

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **CHRISTCHURCH INFANT SCHOOL**

Christchurch, Dorset

LEA area: Dorset

Unique reference number: 113734

Headteacher: Mrs. A. Nicholson

Reporting inspector: Dr. P. M. Leckstein  
4053

Dates of inspection: 10<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> January 2000

Inspection number: 194108

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Addiscombe Road Christchurch Dorset
Postcode:	BH23 2AE
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr. A. Hutchinson
Date of previous inspection:	13 <sup>th</sup> – 17 <sup>th</sup> January 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Peter Leckstein	Registered inspector	Information technology History Physical education	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well is the school led and managed?
Judith Telfer	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Michael Raven	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography Music Religious education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Valerie Howells	Team inspector	English English as an additional language Under fives The work of the special educational needs unit	How well are pupils taught?
Pauline Morcom	Team inspector	Science Art Design and technology Equal opportunities Special educational needs	

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Inspection Quality Division  
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Alexandra House 33 Kingsway  
London WC2B 6SE

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Christchurch Infant School is a larger than average community school for boys and girls aged between 4 and 7 years. It has the capacity to admit 120 pupils per year. Currently there are 348 pupils on roll. There is a special educational needs unit catering for 14 pupils with language difficulties. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is well below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs has increased by 51 per cent since the last inspection and is much higher than in most infant schools. Many of these pupils have speech or communication difficulties. Although the proportion of pupils claiming free school meals is well below average, most pupils' social and economic circumstances are average. Mostly, pupils have white, United Kingdom ethnicity. A few pupils speak English as an additional language.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

Christchurch Infant School's overall effectiveness is satisfactory. Most pupils achieve standards that are better than might be expected. Pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour and personal development are good. Attendance is below average. The quality of teaching is good and this promotes effective learning and high standards. In the special educational needs language unit, teaching is unsatisfactory and this affects pupils' learning and achievement. The headteacher provides very good leadership and is well supported by the staff and by an increasingly effective governing body. Standards have risen a little since the last inspection. The good quality of teaching has been maintained since the last inspection. In relation to the achievement of the majority of pupils, especially those with special educational needs, and to the quality of education provided and the expenditure per pupil, which is above average, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- In the main part of the school, pupils make good progress in their learning and achieve higher standards than might be expected for them because the quality of teaching is good. Pupils attain the national average in writing and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 1.
- The learning of pupils with special educational needs is carefully monitored and evaluated and they are given good quality support. This enables them to achieve higher standards than might be expected.
- The management of pupils' behaviour is very good and this promotes effective learning. As a result, pupils' attitudes to learning and behaviour are good.
- Provision for pupils' social development is very good and support for moral development is good. These factors promote pupils' personal development, which is good overall.
- The recently appointed headteacher provides very effective leadership for the school's development. This is beginning to have a significant impact on the quality of educational provision, for example, in the arrangements for monitoring of teaching, which are very good.

#### **What could be improved**

- The quality of teaching in the special educational needs unit is unsatisfactory and the management of the unit is ineffective. This impacts on the standards that pupils achieve.
- Reading standards are below the national average by the end of Key Stage 1.
- The school has not set targets for the improvement of pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Attendance is below average.

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.*

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has improved satisfactorily since the last inspection. It has increased substantially in size in the last four years and there is a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs. The school's results in the end of Key Stage 1 tests in writing and mathematics have improved but reading standards are below average. The improvement of pupils' reading skills is being addressed. Provision for information technology is much better than at the time of the last inspection and this is having a significant impact on standards. Despite having an increased number of teachers and other changes in staffing, the good teaching reported at the time of the last inspection has been maintained in the main part of the school. However, the quality of teaching in the special educational needs unit has deteriorated and is unsatisfactory. The school has made a satisfactory response to the issues raised by the previous inspection. Much of this work has been undertaken during the last year. Schemes of work have been improved and the school's budget is linked to the priorities identified in the school development plan. The school has recently started to develop its policy and provision for higher attaining pupils. Some issues, such as below average attendance, are unresolved.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 7 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
Reading	D	C	D	E
Writing	D	C	C	E
Mathematics	D	C	C	E

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
Average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

Pupils at Christchurch Infant School are achieving higher standards than might be expected, especially in mathematics and writing. A higher than normal proportion of pupils, mainly boys, have special educational needs, especially in language and communication, and this affects standards in reading and in speaking and listening. Standards in reading are as high as might be expected for these pupils but their attainment is below the national average. By the time they are five years old, many children are achieving well, especially in mathematics and in their creative and physical development. However, fewer than average are attaining the national learning goals for five year olds. Attainment has improved slightly since the last inspection, and in the 1999 end of Key Stage 1 tests, standards in mathematics and writing were close to the national average. Standards achieved in the special educational needs unit are variable. The youngest pupils in this unit are achieving good standards in their work. However, the achievement of pupils in the older class is unsatisfactory because there are weaknesses in teaching. The comparison between Christchurch Infant and similar schools does not accurately reflect the achievement of the pupils. The comparison is based on the proportion of pupils claiming free school meals, which is well below average at Christchurch. It does not take into account the higher than average proportion of pupils with special educational needs.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Most pupils work with interest and sustained concentration on tasks set for them.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Most pupils behave well. In most lessons there is a calm, purposeful atmosphere. Pupils are kind and considerate to one another in the playground.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils willingly take responsibility for routines around the school, and organise their own work with increasing independence. Relationships with the adults in the school are friendly and respectful.
Attendance	Below average.

Pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties usually respond well to the individual strategies developed for them, including the support given by the large numbers of skilled non-teaching staff. Authorised absence is high because a growing number of pupils are absent for term-time holidays.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	Aged 5-7 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good

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

The quality of teaching is good. It is satisfactory or better in 95 percent of lessons, and good or better in 71 percent of lessons. In almost 16 percent of lessons, teaching is very good or excellent. Unsatisfactory teaching occurs in 5 percent of lessons. The teaching of English and mathematics is good. Overall, the teaching provided meets the needs of most pupils well. In the main part of the school good teamwork between teachers and support staff enables pupils with special educational needs to achieve high standards. In the special educational needs unit the quality of teaching is unsatisfactory. There are weaknesses in the management of pupils' behaviour that affect the achievement of older pupils. In most of the reception and Key Stage 1 classes the management of pupils' behaviour is very good and this is a strength of the school. Many other aspects of teaching, such as planning and the use of on-going assessment, are good. The teaching of numeracy skills is good. The teaching of literacy is satisfactory. Writing is taught well. Work set for higher attaining pupils promotes the development of skills in reading comprehension. However, there is insufficient instruction during literacy hour lessons for lower attaining pupils to develop their reading skills. The quality of pupils' learning is good. In most lessons, pupils' effort and pace of work are good. They apply themselves well to the task set, showing good levels of interest and concentration. Their acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding is good.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. Breadth, balance and relevance of the curriculum are good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good overall. Good in the main part of the school. Unsatisfactory in the special educational needs language unit.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Only a few pupils speak English as an additional language. The support given to these pupils meets their needs well.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Strengths in provision for social and moral development. Provision for spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. Procedures for child protection and for ensuring the health and safety of pupils are good. Good procedures for monitoring and promoting pupils' academic and personal development and behaviour. Procedures used to secure good attendance are not successful.

The school implements the national literacy and numeracy strategies well. Special needs provision in the main part of the school is well-organised and matched to pupils' needs. The curriculum in the language unit does not meet the needs of older pupils well enough. There is a high level of support staff. There are insufficient opportunities for the development of pupils' understanding of other cultures. There is a satisfactory working partnership with parents. The health and safety policy is out of date. No formal risk assessment procedures are in place.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good, dynamic leadership from the new headteacher. Supported well by most key staff. Together they have developed a shared culture of success. Weakness in the management of the special educational needs unit.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors support the school well and are effective in monitoring its work and holding it to account for educational standards.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good procedures for monitoring teaching and learning and the effectiveness with which the curriculum is implemented.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. Most staff deployed effectively. Satisfactory financial planning. The budget deficit has been licensed by the local authority. The school has not yet set targets for improving standards.

The headteacher gives very clear educational direction and most key staff fulfil their responsibilities well. The priorities identified in the school development plan are very clear and promote improvement. There is unsatisfactory leadership in the special educational needs unit because there is a lack of clarity about the responsibilities of key staff. The school achieves its aims but it knows that they need revision. Appraisal is behind schedule because there are insufficient appraisers. The school's budget is in deficit because it has increased in size from 3 to 4 forms of entry. The governors are currently negotiating with the local authority about the school's future financial

arrangements. The application of the principles of best value in managing the school's resources is satisfactory. Teaching and support staff provision is good and promotes high achievement. Accommodation and learning resources are satisfactory.

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

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school and their behaviour is good.</li> <li>• Teaching is good.</li> <li>• Children make good progress.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> <li>• They feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or problems.</li> <li>• The school helps children to become mature and responsible.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How well they are informed about how their children are getting on.</li> <li>• The provision of an interesting range of activities outside lessons.</li> <li>• The amount of work children get to do at home.</li> <li>• How closely the school works with parents.</li> </ul>

Inspectors agree with parents' positive views of the school's work. Inspectors found that the information provided for parents about their children's progress is good and that the school is planning to improve further the ways in which it informs parents about their children's achievements. The inspection team found that there is a satisfactory range of activities outside lessons for pupils of this age, and that the use of homework to support children's learning is satisfactory. The extent to which the school works with parents is satisfactory and improving.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### The School's Results and Achievements

1. Pupils' attainment on starting school is well below average for their age. A much higher than normal proportion of the pupils in the reception classes and throughout the school are on the school's special educational needs register. These pupils' needs have been accurately assessed by the school, and where appropriate, by specialist staff, such as educational psychologists. As a consequence, it is not surprising that, despite the effectiveness of the teaching they receive, the attainment of five-year-olds is below average. Many five-year-olds have poorly developed skills in reading, and are below average in speaking and listening and writing. Reception pupils' knowledge and understanding of science and technology, history and geography are below average, but their skills in mathematics and their creative and physical development match the expectations for their age.
2. Inspection evidence broadly confirms the picture of attainment evident in the national tests for seven-year-olds. By the end of Key Stage 1 attainment in the national tests in writing and mathematics is in line with the national average, but in reading, attainment is below average. Overall, the school's results in the end of Key Stage 1 tests in writing and mathematics have improved since 1997 and were broadly in line with the national average in 1999. Attainment in reading has fluctuated between average and below average but was below average in 1999. The improvement of pupils' reading skills is being addressed. Schools are not legally required to set targets for attainment by the end of Key Stage 1, although it is good practice to do so. The school intends to set targets for reading, writing and mathematics in the near future.
3. Overall, pupils' achievement – which reflects the accomplishments of these pupils in relation to what might be expected of them – is high and sometimes very high. This is due to the good teaching that most pupils receive and the effectiveness of the support given to pupils with special educational needs in the main part of the school. Pupils achieve well in English, mathematics, science, information technology, art and physical education, and very well in design and technology. In history, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs in the main part of the school make very good progress towards the targets set for them. Steps may be small, but they are carefully observed and recorded by all staff. In Years 1 and 2, all adults liaise very closely with one another to ensure the progress of the pupils in their care. However, achievement in the special educational needs unit for pupils with speech and language disorders is lower than might be expected. This occurs because the quality of teaching in this unit is unsatisfactory and because the management of the unit is ineffective.
4. It is unfair to compare the achievement of pupils at Christchurch Infant School with that of pupils in schools with a similar proportion of children entitled to free school meals. There is a much higher than average number of pupils with special educational needs on roll at Christchurch, and none of these pupils are disapplied from the end of Key Stage 1 tests, tasks and teacher assessments.

5. Overall, girls' performance in reading, writing and mathematics has improved during the last four years and their results over this period do not differ significantly from that of girls nationally. Boys' skills in writing have improved over time but their attainment in reading and mathematics has declined. These gender differences are probably due to the higher proportion of boys than girls with special educational needs.
6. The proportion of pupils who start school with delayed language development is higher than normal. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils' achievement in English is higher than might have been expected of them. Overall, attainment by the end of Key Stage 1 is close to the national average in writing, but below average in reading and speaking and listening. Literacy skills are taught well, and as a result, Key Stage 1 pupils make good progress in their learning. Many more than might have been expected are attaining the national benchmarks for Level 2, especially in writing.
7. Throughout the school pupils' skills in speaking and listening are below average for their age. Although pupils listen attentively to one another and to teachers and other staff, their ability to speak clearly and confidently is limited. Pupils make good progress in writing during Key Stage 1 because the school has provided additional opportunities in its 'literacy workshop' lessons to practise and extend their writing skills. By the time they are seven, many pupils write sentences in a legible joined hand and simple common words are correctly spelt. Few, however, write at length using paragraphs.
8. There is a small proportion of higher attaining pupils who read with increasing fluency and use phonic skills well to help them read unfamiliar words. These pupils and those of average attainment make satisfactory progress during literacy hour lessons. However, there is insufficient time in literacy hour lessons for lower attaining pupils to practise their reading skills, and the balance between word, sentence and text level work does not meet their needs. Consequently, there is a significant minority of pupils whose phonetic skills are limited and who can only recognise a small range of whole words when reading text that is new to them.
9. In mathematics pupils' attainment in the 1999 end of Key Stage 1 tests was broadly average and this is reflected in the work seen during the inspection. Overall, pupils' skills in numeracy are average for their age. Their knowledge and understanding of shapes and measurements is satisfactory and their ability to use and apply their mathematical knowledge and skills in different situations is in line with that expected of them.
10. In science, the results of the 1999 teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 showed that attainment was close to the national average. The percentage of pupils reaching the expected Level 2 was in line with the national average, but the percentage reaching the higher Level 3 was lower than average. Overall, achievement in science is good. In the work seen pupils of average or high ability attain the standards expected for their age, and lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs achieve well. Pupils' skills in experimental and investigative science and their knowledge and understanding of living things, materials and physical processes are satisfactory for their age.
11. Attainment in the work seen in the other subjects of the curriculum is mainly in line with that expected for pupils in Key Stage 1. In art, for example, Year 2 pupils'

observational drawings of fruit and vegetables, are of a good standard, but their knowledge and understanding of artists and styles is less well developed. Standards attained in design and technology are average in relation to national expectations. Pupils' skills in designing and making are satisfactory, but they tend to use trial and error to improve their work, rather than planning ahead and then testing their ideas. Attainment in information technology is in line with national expectations. Pupils gain access to work they have stored in the computer and use word processing and drawing programs to express ideas. In physical education pupils achieve well. Older pupils hold their balance well in gymnastics and are beginning to put together sequences of movement. Attainment in geography is satisfactory. For example, by the end of Key Stage 1 most pupils can describe their journey to school and explain how to get to the local shop. In the small number of music lessons seen pupils' attainment in singing was satisfactory. Pupils' attainment in religious education is in line with the expectations of the local agreed syllabus. Attainment in history is affected by pupils' lack of skill in reading. Their understanding of the passage of time and their ability to recall details about historical events and people is below that expected for their age.

#### Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12. The good attitudes, values and personal development of the pupils contribute to the good progress they make and to the positive atmosphere in the school. Parents are very happy with the school's contribution to the development of their children as responsible, caring individuals. This has not changed since the last inspection, despite changes in the nature of the intake.
13. From their earliest days in the reception classes, children under five are keen to come to school. They learn to organise themselves well and prepare for work in a purposeful manner. Throughout the school, most pupils are eager to answer questions, such as when children in the reception classes update the charts showing the date, day of the week, and so on, at the start of the day. The whole school enjoys getting together for assemblies and most pupils listen with rapt attention to the stories they are told. They sing familiar songs with gusto and reflect quietly on the issues presented to them.
14. The majority of pupils work with interest and sustained concentration on tasks set for them, such as when Year 1 pupils designed and made a chair for a doll, or when Year 2 pupils learned about co-ordinates in geography. Many pupils participate with enthusiasm in clubs and activities like the gymnastics, dance, football and ocarina clubs. They enjoy working for the community, as when they plant bulbs at the railway station or raise money for local charities.
15. Pupils' behaviour is good. In almost all lessons the majority of pupils behave well and this leads to a calm, purposeful atmosphere in which progress is encouraged. In the reception classes, the pupils patiently wait their turn to choose activities. On most occasions, pupils respond well to the school's expectations of good behaviour. These expectations have been recently embodied in the "Golden Rules", which were written to incorporate pupils' views. Pupils are well motivated by the praise and rewards they are given. In a few lessons negative behaviour interferes with learning, and this is usually due to teaching that lacks pace and shows flaws in the management of the pupils. The small number of pupils with recognised emotional and behavioural difficulties usually respond well to the individual strategies developed for them, including the support given by the large number of skilled non-

teaching staff. Pupils behave well out of lessons. Lunchtime is a pleasant, social occasion and although the play in the grounds can be rough at times, relationships almost always remain positive. There have been no exclusions. A small amount of bullying, including name-calling, takes place, but this is generally resolved satisfactorily and the bullies are led to reflect on the consequences of their actions.

16. Pupils form good relationships with one another and with adults and their personal development is good for their age. They are often considerate and kind to one another; older pupils care for and support the younger or more vulnerable ones. Pupils are good at taking turns and collaborate well. They are courteous and polite to visitors. Their relationships with the adults in the school are friendly and respectful.
17. Through working alongside children with complex special needs, pupils learn to respect and value individual differences. The more able pupils spontaneously help those who are struggling with a task, such as reading. Pupils learn to respect other people's beliefs by studying the differences in the religious practices of Christianity and Judaism.
18. Throughout the school, pupils willingly take responsibility for routine tasks, such as registers and lunch-boxes. The amount of responsibility given increases as they progress through the school. As they get older pupils organise their own work with increasing independence, selecting their own resources and working sensibly on tasks without direct adult involvement, such as in the literacy and numeracy hours.
19. The level of attendance is unsatisfactory and falls below the national average because there is a higher than average level of authorised absence. There is a growing and significant number of requests for term-time holidays, despite the school's efforts to discourage this trend. Unauthorised absence is low and punctuality is generally good. Repeated absence and lateness mainly affects a few pupils from families who have difficulties in organising themselves.

#### **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

20. Overall, the quality of teaching is good. It is satisfactory or better in 95 percent of lessons, and good or better in 71 percent of lessons. In 16 percent of lessons, teaching is very good or excellent. Unsatisfactory teaching occurs in 5 per cent of lessons and during the inspection none of the teaching was of poor quality. In the main part of the school, the quality of teaching in the reception classes and in Key Stage 1 is good. In Key Stage 1, English, mathematics and science are taught well, and the quality of teaching in the other subjects seen was good. There is no significant variation in the quality of teaching in different year groups in the main part of the school.
21. Overall, the quality of teaching in the speech and language unit is unsatisfactory. For younger pupils, long and short-term planning enables work to match their needs and adequate attention is given to the targets identified in individual education plans. Satisfactory classroom management and planned differentiation enables these pupils to progress satisfactorily. In the class for the older pupils, however, strategies to maintain discipline, whilst effective, are inappropriate, and at times, lead to the creation of an intimidating atmosphere. In this class, the programmes of study for individual pupils do not always match their level of development or the targets identified in their individual education plans. Whilst whole class sessions

generally engage all pupils in learning, individual tasks for some pupils are mundane, repetitive and inappropriate to meet lesson objectives. A few higher attaining pupils whose activities are well matched to their level of need do, however, make satisfactory progress; for the others, learning is unsatisfactory. The speech therapist, nursery nurses and ancillary welfare assistant work as a team to provide satisfactory support for pupils in both classes.

22. In the main part of the school, very good classroom organisation and management, coupled with the establishment of routines, ensure that pupils in the four reception classes make a sound start to their education. Teaching in these classes is good. The children display a positive attitude to learning and respond enthusiastically and responsibly to the tasks they are given.
23. Overall, teachers' subject knowledge is good and teachers have consistently high expectations of their pupils. They employ a good range of teaching strategies to achieve lesson objectives and the activities that pupils undertake are challenging and stimulating.
24. The teaching of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy is good. In the literacy and numeracy hours there is a balance of activities, including individual activity, group work, whole class exposition, and plenary sessions at the end of lessons to consolidate pupils' learning. The learning of literacy and numeracy is reinforced well during lessons in the other subjects of the curriculum, such as science and information technology. The school has satisfactorily developed the format of the literacy hour, with a suitable amount of time given to enable pupils to develop the skills required for extended writing. However, the use of text-level work is underdeveloped. Text-level work used to promote comprehension skills provides interesting challenges for higher attainers, but offers insufficient instruction for lower attainers to develop reading skills. The National Numeracy Strategy is implemented very well, and as a result, all pupils are making good progress.
25. Collaborative planning by teachers in each year is good. It leads to the production of high quality lesson plans with specific learning objectives. Group work is matched well to the needs of pupils of differing ability, and activities set are interesting and challenging. Lesson objectives are generally communicated clearly to all pupils in an appropriate format. Emphasis is placed on fostering independence in learning to enable pupils to work at their own pace and to make a sustained effort to complete tasks and to work effectively in groups. In the main part of the school, clear programmes of study have been drawn up for pupils with special educational needs. Work for these pupils is well-matched to the specific needs of individuals and this helps them to make very good progress in their learning.
26. In most classes teachers manage pupils' behaviour very well and maintain good discipline. They exercise authority clearly and fairly and set tasks that hold pupils' attention well and gain their interest and enthusiasm. During the introduction to a Year 1 science lesson on the properties of materials, for example, the teacher made effective use of the familiar story, Goldilocks and the Three Bears, to gain pupils' attention and focus their interest on devising tests to find the best stuffing for a pillow. On a few occasions in both the main part of the school and in the special educational needs unit, the management of pupils is unsatisfactory, and this affects pupils' learning. The school employs a large number of support staff and this helps to promote good discipline and behaviour. Support staff also help to ensure that the requirements of the high percentage of pupils with special educational needs are

met well. Good teamwork between teachers and support staff ensures the effective deployment of the adults present in lessons. In most classes support staff are used to maximum effect and they provide very good support for pupils who, as a consequence, participate fully in all lessons. Generally, time and resources are managed well. Good use is made of information and communication technology equipment in the computer room, but in classrooms, computers lack the necessary software to support pupils' learning across the curriculum.

27. The quality and use of on-going assessment is good overall. Children under five years of age are accurately assessed on entry to the school to determine their level of development and the prior skills they have acquired. Very good use is made of the results to guide the planning of work for them. Throughout the school, pupils' achievement is assessed against set learning objectives. The information obtained is used to set learning objectives for individual pupils and to assist in planning lessons. Good use is made of assessment data to set targets in individual educational plans for pupils with special educational needs in the mainstream classes.
28. The use of homework to support pupils' learning is satisfactory. Pupils take reading books home on a regular basis. Parental involvement in reading contributes to the standards pupils achieve. Homework supports literacy development and learning in foundation subjects, notably history and geography.
29. The quality of pupils' learning is usually good. Their acquisition of skills, knowledge, and understanding is good. From when they first enter the school, pupils begin to respond well to the opportunities given to them to play and form relationships during group activities. During lessons the intellectual, physical and creative effort that pupils make is good, and by the end of the Key Stage 1 they work well on their own and during collaborative activities, usually with sustained concentration and interest. They listen attentively to each other and to their teachers, contribute appropriately to class discussions, and readily help one another. The majority of pupils complete the tasks set for them. Noise levels in some classes for older pupils become unacceptable. On entry, a large number of pupils have language skills that are well below the standards expected for their age. They are placed on the special educational needs register and as they move through the school they make good progress in the development of oracy and writing and satisfactory progress in reading. The effect of this early language delay is noticeable at the end of Key Stage 1 in subjects such as science and history, where many pupils have not fully developed the language required to understand and confirm ideas and to write about processes and concepts. There are a few pupils in the school for whom English is an additional language. Learning by these pupils is good because their needs are met well by teachers and educational support staff.
30. Learning is satisfactory in one class in the speech and language unit. Pupils follow instructions, watch their teachers carefully, work as individuals or in groups, and make appropriate responses in their work. In the other class in this unit, learning is generally unsatisfactory as work set is often inappropriate and suitable behavioural management programmes have not been developed for all pupils. Overall, learning in the speech and language unit is unsatisfactory.

#### **HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?**

31. The content and organisation of the curriculum are good. The curriculum provides

access to the full range of learning experiences and promotes high achievement and personal development, particularly for pupils with special educational needs. The school meets statutory requirements for Key Stage 1 in the National Curriculum subjects and religious education, and for collective worship. The previous inspection found that curriculum provision was good. After a period of far-reaching change in curriculum requirements, the school has maintained a good curriculum and has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection.

32. The school's self-audit indicates that the school has a thorough awareness of its strengths and weaknesses. Its judgement about how far it meets statutory curriculum requirements accords with inspection findings. Detailed analysis of pupils' needs by the special educational needs co-ordinator, the headteacher and key staff has resulted in a good understanding of the curriculum required. The school has responded to the recent increase in pupils with special educational needs by making changes to its curriculum planning and by matching the work set to meet the needs of these pupils.
33. The school is particularly effective in settling in the very youngest pupils, in preparing pupils for the transition to Key Stage 1. It is also successful in developing the self-esteem and educational achievement of the large numbers of pupils with special educational needs in the mainstream school. The curricular experiences offered to these two groups are rich and stimulating, contributing to the personal development of all individuals, and helping them to prepare for life in the future.
34. The curriculum in the early years covers the six nationally recommended areas of learning - personal, social and emotional development; language and literacy; mathematics; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical development; and creative development. Children's personal, social and emotional development, language and literacy and mathematics are given appropriate priority by the school, as these are major areas of weakness when pupils start their education. The school rightly approaches these aspects of education through talk, enquiry and play, with the aim of developing positive attitudes to learning. The early years teachers are already revising the curriculum so that it will take account of the changes to be introduced in the autumn.
35. The school has successfully introduced the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. These strategies are being used to good effect for teaching basic skills. There is satisfactory enrichment through the school's extra-curricular provision, which includes support for learning outside the school day through the gym club, the football club, the creative dance club and the French club. There is a well-developed policy ensuring equality of access and opportunity for all pupils.

36. The school ensures that the quality and range of opportunities for learning cover all the key aspects of personal development. The school aims to develop children's awareness of their world. Areas of study such as history and geography provide an awareness of the locality and of the past which provides pupils with knowledge and insight into values and beliefs of their own local culture. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. During assembly and religious education lessons they are encouraged to reflect on their experiences in a way which develops their spiritual awareness and self-knowledge. The provision for pupils' moral development is good and activities such as 'Circle Time' ensure that most pupils learn the difference between right and wrong. The provision for social development is very good, as the children in the reception classes rapidly learn to mix with one another and acquire good social skills. The school effectively teaches pupils to appreciate their own cultural traditions. However, there is less organised emphasis on the diversity and richness of other cultures and opportunities for systematic study of other cultures are missed in subjects such as art and music.
37. The school pays satisfactory attention to personal and social education, including health education. The governing body has discussed the school's approach to sex education, and although there are no formal lessons, pupils' questions that arise naturally during topics such as "Ourselves", "Animals and their babies" and "The farm" are answered truthfully and sensitively. Drugs education is handled in a similar manner.
38. The school has typical links with the local community through visits to places of interest, and through public service, for example when the children sing to older local residents at Christmas time.
39. The school liaises with feeder nursery schools and with the local junior schools so that pupils are prepared fully for entering the school and for moving on to the next stage in their education.

#### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

40. The school cares for its pupils well. This has a positive effect on the academic progress they make and on their personal development. Most parents are happy with the quality of support and guidance given to their children and state that the school responds well to their individual needs. The overall quality of this aspect of the school's work has been sustained since the last inspection, despite changes in the nature of the school.
41. Provision for first aid, medication and medical emergencies is very good. Security is given a high priority and is constantly being improved. Risk assessment in other areas is less well developed and the health and safety policy is in need of updating. Child protection procedures are in line with the locally agreed policy. There is good liaison with external agencies and specialist support services, such as speech and occupational therapists and educational psychologists.
42. Procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are ineffective and have deteriorated since the last inspection. Whole school absence data is not monitored or correctly reported in the prospectus or in the governors' annual report to parents. The lack of an education welfare officer limits the support that can be offered to families experiencing problems. The education of these pupils suffers as they have difficulties in attending school regularly.

43. The procedures for promoting good behaviour and for eliminating bullying and oppressive behaviour are effective, except in one class in the speech and language unit, where inadequate and inappropriate measures are taken to address challenging behaviour. In the main school, almost all teachers, ably supported by the large number of non-teaching staff, skilfully and consistently use a range of appropriate strategies to encourage pupils' participation and to minimise disruption. Lunchtime supervisors are effective in promoting pupils' personal development and good standards of behaviour in the dining hall and the playground. Lunchtime supervisors are attached to a class and report any incidents or accidents to the class teacher as they hand the pupils over. The recent development of "Golden Rules" and improvements in the rewards system have had a motivating effect on the pupils. Any incidents of bullying are thoroughly investigated and effectively dealt with in such a way as to give the perpetrators a good insight into the feelings of the victim.
44. The school has satisfactory procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' attainment and progress. Attainment on entry is effectively assessed using the local authority's 'baseline' assessment scheme. This assessment forms the first phase in the identification of pupils with special educational needs. The school also uses its own procedures to supplement and check the accuracy of baseline assessment and to monitor the start that pupils are making to their school career. Good liaison between teachers ensures that the progress of pupils with special educational needs is monitored effectively and that appropriate action is taken if there is any change. The school's assessment procedures have recently been improved in consultation with the staff. These procedures are well developed in mathematics and for pupils' written work in English, and are now being produced for other aspects of the curriculum. Teachers make effective use of annotations to record the strengths and weaknesses in pupils' work, and where appropriate, to set targets for future learning. Teachers meet to discuss and agree the standards that pupils attain in English and mathematics and this helps to ensure the accuracy and usefulness of assessment. In other subjects, pupils' learning is assessed formally each term. The marking of pupils' work is positive and teachers suggest good strategies for improvement. The pupils are expected to take responsibility for their own learning, organising their own resources. They are praised and rewarded when they succeed. This raises their self-confidence and self-esteem and helps and encourages them to do better. The school is making satisfactory use of assessment information to guide its curricular planning - for example, in providing support programmes for pupils with special educational needs.
45. The school has good procedures for monitoring pupils' personal development. The teachers and non-teaching staff know their pupils well and treat them as individuals. They note how they respond to responsibility and discuss the concepts and attitudes they display during sessions such as 'Circle Time'. Teachers sensibly record areas of concern about pupils' progress and personal development. They give pupils appropriate guidance based on a thorough awareness of their strengths and weaknesses. In the main part of the school, the provision outlined in pupils' statements of special educational need is carefully implemented. Liaison with outside agencies is good and there are good procedures for ensuring that staff are aware of the particular dietary and medical needs of pupils. Most staff have a detailed knowledge of the progress and achievements of the pupils for whom they are responsible.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

46. The school has established a positive partnership with parents, which has a beneficial effect on pupils' achievement and well-being. Parents appreciate the way in which the school values each child as an individual and promotes his or her academic progress and personal development. They find the school welcoming and responsive to their concerns.
47. Inspectors do not agree with some parents who have expressed dissatisfaction with the information they receive on their children's progress. The information provided for parents is good overall. The home-school agreement effectively describes the commitment of all parties to the children's education. In the consultation exercise on the implementation of the home-school agreement, the school identified various concerns of parents and incorporated them into its development planning. A few of the weaknesses noted at the time of the last inspection concerning the contents of the prospectus and the governors' annual report have not been fully addressed. Further improvements are required in the prospectus, which is weak and does not effectively convey the ethos and expectations of the school. Currently, it fails to include legally required items such as correct absence data, information on the arrangements for collective worship, and a statement of the school's aims. The governors' annual report is more informative, but still does not meet statutory requirements for the reporting of absence data. Newsletters and other communications are clear and friendly. Useful information is sent to enable parents to understand the work being covered by their children each term and to give them guidance on helping their children at home.
48. The teachers are accessible to parents and there is a great deal of informal contact when mutual concerns are exchanged. However, the insufficiency of formal consultation meetings to discuss pupils' progress was a concern of some parents, to which the school is planning a satisfactory response. Annual reports on the pupils cover all required areas of their work and give parents a good picture of their progress and attitudes. They do not give guidance or set targets for improvement, but these developments are planned for this year. Parents of pupils in reception classes are well informed about their children's baseline assessment and the way in which their children have adapted to school life.
49. Parents have a significant impact on their children's progress in reading by regularly sharing books with them and by following a range of appropriate activities with them, as described in the Bookmark scheme, which is being extended throughout the school. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are fully involved and informed in accordance with the code of practice. There is good liaison between home and school through the contact books used for some of these pupils. Significant numbers of parents attend school events and contribute substantial sums to school fundraising efforts. A small but dedicated band of volunteers helps in the classrooms and with extra-curricular activities and acts as escorts for school trips.

## **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

50. The headteacher and most other key staff provide very good leadership for the school. The headteacher is dynamic and thoughtful. She focuses the attention of the staff and governors on the implementation of new procedures that aim to improve the school's educational provision and raise standards. Soon after taking

up her post, a little over one year ago, the headteacher instigated a thorough analysis of the school's strengths and weaknesses. This audit provided the framework for writing a development plan, the priorities of which provide a very strong basis for educational development in the next few years. The school has, for example, used evidence from the audit to improve its long-term curriculum plans for children in reception classes. The structure of this development plan reflects the changes recommended in the last inspection report and is more closely tied to the school's financial planning cycle than it was at that time.

51. The headteacher has also introduced new procedures for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of teaching and curriculum provision. These procedures are very good and they are being implemented effectively by senior managers and subject leaders. The resulting analysis of the school's strengths and weaknesses is being used to modify the existing development plan and to plan for the next phase of school improvement.
52. Most staff have been delegated some degree of responsibility for different aspects of the school's work. The deputy headteacher, the other year team 'base' leaders, teachers with subject leadership responsibility, and the co-ordinators for special educational needs and assessment in the main part of the school carry out their duties conscientiously and effectively. Together they have developed a shared culture of success to which staff and governors are fully committed.
53. However, the management of the special educational needs unit is unsatisfactory. This unit was set up by the local authority many years ago to provide a facility for pupils with speech and communication difficulties. The arrangements for the management of the unit have not been revised to take into account the overall changes in school management that have occurred in recent years. As a consequence, there is a lack of clarity about the responsibilities of the headteacher and other senior staff of the school and those of the teacher in charge of the special needs unit. These difficulties, together with the recent absence of the teacher in charge of the unit, and low morale, result in ineffective management. The local authority is fully aware of the situation and is working with the school to resolve the problems.
54. Overall, the effectiveness of the governing body in fulfilling its responsibilities is good. Governors collaborate closely and sensitively with the headteacher in planning the strategic management of the school's resources. The school satisfactorily applies the principles of best value – comparison, challenge, consultation and competition - in using its resources. It has used these principles, for example, when deciding on the services it will purchase from the local authority and those it will place with outside contractors.
55. The governing body and the headteacher are continuing to negotiate with the local education authority on the size of the annual budget. Since the last inspection the school agreed to the local authority's request to increase its intake from 90 to 120 pupils per year in order to provide more infant places for children in the Christchurch area. However, the school's budget has not been sufficient to match the demand for more teachers and support staff and is currently in deficit. Officers from the local authority have agreed that the school should have a licensed deficit and they are discussing the resolution of this complex financial situation with the school and council members.

56. Governors are fully committed to school improvement and many attend training courses to help them develop their skills in holding the school to account for the educational standards achieved, which they are increasingly concerned to do. Governors frequently meet with key staff, such as those with responsibility for special educational needs and the implementation of the national numeracy strategy, in order to inform themselves about the work of the school. However, other than setting targets for improvement in the performance of the headteacher and the deputy head, the governing body and the senior staff have not felt that the school is yet in a position to set meaningful targets for improvement in the standards that pupils attain. They have identified the need to improve the school's procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' progress before starting the target setting process. As this work is well underway the school should soon be in a position to set targets and monitor their achievement. Overall, the school's values, such as those summarised in the home-school agreement, are reflected well in its work. Although the school successfully achieves the aspirations articulated in its statement of aims, it recognises the need to revise its aims to make them more readily open to monitoring and evaluation.
57. The school provides satisfactory support and guidance to new members of staff and temporary teachers. Some aspects of the school's practices, such as the snapshots and pen portraits of the pupils in each class who have special educational needs, are very good and ensure that new staff have a clear understanding of pupils' problems and learning difficulties. There are satisfactory opportunities for staff to participate in professional development activities. However, the school's appraisal programme has fallen behind schedule, as there is a shortage of trained appraisers. The school has booked places on appraisal training courses run by the local authority in the spring term 2000 to rectify this situation.
58. Overall, there is a good match between the provision of teachers and educational support staff on the one hand, and the demands of the curriculum on the other. In many instances, teachers with subject expertise are effectively deployed to provide leadership for the development of the curriculum. There is a high level of educational support staff provision and this factor, together with the effective arrangements for the management of special educational needs in the main part of the school, has a very positive impact on the standards achieved. The expertise of the staff in the special educational needs unit is adequate. Although two out of the three teachers have not received formal training, they are experienced in working with pupils with speech and language disorders. Additional support is provided by a full-time speech therapist funded by the local health authority.
59. The overall lack of expertise in information technology has, in large measure, been overcome by deploying a committed classroom assistant with considerable subject knowledge and skill to teach small groups of pupils in the school's recently constructed computer room. The school has made very effective use of the Standards Fund grant and its own financial reserves to provide this room, which houses a suite of up-to-date computers and ancillary equipment. The resources are used well and this has resulted in improved standards in information technology. The school has sufficient learning resources to meet its curricular needs, although there is a shortage of materials for history, music and religious education.
60. Since the last inspection the school has enhanced its accommodation to meet its curriculum needs by the adaptation of the stage to provide a studio for the creative arts and by converting a large store room into a computer room. In the reception

base area, the benefits of team teaching and the ethos of shared learning outweigh the disadvantages of noise and the occasional disruption of lessons as children walk through the open plan classrooms.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

### **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

- The quality of teaching in the special educational needs unit is unsatisfactory and the management of the unit is ineffective. This impacts on the standards that pupils achieve.
- Reading standards are below the national average by the end of Key Stage 1.
- The school has not set targets for the improvement of pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Attendance is below average.

### **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

- Improve the quality of education in the special educational needs unit by:
  - clarifying the roles and responsibilities of governors, the headteacher and other staff involved in the management of the unit (paragraphs 53, 66)
  - providing appropriate support and training in the management of pupils' behaviour (paragraphs 21, 26, 64).
- Develop further the strategies for teaching reading, especially for lower attaining pupils (paragraphs 8, 24, 85).
- Set targets for the improvement of pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics and for pupils' attendance, and devise an action plan for the achievement of these targets (paragraphs 2, 19, 42, 84).

### **OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL**

- Ensuring that the school completes its schedule for the appraisal of teachers (paragraph 57).
- Improving the arrangements for pupils to develop a greater understanding of other cultures (paragraph 36).
- Improving procedures for carrying out risk assessments and updating the school's health and safety policy (paragraph 41).
- Improving the quality of the prospectus and ensuring that the prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents meet statutory requirements (paragraph 47).

## **THE SPEECH AND LANGUAGE UNIT**

61. The speech and language unit caters for the needs of fourteen pupils with statements of special educational need for speech and language disorders. The pupils come from a wide area in east Dorset. Since the last inspection, the quality of provision in the speech and language unit has deteriorated and provision for these pupils is unsatisfactory.
62. The unit comprises two classes. One class contains six pupils, the majority of whom are under five. In the other class, there are eight pupils, most of whom are in Year 2. Individual educational programmes exist for all pupils and these satisfactorily reflect the aims of the statement for each child. All pupils are socially integrated into

a mainstream class for registration and school assemblies. A few pupils from the unit are integrated into lessons taught in the main part of the school, and occasionally pupils from mainstream classes join lessons for pupils in the unit. However, the integration programme with the mainstream school is currently underdeveloped and this aspect of the school's work has deteriorated since the last inspection.

63. In the younger class pupils make satisfactory progress towards the achievement of the early learning goals for pupils under five. They pay attention to all adults with whom they work and respond positively in all lessons. In this class, planning is satisfactory and work in the basic skills is well matched to pupils' needs, enabling them to develop the receptive and expressive language that they need in order to gain access to the curriculum. These children are making steady progress in developing literacy and numeracy skills in relation to their prior attainment, which is well below average on entry to school. Pupils have regular opportunities to develop creative and physical skills. They cut, stick and paint and enjoy dance and physical education. They run, hop, march, and jump with control, and they use space well. Although their attainment is below age expectations, their achievement in relation to prior attainment is satisfactory. In this class, there is a positive ethos and a clear sense of purpose. Due attention is given to all areas of the curriculum; teaching and class management is satisfactory.
64. In the class for older pupils, progress and achievement are unsatisfactory because there are significant shortcomings in teaching. In this class, the range of ability and language difficulty is wide, and programmes of study, especially for the development of literacy, are not relevant to the needs of all pupils. Other programmes and strategies have not been devised to interest pupils and engage them actively in learning. Classroom tasks, for groups and individuals, are often ill-matched to meet lesson objectives and are of a repetitive and mundane nature. There are a number of pupils with additional behavioural difficulties in this class. Where management programmes have been established, pupils learn to respond positively and are making satisfactory progress in gaining self-control. However, behavioural management programmes have not been set up for all pupils. As a result, there is a strained atmosphere in the class as the teacher endeavours to maintain discipline. Pupils are constrained in their responses in whole class sessions. This has an adverse effect on some pupils who display unfriendly behaviour towards other pupils in the school as a result of over control in class.
65. In the unit, curriculum planning for both classes focuses on the six areas of learning for children under five, and this is unsatisfactory for pupils at Key Stage 1. Teachers and support staff work constructively together to support pupils in all six areas of learning. Pupils particularly enjoy lessons where they are involved in practical activities, such as trying to redress a doll in Victorian clothes. In this way, they develop ideas of past times. Assessment is a regular feature in the unit. Support staff keep good day-to-day records of how pupils respond in lessons to accompany teacher assessment. All members of staff work closely together to review each day in order to plan future work for pupils. In this way, continuity is planned and resources, which are good, are used effectively to promote learning. Records and procedures relating to the Code of Practice are in place and meet the statutory requirements.

66. A member of the school's senior management team is responsible for the day-to-day management of the unit. Recently, however, low morale and substantial sickness leave have contributed to the ineffectiveness with which the unit is lead. In addition, there is a lack of clarity about the roles and responsibilities of the headteacher and the unit co-ordinator for the long-term management of the unit, and this contributes to the unsatisfactory leadership that is being given.
67. Staff provision for the unit is satisfactory. The unit co-ordinator has substantial experience and qualifications in working with pupils with speech and language disorders. In addition, there are two part-time teachers who have not been trained in teaching pupils with speech and language disorders but who have suitable experience in working in this field. In each class, teachers, nursery nurses and ancillary welfare workers work well together to support pupils. A full-time speech and language therapist also supports the work of the unit and the learning of other pupils in the school. The therapist makes a positive contribution to pupils' learning by providing good quality structured language programmes for pupils and by assisting individuals in the development of receptive and expressive language. Insufficient use is made of the therapist's expertise to guide and develop whole class strategies for the development of communication skills.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	62
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	37

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	15	55	24	5	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y R – Y3
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	348
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	16

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y3
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	23
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	140

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	24
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	18

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.2
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

### **Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1**

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	1999	62	54	116

<b>National Curriculum Test/Task Results</b>		<b>Reading</b>	<b>Writing</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	44	47	49
	Girls	51	51	50
	Total	95	98	99
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	82 (77)	84 (81)	85(84)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

<b>Teachers' Assessments</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	46	50	54
	Girls	50	50	54
	Total	96	100	105
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	83 (83)	86 (85)	91 (86)
	National	82(81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

*Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.*

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	2
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	222
Any other minority ethnic group	0

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

*This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	14.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19.9
Average class size	25

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y2**

Total number of education support staff	26
Total aggregate hours worked per week	470

*FTE means full-time equivalent*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1998-99
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	£
Total income	584048
Total expenditure	592148
Expenditure per pupil	1941
Balance brought forward from previous year	11865
Balance carried forward to next year	3765

## **Results of the survey of parents and carers**

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	348
Number of questionnaires returned	116

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	69	28	2	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	47	48	3	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	34	59	3	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	27	55	9	3	5
The teaching is good.	55	40	1	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	34	43	19	3	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	72	26	1	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	52	45	3	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	38	51	9	1	1
The school is well led and managed.	52	41	2	1	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	44	50	0	1	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	22	44	16	3	15

## **PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES**

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

68. On entry to the school, children's attainment is well below average in all areas of learning and a very high proportion of pupils has identified special educational needs. Children join the reception classes on a part-time basis in the September before their fifth birthday, and all are full-time from January. Overall, the attainment of five-year-olds is below average. However, they are achieving well in relation to what might reasonably be expected of them. Most children are making good progress towards the achievement of the early learning goals in all six areas of the curriculum – language and literacy, mathematics, personal and social development, knowledge and understanding of the world, and creative and physical development.
69. In all of the reception classes, considerable emphasis is placed on the development of language, literacy and communication skills, which are taught well. As a result, achievement in relation to skills on entry to school is good. However, the standards attained by five year olds in reading are below those expected for children of this age.
70. Reading skills are developed through careful preparatory work to enable children to benefit from the National Literacy Strategy. Children are encouraged to develop phonological awareness and are introduced to a basic vocabulary and key characters in stories. As a result, they enjoy talking about pictures and following story texts and approach reading with enthusiasm and interest. Children listen attentively to stories, have learnt to handle books carefully and talk about the pictures with enthusiasm. They enjoy learning about the letters and sounds used to synthesise into words, and many higher attaining children read and write short, phonically regular words.
71. Children make good progress in developing skills in speaking and listening, although standards attained are still below average for their age. Teachers provide daily opportunities for children to develop their oral skills by listening to stories and joining in songs and rhymes and in whole class discussions at the end of most lessons. Most children are beginning to express their wishes clearly when asked to choose an activity. When working in groups, children talk freely with each other about their work and interests and they enjoy their participation in role-play activities, such as in the Animal Hospital that was seen in one class.
72. Pupils' achievement in writing is good. Appropriate attention is given to letter formation. A small number of more able pupils form letters correctly and write the first words in the high frequency word list. Writing is encouraged in specific writing groups where children learn to form and copy sentences. All children handle pens, pencils and crayons correctly to colour and make marks on paper. Tracing and other pattern exercises aid the development of fine motor skills.
73. Mathematics is taught well and pupils' achievements are good. Many pupils attain the expected standards in number work by the time they are five. Frequent oral work reinforces and consolidates learning. In all classes children enjoy number rhymes and can order numerals to ten and identify missing numbers in a sequence from one to ten. Many children can count to twenty and beyond. Children enjoy playing with sand and water, which enables them to develop some understanding of

volume, but were not seen to be involved in structured play to develop and extend mathematical concepts.

74. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is developed satisfactorily. The teaching of this area of learning is good. Children have regular access to computers and are gaining confidence in information technology. They develop scientific and technical skills by learning to build models with large construction toys and by investigating push and pull forces. Their learning is consolidated further when they make wheeled models from recycled materials. However, in science, progress is impeded by underdeveloped language skills.
75. Children make good progress and attain the expected standards in their creative development. This aspect of their learning is taught well. Children have good opportunities to work with a variety of materials to enhance their creative abilities. They are appropriately involved in making choices about these activities, which include artwork involving colouring, cutting, sticking, and pasting different materials to make patterns, pictures, and models. Children pursue these activities with interest, and when asked, they explain clearly what they are doing. Pupils enjoy singing and remember the words to their favourite songs.
76. Children attain the expected standards for five-year-olds in physical development. Satisfactory attention is paid to the fostering of physical development, including fine motor skills. In this aspect of learning teaching is satisfactory. Children participate in dance and outdoor games with obvious enjoyment and their skills in controlling movement are satisfactory. They enjoy the time spent outdoors on the large wheeled toys and climbing apparatus in the secure outdoor area, where they learn to run, jump, pedal and climb. When guided by their teachers, they follow and copy the leader, but are easily distracted and forget the sequence of events.
77. On starting school children settle quickly into their new environment and work and play harmoniously together. They take turns in sharing resources and playing with toys and equipment. Children make good progress in their personal and social development while they are in the reception classes. Children develop their self-confidence during 'Circle Time' and they learn to appreciate and understand their own values and needs and those of others. They have a satisfactory awareness of the difference between right and wrong and show care and consideration for each other and for the environment in both work and play. There are satisfactory opportunities for pupils to develop spiritually during assemblies.
78. Children with special educational needs make good progress. They are very accurately identified on entry to school. As children move through the reception classes they are moved up or down the Code of Practice stages. Some are taken off and other are placed on the special educational needs register as they progress or experience difficulties. Children receive very good support from ancillary welfare assistants.
79. Overall, the quality of teaching in the reception classes is good. Teachers' skills in managing children's behaviour are very good and this helps to ensure that the children settle quickly and quietly and work with suitable concentration and involvement at the tasks set. Teachers and support staff work closely together to provide good support for children of differing abilities. Work is carefully planned and assessed. Teachers collaborate well with one another in planning work for pupils. Generally, an appropriate balance is maintained between direct teaching and

practical activities. Medium and long-term plans demonstrate a progression in learning and sound attention to the needs of pupils as identified through assessment. Teachers use a suitable range of teaching strategies which, combined with continuous assessment, supports pupils' learning well. Relationships are warm and friendly, with children receiving frequent praise and encouragement. Teachers work together well in the large, open plan classrooms, although there are times when the noise levels from one group disturb the work of another. Overall, the range and quality of the resources available to support learning are good.

80. Since the last inspection there has been an increase in the number of pupils taught in the reception classes, which have expanded from three to four forms. There has also been a significant change in staffing, with the appointment of the new deputy headteacher who is the early years co-ordinator. Recently, the school has reviewed its curriculum plans for the early years and improved its procedures, particularly for teaching writing and mathematics through the implementation of the national literacy and numeracy strategies. The school has also implemented the local authority's procedures for assessing pupils' attainment on entry – baseline assessment. The good quality teaching seen at the time of the last inspection has been maintained. However, a higher proportion of pupils now has special educational needs, and as a consequence, there has been a decline in standards attained compared with those reported in 1997, which were satisfactory.

## **ENGLISH**

81. On starting school, many pupils lack sufficiently well developed language and communication skills and many have special educational needs in this area. Against this background, pupils are achieving higher standards than those that might reasonably be expected of them, with many pupils attaining nationally expected standards. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils attain standards in English which are close to the national average in writing, and just below expectations in reading and speaking and listening. The results of national tests indicate that standards in writing have improved since the last inspection, but standards in reading have not developed as well. The performance of girls is close to average. However, that of boys is below average, as many more of them have special educational needs.
82. The school is successfully implementing the National Literacy Strategy. Literacy lessons provide effectively for pupils to learn about books and textual devices, such as rhyme, and to develop phonological awareness. The contribution made to the development of pupils' skills in reading and writing in other subjects of the curriculum, such as science, information technology and history, is satisfactory.
83. Throughout the school pupils' speaking and listening skills are below average. Pupils listen attentively to each other and to their teachers, but many do not speak with clarity and confidence. Teachers use questioning effectively to help pupils develop the appropriate use of spoken English.
84. Attainment in reading is below average. In the 1999 national tests for seven-year-olds, the proportion of pupils attaining the expected standards of Levels 2C and 2B was average, but too few attained the higher Level 2A. The proportion attaining Level 3 was close to average. In Year 2 too few pupils read with sufficient fluency and understanding. Pupils' skills in expressing preferences about stories and authors are below average. Higher attaining pupils use phonic skills appropriately to help them read unknown words. They have a good awareness of the difference

between fiction and non-fiction and they understand and use the contents pages and indexes in simple reference books. However, a substantial minority of pupils has limited word knowledge and breadth of sight vocabularies, and lacks the skills needed to help with the reading of new words. When reading with teachers from books with large text, most pupils read with expression. In both Year 1 and Year 2 pupils enjoy the stories that they read during literacy lessons and they remember the details of these stories well. They apply the knowledge acquired during earlier lessons to help them develop comprehension skills and vocabulary for the critical analysis of text and story writing. Pupils read to their teachers, but there is a lack of time for lower attainers to practise reading to consolidate their learning. In most literacy lessons the balance between word, sentence and text-level work is satisfactory for most pupils, but it is unsatisfactory for lower attaining pupils, who do not receive sufficient guidance to help them improve in their reading.

85. Standards attained in writing are in line with the national average and the standards achieved in writing are higher than those that might be expected. In 1999 the proportion of pupils attaining the expected standard, Levels 2C, 2B and 2A, in the end of Key Stage 1 tests in writing was close to the national average. In addition, there was an average proportion of higher attaining pupils who reached Level 3. Average and higher attaining pupils write interesting stories, poetry and accounts, such as how they made an object or completed a task, for an appropriate range of audiences. Pupils are encouraged to attempt a spelling before using unknown words and to then check this with a member of staff, thereby developing their accuracy in spelling. Many five year olds' skills in writing are limited to the formation of letters or words that are just recognisable – 'emergent writing'. These skills quickly develop as pupils learn to write in clearly defined sentences with recognisable spelling. By the time they are seven years old pupils have developed a clear legible form of cursive handwriting.
86. Teaching overall is good. Teachers make satisfactory use of data obtained from the end of year assessments to inform planning of work in classes. Work is suitably matched to pupils' needs. Pupils are given specific targets, which they understand and work methodically to achieve. At all ability levels, pupils are making satisfactory progress in writing, although few write at length using paragraphs. Individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs are clear and informative and set appropriate targets and strategies for pupils' improvement.
87. Corporate planning by teachers in the four classes for each year results in satisfactory lesson plans. These plans ensure that there is consistency in the aims and strategies used to deliver the curriculum across year groups and the school as a whole. In most classes, the planning of work is thorough, tasks are clearly explained and skilful questioning is used to extend pupils' thinking. In a small number of unsatisfactory lessons seen, class management lacked rigour and pupils received insufficient guidance to help them improve their work. On some occasions, the noise in the classroom is allowed to rise to an unacceptable level, and this affects pupils' learning. The day-to-day assessment and recording of pupils' achievements is good and this information is used effectively to guide pupils in their studies.
88. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported by classroom assistants. Good teamwork between teachers and classroom assistants enables pupils with special educational needs to work towards the goals set for them in their individual educational plans and to make satisfactory progress. They are fully

integrated into all lessons. Teachers and support staff have a good knowledge of phonics, which they teach systematically from a commercially produced structured scheme. Pupils with reading difficulties enjoy these lessons and gain a good understanding of the phonemic system. They blend sounds into words, but are not becoming confident readers as the gap between the phonics lesson and reading practice is too long. Overall, pupils lack confidence when reading and are hesitant to put into use their newly acquired skills.

89. Pupils with English as an additional language are making satisfactory progress. They benefit from the advice the school receives from the local authority's advisors and from the direct teaching provided by a specialist support teacher.
90. There are good arrangements for the management of English. The National Literacy Strategy has been effectively modified to meet the needs of the school - for example, by providing a two-hour workshop in place of two separate hours, to enable more concentrated time to be given to pupils to practise and develop their extended writing. As a result, pupils now attain the nationally expected standards in writing. The monitoring of teaching and learning is good. Lessons are regularly observed and verbal and written feedback is given to teachers. A sample of pupils is tracked to check the progress that they make. Work samples are kept and annotated and targets are set to help pupils improve the standards of their written work.

## **MATHEMATICS**

91. Results of the national tests in mathematics in 1999 at Key Stage 1 show attainment to be broadly in line with the national average. In comparison with similar schools, results appear to be well below average. However, this comparison is made on the basis of pupil eligibility for free school meals and does not take account of the number of pupils with special educational needs. Christchurch Infant School has a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and inspection evidence indicates that pupil achievement is above that expected for these pupils. Teacher assessments are similar to inspection findings and indicate that the areas for development are the use and application of mathematics, and shape, space and measure. Trends over the last three years follow national results and show a slight improvement in standards. The standards achieved by both boys and girls in the 1999 tests were close to the national average. The number of pupils achieving the higher levels was also close to the national average. Evidence gained through inspection reflects this improving picture and shows attainment overall to be in line with national expectations.
92. The school has maintained the teaching strengths evident in the last inspection and continues to provide its pupils with a good grounding in numeracy and its use in other subjects. Improvement has been good following the appointment of the current headteacher. Prior to that, little improvement since the last inspection seems to have been made.
93. Overall, pupils achieve well over time and in the lessons seen. Gifted and talented pupils make satisfactory progress. The large number of pupils with special educational needs and the small number of pupils with English as an additional language make good progress, particularly in the younger age group, as a direct result of high quality teaching. In one lesson, younger pupils developed their skills in number by helping a puppet to remember number facts correctly. The most able

understand that numbers become very large and know the word “million”. Some pupils can order and count numbers to 20 and beyond. The least able pupils are not yet ready to begin recording their numbers but show good understanding of what they have been taught. Pupils in Year 1 practise two digit numbers and know the pairs of numbers that add up to 10. They know a good range of mathematical vocabulary and this helps them understand problems and aids them when they are asked to split two digit numbers into tens and units. The lessons build well on what has gone before, and as a result of having been taught well previously, pupils find the recording of two digit numbers straightforward. Pupils in Year 2 play number games to reinforce their previous learning, but these games are not always well-organised. Pupils in Year 2 work on three digit numbers and successfully use the “less than” (<) and “more than” (>) symbols in their work. Pupils decide which are larger and which are smaller numbers by looking first at the tens column and then at the units. Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of place value which is not always matched by their ability to record numbers. Pupils’ previous work indicates that they cover a broad range of study in mathematics. There is a concentration on number work as advised by the National Numeracy Framework. Relatively less work is completed in the area of shape and space.

94. Initially, lower attaining pupils make slow progress in understanding new concepts, such as metric measures, but once they have grasped the principle they make good progress. Higher attaining pupils quickly apply new learning and move rapidly to more challenging tasks. Their mental agility advances with daily mental arithmetic, especially when question sessions are stimulating. Pupils make good progress when they use mathematics in other subjects - for example, by constructing graphs from data in science and geography. They extend their literacy by regularly adding to their subject vocabulary. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils know their numbers to 100 and show this in card games and problem solving. They know that numbers get bigger counting forwards and smaller counting backwards. They use their knowledge and understanding of number in every day contexts, such as time and monetary transactions. They demonstrate their knowledge by adding coins of different value to make 10p. They use the other three mathematical operations in practical ways, such as sharing cakes between various numbers of people.
95. Pupils behave well and show an interest in mathematics, especially when questioning is lively and tasks relate to their experience. They revel in appropriately set challenges, which they answer with enthusiasm, and they respond positively to variety in lessons. Pupils’ interest wanes when the teacher is disorganised or talks for too long and the pace slows. Pupils of all ages work well independently, in pairs and in groups. When given the opportunity, pupils readily accept responsibility, such as when they distribute resources.
96. Teaching quality is good or better in nearly all lessons. Unsatisfactory teaching was seen in one lesson. Where teaching is good or better, teachers spend a significant amount of time in quick-fire questioning, which maintains pupils’ mental alertness. This practice gives teachers a continuous awareness of pupils’ progress, which they use to shape the direction of the lesson and of future work. Good planning is a strong feature of most lessons and this contributes positively to progress. Better teaching includes a range of tasks carefully chosen to provide learning opportunities for the wide ability range present in most classes, and for the high number of pupils with special educational needs. In such lessons teachers draw upon practical resources to give tasks more relevance, and design their questioning carefully to challenge gifted and talented pupils. Teachers use support teachers and assistants

effectively to promote the achievement of lower attaining pupils and of those with special educational needs. Teachers manage pupils well by giving clear directions calmly and with good humour. Unsatisfactory teaching shows a slow pace, lack of challenge for higher attaining pupils and the absence of appropriate tasks and practical equipment for lower attaining pupils.

97. The school provides good coverage of all aspects of mathematics. The co-ordinator has identified areas of focus for the future through analysis of past results and by monitoring colleagues' planning. The school stresses the importance of assessment in creating well-targeted plans for learning. The school is aware that the use and application of mathematical methods needs developing. Number work is particularly well developed. The school has adopted the framework of the National Numeracy Strategy and this has supported the development of the provision for mathematics and has prepared teachers and class assistants well. The school is aware of the positive impact the Numeracy Strategy is having on teaching and has invested in appropriate resources. The school analyses test and assessment data to identify areas for further development. The subject is well managed and the co-ordinator's monitoring role is developing well.

## **SCIENCE**

98. Overall, the results of teacher assessment at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999, were similar to the national average. The percentage of pupils reaching the expected Level 2 was in line with the national average, but the percentage reaching the higher Level 3 was lower than average. In comparison with schools containing a similar number of pupils eligible for free school meals, the percentage reaching the expected Level 2 was below average and the percentage reaching the higher Level 3 was well below average. There were some variations between standards reached in different aspects of the subject. The performance of pupils of all abilities in life and living processes was below average. There were fewer pupils than average who achieved the higher levels in materials and their properties. The school has a much higher than average number of pupils with special educational needs and their results depress the standards attained overall. Boys' attainment is lower than that of girls because there are more boys with special educational needs.
99. Overall, pupils' achievement is better than might be expected. The number of pupils with special educational needs is unusually high - a majority in some classes - and these pupils are achieving good standards in all aspects of science, including physical processes. Pupils of average or high ability are attaining the standards expected for their age. Pupils of all abilities learn through practical experiences and are beginning to understand the principles of the study of science, such as the need for gathering data, through investigation. During the inspection week the focus of work was on forces in Year 2 and in the Key Stage 1 reception class. Pupils had experimented with a range of toys and artefacts and were recording in categories on the basis of whether they worked by pushing or pulling. In Year 1 the focus of work was on materials. Pupils examined a wide range of materials and investigated which were the most suitable for filling a pillow. Pupils in Year 2 build on their observations and understanding of forces through their work in design and technology, making structures such as swing bridges, designed to respond to forces while remaining stable. Most pupils show a satisfactory knowledge of topics they have studied in science and talk about them using correct terminology when appropriate. Pupils record their findings satisfactorily but do not make sufficient use of literacy skills to write about experiments and do not regularly use information

technology to record and display results. Most pupils are beginning to grasp the basics of scientific modes of enquiry and higher attaining pupils are beginning to appreciate the need for a fair test when carrying out an experiment.

100. Pupils across the range of ability make satisfactory progress in lessons and as they move through the school because of the breadth of experiences they encounter. Pupils in Year 1 were making satisfactory progress in developing their observation skills and drawing conclusions from evidence as they examined different materials for making pillows. Pupils in Year 2 provide evidence of sound progress in investigating forces. Pupils with special educational needs in the main school make very good progress towards the targets set for them because work is well designed to support their previous learning and challenges them appropriately. These pupils make up a substantial part of every class and their attainment in science, while good when compared with their attainment when they started school, is still below average. Most of their difficulties are related to language development, and teachers work effectively to adjust both the tasks and the groupings to suit all abilities. The school's plan to target higher attaining pupils will be of great benefit to both pupils and teachers.
101. Since the last inspection attainment appears to have declined slightly, but this is largely due to the increase in the numbers of pupils with special educational needs. Progress of this group, almost half the school population with a disproportionately high number of boys, is very good. Pupils from the language unit were not observed in science lessons, and there was little evidence of liaison in this subject with class teachers.
102. The quality of the teaching is good overall. Teaching in science has improved since the last inspection, with examples of good teaching in all year groups, and some very good teaching. Joint planning by all teachers ensures that the content of work is broadly similar between classes. Learning objectives are clear and good links are made to previous learning. The best teachers make sure that all pupils are aware of the intended learning objectives in a particular lesson. The lessons seen were well planned, and in the best lessons it was quite clear that pupils were making progress in acquiring scientific knowledge and understanding. The improved teaching of this aspect of the science curriculum is due to the co-ordinator's awareness that it is an area that has been previously underdeveloped. The school has developed a good system of monitoring to help teachers improve their own subject knowledge. Particularly good subject knowledge in some lessons seen enables teachers to respond especially well to pupils' questions and to ask more challenging questions themselves. Where this occurs, it promotes good progress. Teachers use adult helpers effectively to support pupils working in groups. Teachers place appropriate emphasis on the health and safety aspects of the subject to ensure that pupils become aware of safe working methods. Methods of assessment are satisfactory and are being used increasingly well to inform planning. For example, the teaching of experimental and investigative science has been included specifically in the planning in the light of the 1999 teacher assessment results. No homework is set, but pupils are encouraged to carry out simple tasks to prepare for, or extend work in lessons.
103. The playground, and a conservation area and garden in the school grounds, are frequently used for teaching. The outdoor environment is used for scientific investigation during the spring and summer terms. Pupils enjoy the practical aspects of these lessons and make sound progress. Most pupils are interested in their lessons and enjoy them. In lessons where pupils learn best they are encouraged to

predict and are involved in close observations and practical work, whilst being encouraged to develop scientific vocabulary.

104. The leadership and management of science are good. The co-ordinator has a clear vision for the development of the subject and has developed secure systems to ensure that improvements are made in the provision. The school's monitoring system is used to identify areas where teachers need support and further training is arranged where necessary. The co-ordinator has a complete picture of the current status of science in the school because she has regular opportunities to monitor the quality of planning and progress through work sampling in different year groups. This awareness enables her to adjust the curriculum when necessary. There is a good policy statement and scheme of work that provide teachers with secure guidance for planning work. Resources for the subject are satisfactory and well organised.

## **ART**

105. In practical work in art the achievement of pupils of average and above average ability is satisfactory. The large number of pupils with special educational needs are achieving good standards. All pupils are provided with opportunities to work with a suitable range of media in two-and three-dimensions. Pupils' achievement in observational drawing is good. By Year 2, pupils' drawings and paintings of a range of fruit and vegetables - pineapples, pomegranates, peppers, oranges and sweetcorn - show close observation and good use of a range of media to record detail. In one lesson seen, all pupils made good progress in acquiring drawing skills and some made very good progress because of the quality of the teaching and the sustained concentration with which pupils carried out the task of sketching their imaginary magic garden.
106. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of art is below that expected. Pupils are given some opportunities to look at the work of noted artists as appropriate stimuli during the literacy hour, for example, but this aspect is not given sufficient emphasis, and pupils are not encouraged to use techniques to improve their own original work. No evidence was found of teaching based on examination of the work of artists to provide ideas for pupils' own work. Opportunities are missed to promote pupils' awareness of the rich diversity of cultures on which contemporary art draws. Overall, the art curriculum makes insufficient contribution to pupils' cultural development. Care is taken to maintain a good gender balance by examining the work of female artists, such as Mary Cassat.
107. Pupils enjoy their work in art. Most concentrate hard, make careful observations, and strive to do their best. Many pupils persevere in order to achieve the desired effect, and older, higher attaining pupils are beginning to evaluate their own work and to suggest how it might be improved.

108. The school has maintained many of the strengths noted in the previous inspection report, with work in art closely linked to curriculum themes and good planning to ensure that pupils experience a wide variety of media and techniques. The lack of the study of art from other cultures noted in the previous report remains a weakness.
109. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory because teachers successfully teach basic practical skills and motivate pupils well. In one of the two whole-class art lessons seen, the teaching was good, and in the other it was satisfactory. In the good lesson, expectations were high and pupils' attention was well directed to developing their skills with the chosen media, which included information technology. In this lesson, all pupils made good progress. In the other lesson, the teacher's organisation, planning and motivation of pupils were good, but there was no sense of a drive towards the improvement of the skills being taught. Teachers provide a stimulating visual environment for pupils. Displays around the school are of good quality and celebrate achievement well.
110. The policy for art is sound. It is based on National Curriculum guidelines and is supported by a satisfactory scheme of work that identifies key art skills and some areas of knowledge to be taught. The scheme sets out in sufficient detail what pupils are expected to learn from year to year. However, the policy and scheme do not contain sufficient reference to the work of professional artists or to cultural aspects of the subject. This results in too narrow a curriculum in practice and missed opportunities to promote good all round progress. The time allocated to art in all classes is sufficient to meet the objectives of the school's policy.
111. The leadership and management of art are good overall. During a period of great change the school has successfully maintained the position of art in the curriculum and its place in the personal and spiritual development of children. The co-ordinator participates in the monitoring programme to influence standards and has made a thorough evaluation of existing provision and of what needs to be done to develop the subject. Resources for art are sufficient and there are carefully drawn up plans for using the work of an artist-in-residence to stimulate pupils next summer.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

112. Standards in design and technology are in line with national expectation by the end of Key Stage 1. Pupils of average and high ability achieve satisfactory standards in relation to their prior attainment. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is very high in relation to their attainment on entry. These pupils form an unusually high percentage of the pupil population. Pupils enter Key Stage 1 with a good grounding in basic making skills, such as cutting and joining techniques, and a satisfactory knowledge of materials for different purposes. They make good use of these early acquired skills across the curriculum by using and applying them as they move up through the school. However, not all pupils make as much progress as they should in extending their making skills. Although tasks set for older and more able pupils are more complex and call on more advanced designing skills and knowledge and understanding, the ability of these pupils to complete tasks is not noticeably better than that of many younger pupils. All aspects of the subject are covered through efficient planning. For example, when pupils use construction kits to make a chair for Baby Bear, they use drawings and manipulation of materials and

components to develop their ideas on stability. However, they tend to proceed by trial and error rather than planning ahead and testing ideas.

113. Pupils respond well in lessons. A small minority find sustained concentration difficult when tasks are not appropriately set, but most pupils work carefully, and many become absorbed in their work. Pupils enjoy the tasks teachers set. This was particularly evident in a lesson in which Year 1 pupils made pillows for Baby Bear to their own design brief and tested them by seeing if they fitted a range of toys. Pupils in Year 2 show that they can collaborate well as they work together and compare and discuss their progress in making stable structures, such as bridges, from a range of paper, cardboard and straws. Pupils share tools and materials, treat school property with respect, and avoid waste. The Year 1 pupils making chairs for the bears explained clearly why it was important to measure the exact amount of masking tape needed, both to avoid waste and to make it easier to use.
114. The strengths noted in the previous inspection report have been maintained. The design and technology curriculum is still an important factor in developing the self-esteem of pupils with special educational needs. Teachers continue to be aware that the skills taught in literacy and numeracy may be practised through design and technology projects which give great enjoyment and which secure very good progress for pupils with learning difficulties.
115. Design and technology teaching alternates on a termly basis with art. During the inspection only two lessons with a specific focus on design and technology were observed and it was not possible to draw secure conclusions about the overall quality of teaching in the subject. However, the evidence from the lessons seen, teachers' planning and records and a scrutiny of pupils' work indicate that teaching is at least satisfactory. Teachers' planning is good overall and follows the guidance of the school's scheme of work. The activities that teachers provide capture pupils' interest and imagination and promote their involvement and hard work. In both lessons seen, pupils were well managed and the lessons had clear objectives and were well organised. Pupils have opportunities to design and make for themselves and are clearly familiar with the full design process.
116. Good leadership is given to design and technology, which provides good opportunities for developing cross curricular skills, for example with science. The co-ordinator monitors teachers' planning and checks standards throughout the school by looking at samples of work to ensure progress is consistent. Assessment arrangements are satisfactory and the information is used appropriately to plan future work. Resources are sufficient and well organised. Information technology is sometimes used to support pupils' learning, for example, in Year 1.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

117. Only two lessons were observed during the inspection. Judgements are based on these, and additionally, on evidence gathered by talking to pupils, teachers and the co-ordinator, by looking at work and by examining teachers' planning.
118. The standards reached in geography are broadly comparable to those noted in the previous inspection report. The school has made satisfactory improvements, despite the major and far-reaching changes in the curriculum for numeracy and literacy that have occurred since the last inspection.

119. Younger pupils learn through simple investigations about themselves, their class and their family. Planning indicates that pupils make a study of their own local area, of a contrasting locality in the United Kingdom and of an area beyond the United Kingdom. Pupils investigate soil, water, rocks, buildings and their uses, transport services and the world of work. Most pupils have a satisfactory sense of spatial awareness, although some still have difficulty in telling their right from their left. As they progress through the school, they develop an understanding of the local environment, consolidating their knowledge by participating in school trips and using the school grounds for geographical investigations. By the end of Key Stage 1 most pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, can describe their journey to school or explain how to get to the local shop. The specific teaching of geographical vocabulary is of particular value to both these groups of pupils.
120. The teaching seen during the inspection was good. Teachers' subject knowledge is sound, and is supported by effective planning at all levels. Teachers show effective control and management and have high expectations of work and behaviour. Work is differentiated at class and group level to take account of the needs of pupils' different ages and abilities. Examination of pupils' work indicates that progress in learning over time is satisfactory.
121. The co-ordinator regularly monitors colleagues' planning to ensure that pupils are learning the same skills and developing the same level of geographical understanding in different classes. She also provides help and support to colleagues, but does not monitor the quality of teaching or standards throughout the school. Teachers have satisfactory subject knowledge. Good links are made with mathematics during the collection of weather data in the Spring term. Information stored on CD-ROMs is used to promote pupils' learning. However, there is little evidence of the wider use of information technology to support geography. Opportunities to use the geography curriculum as a stimulus for extended writing are not taken, although good attention is paid to the development of subject specific vocabulary. Resources are in need of updating and refurbishment. The co-ordinator is aware of this. The budget is linked to school development priorities.

## **HISTORY**

122. The small number of lessons observed during the inspection and the scrutiny of pupils' work indicate that pupils, many of whom have special educational needs, are achieving the standards that are expected for them. Overall, pupils' attainment in relation to national expectations is below average because they lack the reading skills needed to reach a higher standard in this subject.
123. In Year 1, pupils' understanding of the passage of time in their own lives is below that expected. Many pupils could not recall the month in which their birthday occurs. Higher attaining Year 1 pupils looking at a display about the story of Grace Darling, which they had helped to prepare, could recall a few details about the events depicted but they did not understand that these events occurred in a time before the birth of anyone living now. Most Year 2 pupils seen during the inspection understand how events in their own lives have changed with the passage of time but their skills in sequencing these events by independently drawing their own timelines are below average. The scrutiny of pupils' written work and drawings indicates that higher attaining pupils make thoughtful comparisons between the ways in which people live today and those of past times. They compare artefacts,

such as irons, from the early decades of the last century with those in use now. Their written work about school life in the past and nowadays shows a basic understanding of changes over time. However, in their writing few pupils demonstrate a detailed factual knowledge and understanding of major events and people from past ages.

124. In the lessons observed, the teaching of history was satisfactory overall and sometimes it was very good. Teachers have suitably high expectations for pupils' learning and they plan activities that enable pupils to make satisfactory progress. In both Years 1 and 2, teachers introduce the concept of chronology correctly by linking the work set to the passage of time in pupils' own lives. In Year 1, for example, pupils wrote their names and their birth month on paper 'balloons', which were then attached to a line of string in order. This enabled the pupils to develop a visual picture of the passage of time. In Year 2, the teacher set a homework activity which required pupils to find out details about themselves at different ages. Almost all pupils completed this task, and in a subsequent lesson they learned how to use this information to draw timelines for their own lives. These activities helped them to achieve a greater understanding of the concept of the passage of time. In both Years 1 and 2 good support from teachers and classroom assistants enables pupils of average ability and those with lower attainment and special educational needs to complete the tasks set and to make satisfactory gains in knowledge and understanding. In all the lessons seen teachers exercised effective skills in managing pupils' behaviour, and as a consequence most pupils concentrated well and applied themselves to the task set with interest and enthusiasm. Teaching provides good support for the development of pupils' skills in literacy and in speaking and listening.
125. The subject leader is giving good educational direction to the development of history in the curriculum. Since the last inspection, for example, there has been an improvement in the school's curriculum planning for history and in the arrangements for assessing and monitoring pupils' achievements and progress. There is insufficient evidence about standards and teaching quality to make secure judgements about improvement in these aspects of the school's work. A shortage of appropriate artefacts of historical interest is mostly overcome by the use of the subject leader's own collection and of those borrowed from other members of staff and parents. The history curriculum provides satisfactory support for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, although there is insufficient emphasis on understanding other cultures.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

126. Standards in information technology are in line with those expected nationally for pupils in Years 1 and 2, and have improved since the last inspection. Pupils achieve well in this subject and their skills in the use of information technology are higher than those usually found for this age. Most pupils have good attitudes to work in information technology and this supports their learning. They confidently log-on to the school's network, store and retrieve their own work, and communicate their own ideas, such as the choice of their favourite Christmas presents, by using appropriate software to draw pictures and word process text. Work samples kept by the school indicate that Year 2 pupils know how to give instructions to control programmable toys, such as floor robots, when they solve a Treasure Island puzzle in the school playground.

127. The improvements in information technology that have occurred since the last inspection are largely due to the very good choice of teaching strategies and to the effective use of the new equipment and accommodation which have been installed in the last year. Pupils are usually taught information technology skills in groups of five to eight in the new computer room. A highly skilled and experienced classroom assistant takes the lessons. She liaises closely with the teachers in each year group to plan activities that complement those taking place in other subjects, such as art and English. Pupils are grouped on the basis of ability and this enables the classroom assistant to match the support she gives to the pupils' individual needs. As a consequence, pupils of all levels of attainment make good progress in their learning because they are taught to apply new skills, such as how to integrate text and pictures, in a learning atmosphere that develops their interest and independence.
128. In a few lessons in other subjects, such as literacy and design and technology in Year 1, a minority of teachers confidently use information technology to support pupils' learning. However, this practice is not employed as widely as it might be because many teachers lack skills in using and teaching information technology and because most of the computers available in classrooms are not compatible with the up-to-date equipment in the new computer room. The school has satisfactory plans for improving teachers' skills by using the Standards Fund grant to provide in-service training.
129. The school's curriculum programme for information technology and its arrangements for assessing and monitoring pupils' progress are satisfactory. However, the monitoring of teaching and learning is impaired by the lack of a teacher with responsibility for providing leadership for this subject. The headteacher and governors are aware of this deficiency and have suitable plans for rectifying the situation as soon as it is practicable to do so.

## **MUSIC**

130. It was only possible to see two lessons during the inspection. Additional evidence was obtained by listening to pupils singing in assembly, looking at teachers' planning and by talking to pupils. The school has not maintained the overall high standards found during the previous inspection. The reason for this is the recent changes in the curriculum for literacy and numeracy, which have reduced the time available for music.
131. Achievement in singing and the other areas of music is satisfactory. Pupils recognise the sounds that are made by a variety of instruments and they sing a range of songs from memory. They pay attention to keeping time and appropriate rhythm and sing out well during music lessons and assembly. During one assembly, pupils' enthusiasm for singing was noticeable. Their singing was clear, and they kept in time with the good piano accompaniment. Pupils sing for local old people at Christmas.
132. Overall, pupils achieve satisfactory progress over time. Pupils in reception classes beat time and copy simple rhythms. They know many songs and the gestures designed to accompany them. They consolidate their knowledge of numeracy when they practise simple counting songs. Year 1 pupils develop simple non-standard notation to record their compositions which use a story as a stimulus.

133. Pupils' response to their music lessons is generally good. They enjoy performing and listening, especially to the good quality piano accompaniment in Year 1. Pupils with special educational needs take particular pleasure in their success in music lessons.
134. The teaching observed was good. Classes were well-controlled and the teachers seen showed a good knowledge and understanding of music. However, a lack of musical knowledge inhibits some other teachers. The school uses guidance from the local education authority on the teaching of music, which is satisfactory at the medium term level. There is insufficient support for teachers' planning in the short term and teachers do not match the work set to the needs of different individuals. The school plans to develop the music curriculum by introducing a new scheme.
135. Music does not currently make its full contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education and to other areas of the curriculum. The co-ordinator monitors the work of colleagues by reviewing planning. Whole-school curriculum planning for music is not fully established, particularly in view of the different needs of pupils in Years 1 and 2. Information technology is not used to support music teaching; there is a lack of suitable music programs for the new computers.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

136. In the two physical education lessons observed during the inspection many pupils were achieving standards in gymnastics that were above those normally achieved by five, six and seven year olds. In the reception class comprising five-year-olds, for example, pupils demonstrated good skills in using their legs, arms and trunk to travel along the floor and when working on the good quality small apparatus. In the Year 2 lesson seen, most pupils could hold their balance in different ways and they were starting to develop skills in putting together a sequence of movements. The oldest pupils seen were achieving standards in gymnastics that were in line with and sometimes above the national expectation for the end of Key Stage 1.
137. Although there is insufficient evidence to make secure judgements about improvements in standards since the last inspection, it is evident that the quality of curriculum planning has improved.
138. The quality of teaching and learning in the lessons seen was good. Teachers clearly identify what they expect pupils to learn and ensure that physical education apparatus is put out before the lesson commences. At the end of lessons pupils are given progressively greater responsibility, appropriate to their age, for helping to put away the equipment and apparatus. Older pupils are encouraged to evaluate their performance and both the teacher and selected pupils demonstrate gymnastic skills to help others understand what they need to do to improve their performance. Most pupils respond well to the opportunities provided, showing good attitudes and a growing sense of independence as the lessons proceed. Most pupils behave well, but occasionally a minority of boys demonstrate silly behaviour.

139. Arrangements for the management of physical education are satisfactory. For example, a programme for monitoring lessons is planned for later in the year and good support is given to curriculum development. The curriculum provides coverage of the National Curriculum programmes of study for Key Stage 1 and supplements this with opportunities for older pupils to learn swimming skills in the pool at Christchurch Junior School. Opportunities for extra-curricular sports, such as soccer, and for gymnastics and dance, make a strong contribution to pupils' physical education and to their social development.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

140. During the inspection, only two Key Stage 1 religious education lessons were seen. The distinction between the teaching of religious education and provision for spiritual development through assemblies was clearly made by the school. Evidence was gathered through observation of lessons, assemblies, a scrutiny of work, discussions with staff and pupils and by looking at teachers' planning and records.
141. Pupils' attainment by the end of the key stage is in line with the expectations set out in the locally agreed syllabus and their achievement in relation to what might be expected of them is good. Overall, there seems to have been a decline in standards attained since the previous inspection, which were judged to be good.
142. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils are aware that people hold different beliefs, and that people worship in different places and with varying observances. They are aware of the similarities and differences between two major religions: Christianity and Judaism. Some pupils know that Christians believe that Jesus is the Son of God. They also know that Christians worship only one god. Their achievement is in line with that expected.
143. Insufficient lessons were seen to enable a secure judgement to be made about the quality of teaching. During one of the lessons observed, pupils' learning was satisfactory and pupils were able to explain what they had learnt. The task set was appropriate to their needs and allowed them to make progress in understanding Christian symbolism. In the other lesson teaching and learning were unsatisfactory because pupils were not fully aware of the significance of the Christingle they had made. The task did not challenge pupils to extend their own ideas or develop their understanding. The school follows the agreed syllabus closely and key themes are studied in sufficient depth. By the end of the key stage pupils make satisfactory progress and their knowledge is sound. Pupils show a good understanding of the social and moral elements of the religious education syllabus. Pupils for whom English is an additional language and pupils with special educational needs make similar satisfactory progress.
144. Pupils' attitudes to learning are satisfactory. Pupils listen when new work is explained and when asked questions by the teacher they respond appropriately. They listen to the ideas of others and are keen to learn about different faiths, customs and beliefs. They generally work together without disturbance but are not always cooperative when asked to share equipment.
145. Sufficient time is devoted to religious education and the subject is satisfactorily led by an enthusiastic and knowledgeable co-ordinator. The curriculum is based on the agreed syllabus and the school plans to develop the use of assessment. In some classes, the suggested assessment opportunities are already being implemented.

Assemblies support the study of other faiths and the moral and social messages implicit in religious education. There are sufficient books and artefacts, some of which are shared with neighbouring schools. Links are being developed with local churches. Resources are satisfactory, although there is little evidence of the use of information technology.