are able to retell the story, discuss the moral issues and, in drama, act out parts with empathy for the characters they are playing.
69. In Key Stage 2 pupils develop their knowledge and understanding of the main features and characteristics of Christianity, Hinduism and Judaism. By the end of Year 4, they understand the importance of religious beliefs to all people. In studying the stories of the Good Samaritan, the Prodigal Son and the life of Abraham, pupils increase their awareness of the importance of giving help and support to others. They can retell the Hindu story of Rama and Sita. They know about symbolism in the Jewish faith.
70. Pupils listen attentively to stories and behave well when they are involved in discussion or the acting of stories. For example, in both Year 1 classes, good lessons were observed where pupils acted out the story of Joseph. They were eager to answer questions and willing to share their thoughts, making spontaneous and sensitive remarks in their acting.

71. The standard of teaching is good at both key stages. Teachers have good subject knowledge, high expectations, plan well with clearly identified learning objectives, and use time efficiently. Procedures for the assessment of pupils' progress are good. A new system of 'steps' to assess this has recently been introduced. Teaching is especially effective where teachers encourage pupils to share their own thoughts and experiences.
72. The co-ordinator provides good leadership for the subject but has limited opportunity to monitor in the classroom. The locally agreed syllabus has recently changed, and she has ensured a smooth transition from the old syllabus to the new. Resources are satisfactory in quantity and of good quality but there is a limited number of artefacts. Assemblies extend opportunities for learning and offer very good opportunities for reflection. Assemblies follow weekly themes, for example 'the beauty of creatures and The Creation'. Good links have been established with the local church. Religious education was not reported on in the last inspection so no judgement can be made on any changes since the last report.
98. **Art**
73. Pupils' work on display in their classrooms and corridors shows skills, techniques and quality of finish that are appropriate for their age. They make satisfactory progress. In Year 1, they remember from previous lessons how to lighten or darken colours and mix brown. They learn, through listening to one another, that paintings can be interpreted in a number of ways. Pupils learn, for example, how to lighten green to match an existing tone in a painting. They mix colours carefully and wash their brushes before changing colour. In Year 2, pupils make steady progress in observational drawing due to adults pointing out features of, for example, shells and praising successful techniques. Pupils learn to observe more closely and try to reproduce shape, texture and pattern in their drawings. By the time they enter Year 4, pupils use different size brushes effectively to produce, for example, finely detailed silhouette paintings of trees on a colour wash background. Their observational drawing includes shading and shows views from different perspectives. Pupils' work throughout the school shows due regard to the work of other artists and that this has successfully influenced their own work.
74. In the lessons observed, pupils' attitudes were satisfactory. They looked carefully at paintings and considered their own response to them. Pupils behaved sensibly with water and paint and remained focused on their work. They concentrated on their drawing and were willing to enlarge or re-work their drawings in response to advice from their teachers. The teaching was also satisfactory. Lessons are appropriately planned and classrooms organised so that all pupils can see and have access to materials. Teachers give advice to pupils as they work that helps them to successfully improve their work. Demonstrations are used effectively - for example in one lesson pupils learnt to match shades through thoughtful colour mixing, and in another lesson where showing pupils how to use a pencil for shading produced an improvement in the quality of their drawings. Teachers question pupils effectively to observe more closely and consider their emotional response to paintings and this makes a good contribution to their spiritual development.
75. The curriculum provided is satisfactory and appropriate arrangements are made for the assessment of pupils' skills. The subject co-ordinator is new to the role and has yet to have an impact on the development of the subject. There is a suitable range of resources and good links with the middle school to ensure that pupils build on the skills they learn at St. Mary's.

101. Design and technology

76. The pupils make good progress in all aspects of design and technology. The use of a national scheme of work ensures they cover a good range of materials and skills. The subject is led well. A careful focus on teaching elements of design and ways of making products ensures that pupils are aware of the key things they must consider. In design, for example, they initially work through drawing pictures of what they want to do. In Year 1 they made a picture plan of a house with an opening door. By Year 2 they move on to making a series of sequenced instructions, for example for a recipe. By Year 4 they understand that plans have to be redrafted and adapted as they develop. The pupils have been heavily involved in the school's work designing a new courtyard area, producing drawings, plans and more detailed models to present to governors. The pupils also make final products of good quality. They learn a variety of cutting and joining techniques, moving from the use of scissors to techniques for cutting food and harder materials.
77. As only one lesson was seen during the days of the inspection, it is not possible to make an overall judgement of teaching or the pupils' response to the subject. However in the lesson seen both these were good. The pupils in Year 1 were looking carefully at various fruits, and developing their vocabulary to describe the look, texture and taste of the food. They worked in small groups at a brisk pace. The adults in the room questioned them well, developing their ideas and encouraging them. The pupils showed they were good at sharing the fruit and handling it carefully.

103. Geography

78. The pupils' progress at both key stages is satisfactory. By the end Key Stage 1, they develop an understanding of their location, begin to use geographical terms and have a sound knowledge of plans. Year 1 pupils visit Weymouth to contrast the town with a study of the village of Charminster. Year 2 pupils can draw simple plans and follow a route on a map. They can identify climatic patterns and physical processes through their study of the African Elephant. By Year 4, Key Stage 2 pupils know the names of the main cities of the British Isles and contrast land use in the village of Charminster with that of the Isle of Purbeck. They are developing sound enquiry and recording skills.
79. As no lessons were observed during the inspection week, no judgement could be made about the attitudes of pupils nor the quality of teaching in geography lessons. However, planning is sound with clear learning objectives. Marking is satisfactory. Books and folders are well presented, and this is an improvement since the previous inspection.
80. The co-ordinator has good subject knowledge and provides good support for colleagues. The geography curriculum is broad and balanced and based on the study of localities. Appropriate skills are taught and good use is made of fieldwork in the local area. Fieldwork includes, for example, a study of the local village in Year 1 and 4, a visit to the Carey Outdoor Centre in Year 2 and a visit to an Iron Age settlement in Year 3. There is also a short residential visit in Year 4 to study shorelines and tides. The resources for geography are satisfactory in number and of good quality. The majority of classrooms display wall maps of the world.

106. History

81. Pupils make sound progress throughout the school. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils demonstrate satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the past and a sense of chronology. In Year 1 a sense of time and chronology is developed by pupils bringing teddy bears to school which are then ordered by age. They also study the local village and the church. Year 2 pupils study the life of Grace Darling to develop an understanding of the ways in which history is represented and recorded through pictures, books and personal memory. Key Stage 2 pupils have satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the topics studied. They have a developing sense of chronology. For example, Year 3 pupils have sound knowledge of the Ancient Greeks and their society and the life and times of Guido Fawkes. Year 4 pupils know about Roman society.
82. No judgement could be made about the attitudes of pupils nor the quality of teaching in history lessons. However, planning is sound with clear learning objectives and sound use is made of marking. Satisfactory use is made of time lines to develop pupils' sense of chronology but they are not on display in all classrooms. Those pupils spoken to enjoy history lessons and especially the visits or visitors to the school. Work is well presented. This is an improvement since the previous report.

83. The co-ordinator is an enthusiastic historian and provides good leadership. Good use is made of local visits and visitors to the school. For example, Year 3 pupils have a day where they dress up as Greeks and Greek Gods and Year 4 spend a day dressed as Romans. In both cases, good use is made of a visitor from a historical re-enactment group. Visits to the village of Charminster, Weymouth, the Isle of Purbeck and an Iron Age farm also provide good support and stimulus for the subject. At Key Stage 2 homework is set to support the subject. Pupils research the life of Queen Boudica and the life of a Roman Gladiator. The subject makes a good contribution to the cultural development of pupils.

109.

Music

84. Pupils make satisfactory progress in music and have skills for singing, listening and performing that are appropriate for their age. Pupils in Year 1 for example, know how to hold instruments correctly and learn to modify their playing to keep a steady tempo. They listen to songs and sing with reasonable melodic accuracy. By the end of Year 2, pupils know if pitch is high or low. They copy the melody, rhythm, pitch, and syllables of the teacher with accuracy as they 'warm-up' for singing. Pupils sing in tune with effective tone and control. They learn to clap a steady tempo with the emphasis on first beat and in one lesson observed, sang a round successfully for the first time. Pupils in Year 4 build effectively on these skills, handle instruments with confidence and recognise the shape of a melody. Pupils also have opportunities for instrumental tuition on keyboards and recorders and make satisfactory progress in these sessions.

85. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are satisfactory. They listen quietly and resist the temptation to play instruments when not required. Pupils try hard to copy rhythm patterns and concentrate on their singing. There are occasions when a minority of pupils fidget and try to distract one another.

86. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Pupils in Years 1, 3 and 4 are taught by a music specialist, and those in other years are taught by their class teachers. Teachers use a commercial scheme and this is effective in giving them confidence in the subject. Singing is taught enthusiastically and pupils are encouraged to sit and breath correctly before beginning. Teachers use correct musical vocabulary and have appropriate expectations for pupils' instrumental work. There are occasions, however, when rhythm work is planned with insufficient clarity and logic and pupils become confused over what they are expected to do.

87. Good links are maintained with the local education authority music service and, through these, pupils are enabled to hear live performances and take part in musical workshops and festivals. These experiences add effectively to the curriculum, as do the opportunities provided by the school for performances in assemblies and other productions. Music is used to good effect in collective worship to enhance the spiritual experience of calm reflection. Resources are purchased wisely and the school has a good stock of quality instruments, particularly tuned percussion.

113. Physical education (PE)

88. Progress is good at Key Stage 1 and sound overall at Key Stage 2. This is an improvement since the previous inspection report. Pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated and involved in physical education lessons and their progress is similar to that of other pupils. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils' display a good range of suppleness and control when balancing and jumping. In games, pupils throw a ball accurately and show appropriate hand-eye co-ordination. They respond confidently to percussion instruments and use their imaginations to find solutions to the tasks set by the teachers.

89. By the end of Year 4, pupils show good control when balancing, jumping and landing. Progress in movement at Key Stage 2 is good. Pupils work purposefully to produce improvements and they make good use of practice and repetition in order to refine performance. In Year 4 movement lessons pupils show good skills in interpreting music and sound and in creating effects. They use their imagination well to express ideas, feelings and moods with appropriate movement. During the inspection week the school's swimming pool was closed, so it was not possible to make judgements on swimming.

90. Pupils are enthusiastic about physical education. They respond well to activities and show enjoyment in lessons. They can work well individually, in pairs and in groups and when given the opportunity to evaluate each others' work they do so constructively and effectively. Teaching at both key stages is good. Teachers have good subject

knowledge and, generally, set a good example to pupils by dressing appropriately, often leading by example. Lessons are well planned and include the essential elements of warming up and cooling down. Pupils are given opportunities to discuss and refine their work with each other and with the class teacher. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can attain and manage the pupils well throughout lessons. Where teaching was very good, for example in Year 4, there was obvious enthusiasm, thorough planning and a good knowledge of techniques, which enabled the teacher to intervene and move individual pupils learning to a higher level. Assessment opportunities are good. Teachers ensure that all pupils wear appropriate clothing.

91. The co-ordinator for the subject provides sound leadership. Physical education has not been a priority in recent years. The accommodation is good. The school playground is large enough for skills training and the field is large enough for a football pitch and fitness trail. There is a solar heated pool for use in the summer. Resources to support the subject are also good. Extra-curricular activities are limited to some swimming in the summer months, but this is a small school and overall provision is sound.

117. **PART C: INSPECTION DATA**

117. **SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

92. The inspection was carried out by a team of four inspectors, who spent a total of eleven inspector days in school. Lessons were observed for a total of 28 hours and other direct evidence gathered (including observation of registration, assemblies and extra-curricular activities, and a study of past work) for a further 15 hours. It was not possible to observe lessons in history or geography during the three days of the inspection, and observations of design and technology were very limited. As a result no overall judgement of teaching or pupils' response could be made in these subjects, and judgements of progress are based on past work and plans, combined with discussions with pupils.
93. Meetings were held with pupils, members of staff, the chair of governors and a group of other governors, as well as informal discussions. Non-teaching staff and volunteer helpers were also observed. Samples of pupils' work in all year groups were scrutinised. Several pupils in every year group were heard reading. The team examined school documentation before and during the inspection week. Members of the team met nine parents at a special meeting held prior to the inspection to hear their views. The 56 written responses to questionnaires distributed to all parents of the school were also taken into account.

119. **DATA AND INDICATORS**

119. **Pupil data**

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
YR – Y4	148	3	32	23

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers (YR – Y4)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	8.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.05

Education support staff (YR – Y4)

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked each week	111

Average class size:	24.7
---------------------	------

Financial data

Financial year:	1998-9
-----------------	--------

	£
Total income	275460
Total expenditure	268399
Expenditure per pupil	1720.51
Balance brought forward from previous year	16436
Balance carried forward to next year	23497

119. **PARENTAL SURVEY**

Number of questionnaires sent out:	155
Number of questionnaires returned:	56

Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	50	48	2	0	0
I would find it easy to approach school with questions or problems about my child(ren)	68	32	0	0	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	30	50	18	2	0
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	48	45	7	0	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	46	41	5	7	0
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	45	46	9	0	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	29	46	16	9	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	30	54	7	9	0
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	41	52	5	0	2
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	29	57	11	2	2
My child(ren) like(s) school	57	41	2	0	0

Other issues raised by parents

The parents' meeting showed parents have very positive views. The only issues were very minor – for example consistency of homework. Comments on questionnaires raised by more than one parent covered:

Positives:

- Good communication and welcome to parents
- Good support for pupils in transition from home to school and elsewhere
- Good information on topics
- A secure and happy environment
- Many, more general, very positive comments

Negatives:

- A need for extra-curricular activities and more sport
- A need for more homework
- A need for more male role models
- A question whether there is a play time behaviour issue/a need for more dinner staff

Response of team during inspection:

The inspectors agreed with the strengths the parents mentioned. They found that the quantity of homework is appropriate this term, though there was some inconsistency last year. They found that the extra-curricular opportunities were sound, and behaviour good.