

INSPECTION REPORT

VERWOOD CE FIRST SCHOOL

Verwood

LEA area: Dorset

Unique reference number: 113779

Headteacher: Mrs Fiona Brown

Reporting inspector: Mrs Ann Coughlan
21124

Dates of inspection: November 6th – 10th 2000

Inspection number: 225017

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First school
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 – 9 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Howe Lane Verwood Dorset
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Neil Gibson
Date of previous inspection:	January 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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Gillian Anderson 19639	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
Christine Balson 23958	Team inspector	Science Music Religious education Special educational needs	Staffing, accommodation and learning resources
Ann McPhee 20376	Team inspector	Foundation Stage History	How well is the school led and managed?
Pat Wootten 22654	Team inspector	English Design and technology	How good are the curricular opportunities offered to pupils?
June Watson 25554	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design Geography	How well the school cultivates pupils' personal development The effectiveness of the school's assessment and monitoring of pupils' academic performance

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	11
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	13
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	14
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	16
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	18
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	18
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	21
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	23
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	27

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is larger than the average first school with 312 pupils aged from four to nine years on roll. The numbers of boys and girls are similar. Most pupils come from the local residential area where there is a mixture of owner occupied and rented housing. The school has identified 24.8 per cent of pupils as having special educational needs; this is above the national average. Two pupils have a statement of special educational need, at 0.7 per cent this is below the national average. There are no pupils from ethnic minorities. The percentage of pupils deemed eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The socio-economic circumstances of pupils vary but are slightly above average. The school admits children at the beginning of the year in which they have their fifth birthday, initially on a part time basis. Most have experienced some pre-school provision. The 60 children in the reception year were attending for mornings only during the inspection. The children's attainments on entry are average overall.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very effective school, with many good features. It is very successful in meeting its aims and thereby providing pupils with a very good foundation for the future. Good teaching helps pupils to learn well and they frequently attain above the expected standards by the time they leave the school at nine years old. The headteacher's very effective leadership helps staff and governors to work together purposefully and to do their best for the pupils. The school provides a lively, industrious and caring Christian atmosphere. This promotes the pupils' keen interest in learning, very good relationships and very good personal development. The school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- The quality of education provided for children under five is outstanding and enables them to make very good progress in all areas of learning.
- The high proportion of good or better teaching, and the very good range of learning opportunities the school provides, help pupils to achieve high standards in art and design and standards above those expected for their age in reading, mathematics, history, music and religious education.
- The pupils' excellent personal development and very good behaviour reflects the school's excellent provision for their spiritual, moral and social development.
- The headteacher's excellent pastoral leadership and very clear direction of the school has resulted in very effective teamwork by all staff that has a very positive impact on the standards the pupils' achieve.
- The school has forged very good links with parents thereby helping them to make very significant contributions to their children's learning.

What could be improved

- Standards in writing for pupils aged between 5 and 9 years
- Pupils' awareness and appreciation of written language and their access to books
- Aspects of the assessment of pupils' achievements from 5 to 9 years.
- The ability of pupils aged 7 to 9 years to plan and carry out their own investigations in science.

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 made good progress since its last inspection in 1997 while, maintaining overall, the high standards noted at that time. As well as introducing the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies the school has made significant improvement in its provision for the Foundation Stage and for information and communications technology. Standards have risen for the under fives, in mathematics, information and communication technology, art and design, and music. The school has addressed most of the weaknesses identified by the last inspection successfully but weaknesses in assessment remain. The quality of information for classroom assistants and voluntary helpers has improved. Learning objectives are sharper, though there is still room for further improvement. Curriculum co-ordinators play a greater

part in developing their subjects. In addition, the roles and responsibilities of governors have been developed further so they support the headteacher more effectively in guiding school improvement and responding to national initiatives.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 7 year olds based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
Reading	A	C	B	B	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Writing	A	E	C	D	
Mathematics	B	B	C	B	

The results show that, in comparison with national averages, the school's standards in reading improved in 2000 after a dip in standards in 1999 and remain above average compared with schools in a similar context. Analysis of the results show that writing standards were close to the national average after the sharp drop in 1999 but were below average when compared with similar schools. In mathematics, pupils attained standards that were average when compared with all schools and above average when compared with similar schools. Over the last three years the performance of pupils in reading and mathematics exceeded the national average but fell below this in writing. Fewer pupils are attaining the higher level 3 than in 1998 when results in reading and writing were well above average and the school's current target is to return to 1998 levels. Inspection evidence is largely consistent with the latest results. It also shows that by the time pupils leave the school at the age of nine, they attain standards that are above national expectations in mathematics, religious education, history, music and physical education and well above those expected in art and design. Pupils achieve the expected standards in English, science, information technology, design and technology and geography at 9 years. The current Year 1 has a higher than average proportion of pupils with special educational needs and a significant number of pupils did not achieve the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. However, most of the current reception class children are likely to attain or exceed the early learning goals before they transfer to Year 1.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good: the pupils are attentive and concentrate well in lessons. They respond well to a wide range of challenges.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good in nearly all lessons and around the school. Exemplary behaviour in collective worship.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent: pupils can reflect on what they do, and understand how this may affect others. When given the opportunity pupils show initiative and they handle responsibility with maturity and pleasure. Relationships are excellent throughout the school.
Attendance	Good: pupils are keen to come to school and punctuality is good throughout the school day.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-9 years
Lessons seen overall	Very good	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.

Overall, teaching was excellent in nearly 10 per cent of the lessons seen across the school, very good in 35 per cent and good in 40. Teaching was satisfactory in all other lessons except one where the teacher's subject knowledge was weak. The quality of teaching in the reception year is outstanding with excellent or very good teaching in 70 per cent of the lessons. The children are given every opportunity to develop independent learning skills. The high proportion of very good and excellent teaching across the key stages promotes pupils' effort, productivity and pace of working and leads to good achievement. The teaching of literacy is good for 5 to 7 year olds and satisfactory for 7 to 9 year olds. The teaching of numeracy is good and frequently very good. Teaching is also very good in information communication technology, and art and design. It is good in most other subjects. The school meets the needs of most pupils well, including those with special educational needs but does not always challenge the brighter pupils enough, especially in science. Although pupils' learning is good overall, and sometimes very good, a weakness is that pupils are not always aware of their personal targets or may be unclear about the purpose of the lesson and this limits their progress. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own work and identify ways in which it can be improved.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good range of learning opportunities with good provision for the creative arts, enhanced by a good range of visits, visitors and extra-curricular clubs.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good overall owing to the significant support that the committed and well-qualified welfare assistants give in lessons.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Excellent opportunities for spiritual, moral and social development through collective worship, the school's programme of personal, social and health education and across the curriculum. Good provision for the cultural development of pupils.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good overall: good child protection and welfare procedures. Personal support is excellent. Good procedures for monitoring attendance, behaviour and personal development. Assessment of pupils' academic progress is unsatisfactory overall, although there are some good features

Effective assessment of children's work in the reception class is used well to plan the next steps in learning. Although the school uses a variety of means for assessing the achievement of pupils aged five to nine years, these do not have a sharp enough focus and are not useful in planning further work. Formal reviews of individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs are not frequent enough. The school works very effectively with parents and this has a very positive impact on pupils' learning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good: excellent pastoral leadership and team building by the headteacher. Strong commitment to improvement by the deputy headteacher and other key staff.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors make a very good contribution to the school. They are led and organised well, fulfilling their responsibilities conscientiously and effectively.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory analysis of the results of national and other tests. The school has prepared well for new requirements for performance management.
The strategic use of resources	Very good; the school uses its resources very well to support priorities in the school development plan and to raise standards and quality

The generous number of well-qualified staff together with the good quality accommodation and good level of learning resources promotes the learning and progress of all pupils well. However, learning resources for English are unsatisfactory overall. The teaching of literacy and numeracy has been monitored satisfactorily by the headteacher and deputy headteacher. Assessment of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning by subject co-ordinators currently lacks sufficient rigour to make an impact on improving standards. The school uses the principles of best value very well when allocating and managing school funds.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children like school and make good progress • Behaviour is good • Teaching is good • The school expects children to work hard and do their best • The school is well led and managed • The school helps children to become mature and responsible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The information about their children's progress • The amount of homework • The range of activities outside lessons

The inspection team fully endorse the positive comments of parents. The inspection team judged that the school provides good opportunities for parents to discuss their children's progress. However, annual written reports, while giving good information about what pupils' know and can do, do not indicate where a child is in relation to nationally expected levels; this is a weakness. The amount of homework is similar to that given to most pupils of this age and supports pupils' learning. There is a good range of activities outside lessons for all pupils and a wide variety of extra-curricular clubs for pupils aged seven to nine years.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Children enter the school with levels of attainment that represent the full range of ability but are average overall. Baseline assessment data and inspection evidence indicate that there is a wide variation in the profiles of different year groups. For example, the attainments of many children in the current reception class are above average and they are likely to achieve the early learning goals before the end of the reception year. By contrast, the school has identified around 25 per cent of the current Year 1 as having special educational needs and some did not achieve expected standards by the end of reception. There have been significant improvements in provision for the youngest children since the last inspection and it is now outstanding. Children's achievements are very good and they make excellent progress in their personal, social and emotional development. The very good assessment of children in the reception year is a significant factor in their good progress. However, weaknesses in the assessment of pupils in the rest of the school sometimes limit the progress of pupils in several subjects, including English and science.

2. The school's results for the national tests in 2000 indicate that pupils aged seven attained standards that were above the national average in reading and average in mathematics. The standards were above those found in schools in a similar context. Trends over the last four years show that the school is maintaining above the national average performance in reading and mathematics but standards in writing dropped sharply in 1999. Although writing standards rose slightly again in 2000, attainment, as measured by national tests, was close to the national average and below the average found in similar schools. While the proportion of pupils who attain the national target of Level 2 in the tests, is close to national averages, the proportion that attain the higher Level 3 standard is lower than it was in 1998. The school is aiming to regain the standards attained in 1998.

3. Inspection findings reflect these results; pupils' standards are average overall in English but there is under achievement in both key stages. The school has recognised the weakness in writing compared with other aspects and made this area a high priority for improvement. The already improved teaching and learning is beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' achievements and most pupils make satisfactory progress in lessons. By the time they leave the school at the age of nine, pupils attain standards in line with national expectations but standards could be higher. Pupils' achievement in mathematics is good in both key stages and their attainment is above average by the age of seven and above the expected level by the age of nine.

4. The school pays good attention to pupils with special educational needs. The good support they receive enables them to have full access to the curriculum and participate well in lessons. This is further enhanced by the good quality teaching in individual and group lessons for their particular needs. They make satisfactory progress in all aspects of English, good progress in mathematics and similar progress to other pupils in other subjects.

5. Throughout the school pupils' listening skills are stronger than their speaking skills, though both are in line with national expectations. However, many pupils in Year 1 do not speak articulately and find difficulty in expressing themselves clearly. Although pupils listen intently to adults and to each other, some of this is passive and linked more to their good behaviour, so their careful listening does not impact fully on their learning. In some literacy, drama and music lessons listening is more active and there is a more positive response. When prompted, pupils talk about their work or interests but do not often initiate questions or conversations. The sound range of opportunities that teachers provide in, for example, drama and personal and social education lessons helps pupils to gain confidence in speaking.

6. Although pupils make sound progress in reading and attain above average standards, their ability to discuss books and authors does not match their technical ability. Overall, the literacy hour is being implemented satisfactorily but some weaknesses remain. In several lessons teachers miss opportunities to foster interest and excitement about books. When the teacher shares a book with a large group of pupils but does not point to the words, lower attaining pupils, in particular, cannot follow

the text. Key Stage 1 pupils know how to use the contents and index sections in books but their dictionary skills are not well developed. Higher attaining pupils in Years 3 and 4 use dictionaries and thesauruses confidently but many read with limited expression.

7. Achievement in writing is improving in both key stages for most pupils and standards are rising. However, in some lessons there is insufficient emphasis on explaining the learning objectives so pupils are unsure of what it is they are supposed to be learning or how to improve. Between the ages of five and seven pupils develop skills of composition and develop strategies for spelling and older pupils improve punctuation and the organisation of their writing. Across the school however, progress in handwriting is slower than in the other skills and the presentation of work is not always as good as it could be. This has a negative impact on the standards achieved. Lower attaining pupils make slower progress than other pupils though they build soundly on their prior knowledge and skills. Owing to good provision, pupils with special educational needs make sound progress and those receiving additional literacy support achieve well in spelling. Pupils develop and use their literacy skills well in subjects such as information and communications technology, geography and history.

8. The school has implemented the National Numeracy Strategy effectively and the good and frequently very good teaching in mathematics promotes good achievement for all pupils. Pupils respond well to challenging activities, interesting practical work and investigation. Standards are above the national expectations by the age of seven and also when pupils leave the school at the end of Year 4. A particular strength throughout the school is pupils' ability to use and apply mathematics in a range of situations and in other subjects such as working out co-ordinates in geography. Number skills are another strength. The pupils are beginning to appreciate pattern in number and give appropriate explanations. Many pupils demonstrate high standards in Year 4, especially when solving problems related to mathematical patterns, such as those found in the nine times table. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress as they receive good quality support in lessons. Teachers' good overall assessments in mathematics contribute to the progress pupils make.

9. Pupils' attainments in science are above average by the end of Key Stage 1 and meet the national expectation by the end of Year 4. As they move through the school, pupils gain a sound and frequently good knowledge and understanding of all aspects of science. They learn a good range of appropriate vocabulary such as that relating to forces, materials and living things. However, achievement is limited by the lack of challenge for higher attaining pupils and insufficient opportunities for pupils in both key stages to plan and carry out their own investigations. The school's policy of supporting higher attaining pupils in Key Stage 2 is beginning to have a positive impact on their attainment and pupils with special educational needs make good progress as a result of the good quality support provided for them.

10. Pupils' achievement in information and communication technology is good. The improvement in provision for the subject since the last inspection results in more efficient and effective teaching. The well-planned curriculum ensures that pupils use information and communication technology to support learning in many subjects at the same time as they improve their skills. The teaching of small groups with a high ratio of adults to pupils promotes good and sometimes very good progress in lessons. Standards are rising and pupils are now attaining the nationally expected level by the end of Key Stage 1 and by the end of Year 4. Pupils with special educational needs use computer programs effectively to work towards their learning targets.

11. In religious education, pupils' attainment is above the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus as most lessons provide work that challenges and motivates pupils. Pupils develop a good factual knowledge of Christianity and other faiths. The school places a strong emphasis on developing the creative arts and pupils attain above the expected standards for their age in music and high standards in art and design. They also attain above national expectations in history and most aspects of physical education, though their ability to evaluate and improve performance in the latter is under developed. Standards in design and technology and geography meet national expectations.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12. Pupils' self esteem and self-confidence flourish in the school's positive ethos and the high standards noted at the last inspection have been maintained. The excellent induction programme helps children to start school confidently and eagerly. They make excellent progress in their personal, social and emotional development. The stimulating environment in the reception classes helps them to become enthusiastic learners who eagerly join in all activities.

13. Pupils' attitudes between five and nine years are very good owing to several factors. They are keen and eager to come to school, as they do not want to be late for worship, which is a very important part of their school day. Pupils are interested in their lessons, concentrate well and try to do their best because teachers provide a wide range of interesting activities that support learning well. Pupils enjoy their school life, including the activities outside lessons; for example, the school's Millennium pilgrimage to Salisbury Cathedral has had a profound impact on them.

14. The behaviour of the under fives is usually excellent, in Key Stage 1 lessons it is very good, and in lessons in Key Stage 2, is good. Pupils' behaviour in assemblies, at lunchtime and in the playground is very good. Pupils are very courteous; they hold doors for others, and are normally polite. No pupils have been excluded from the school. Pupils are trustworthy and property is well looked after, including the play areas.

15. Personal development and relationships are excellent throughout the school. The consideration of children in the foundation stage for each other, both in the classroom and in the playground, is highly developed. Pupils learn, especially in religious education lessons and during collective worship, about caring for people because they are special. This reinforces the philosophy of the school. Teachers value pupils' ideas and celebrate their achievements within a firm but consistent framework. There is no oppressive behaviour and bullying is not an issue. The strong Christian ethos encourages pupils to reflect on what they do, and understand how this may affect others. This has a very positive impact on their respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others. When given the opportunity pupils show initiative and they handle responsibility with maturity and pleasure as, for example, when manning the reception desk at lunchtime, and when older pupils befriend younger ones in the playground. Personal and social education helps pupils to develop responsibility and confidence.

16. Attendance is good. Although the figures are broadly in line with the national average, unauthorised absence is below the national average and pupils are exceptionally punctual at the start of the school day and for lessons.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

17. The good overall quality of teaching seen throughout the school makes a very strong contribution to pupils' good achievement. In ten per cent of the lessons seen teaching was excellent and it was very good in 35 per cent and good in 40 per cent. Teaching was satisfactory in all other lessons except one where the teacher's subject knowledge was weak. This represents an improvement on the already good standards reported at the time of the last inspection. Teachers have addressed a weakness identified at that time successfully by improving the clarity of learning objectives. These impact most effectively on pupils' learning when they are shared explicitly at the beginning of lessons.

18. Teaching in the foundation stage is of consistently very good quality. The commitment of the teachers contributes to meticulous planning and assessment and there is excellent teaching of independent learning skills interwoven with the teacher directed tasks. As a result children make very good progress towards the early learning goals specified in national guidance, and their achievement in personal, social and emotional development is excellent.

19. In the classes for five to nine year olds the quality of teaching is good overall with a high proportion of very good teaching and some examples of excellent teaching. This leads to highly effective learning in many subjects. The quality of teaching is good in most subjects, very good in mathematics in Key Stage 1 and across the school in art and design, and in information and communications technology.

Teaching is satisfactory overall in geography with a very good lesson observed in Year 3. There was insufficient evidence to make a secure judgement on teaching in design and technology.

20. There are some significant strengths in the teaching. For example, the good links between mathematics and art, drama and history and the use of information technology across the curriculum make learning relevant to pupils. The setting across year groups and the use of specialist teaching by co-ordinators in several subjects is also effective. The generous level of very well deployed classroom assistants is another strength. Their good quality and experience promote learning across the curriculum for many pupils, particularly those with special educational needs. Extra support is also beginning to be used to promote learning for higher attaining pupils, especially in science in Key Stage 2. However, the lack of an effective review session at the end of several lessons to reinforce and consolidate learning is a weakness, particularly in English.

21. Teachers have a good understanding of most aspects of the National Literacy Strategy and teach basic skills in English well. Teaching is good in Key Stage 1 and sound in Key Stage 2, with some examples of very good teaching such as the effective development of speaking and listening skills in Year 3. Though the teaching of basic skills is good overall, some weaknesses remain. The teaching of the technical aspects of reading is good but teachers do not always emphasise the richness of vocabulary or the rhythms of the English language enough in text work. Where teachers fail to explain learning objectives to pupils, lessons lack purpose. Resources like word lists, dictionaries or thesauruses are not used consistently as tools for learning.

22. Teachers follow the National Numeracy Strategy successfully in most mathematics lessons. Often the introductory mental session moves at a brisk pace, involving all pupils and sharpening their mental skills. Occasionally, where the pace is slower, not all pupils are engaged in learning. Good quality teaching and learning occurs in mathematics overall when challenging activities and practical tasks are introduced and where there is a good match of work to pupils' prior attainment.

23. A strong feature of the school is the teachers' very good management and the firm discipline maintained in nearly all lessons. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and of their ability to apply themselves to work. For example, changeovers between classes and sets are conducted very efficiently, with pupils well used to the routine and being ready quickly to start work. Very occasionally, where the teacher does not sufficiently reinforce expectation of behaviour, this deteriorates and learning is interrupted. Teachers communicate effectively with the pupils encouraging their efforts so there is a pleasant and purposeful atmosphere in lessons that promotes good relationships. The pupils feel confident enough to contribute their ideas freely and to undertake new tasks. Good questioning strategies are used to check on understanding and to consolidate learning. Teachers mark work effectively leading to constructive comments in pupils' books. The regular homework the teachers provide supports learning well. However, pupils are unclear about how effective their learning has been when the purpose of the lesson is not clear to them. Teachers have set individual learning targets for pupils but do not always share these with them.

24. Teachers structure lessons and organise purposeful practical work well, making good use of most resources. They have a good awareness of safety issues and encourage safe practice in science and physical education. The teachers make good use of the school's attractive environmental area to further pupils' knowledge of plants and animals and their habitats and to stimulate creativity in art. The well-chosen venues for educational visits contribute well to pupils' geographical skills and understanding as well as their knowledge of life in previous times.

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

25. The school provide a very good range of worthwhile opportunities for learning, which reflect the schools aims and vision and the interests of pupils. The curriculum is broad and balanced, meets the statutory requirements and strongly reflects the school's Christian foundation. The planning for the progressive development of knowledge and skills is secure. The needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs are well considered; the requirements of the national Code of Practice for these pupils, including those with statements, are met satisfactorily, ensuring equality of access to the curriculum. The school tries hard to ensure the equal opportunities of pupils who are withdrawn from

class for individual tuition but on occasion some miss the important part of a lesson, for example, when reading to a parent helper during the beginning of a numeracy lesson in Year 3.

26. Most of the above features were mentioned in the previous inspection report and the quality of provision has been maintained and developed. For example, the school is implementing the National Literacy Strategy soundly and has introduced the National Numeracy Strategy successfully. The provision for information and communication technology has improved, particularly for pupils in Key Stage 2. There has been significant improvement in the provision for the early years. However, there are some weaknesses in, for example, the opportunities for learning about fair testing and for planning science investigations and for pupils to learn to evaluate their work in physical education.

27. The school enriches the curriculum well through a good range of extra curricular activities such as silk painting, recorders, choir, French and woodwork. This good provision was also mentioned in the previous report and teachers continue to give unstintingly of their time and talent beyond the school day. Further good enrichment is offered through visits such as the annual residential visit to Fontmell Magna for pupils in Year 4 and to other places of local interest. Memorable experiences such as the Millennium Pilgrimage to Salisbury Cathedral and the Festival of Light involve the whole school community and include many parents. The school welcomes a wide range of visitors, who make a positive contribution to the curriculum.

28. Personal, social and health education is given a high priority by the school, with a well-planned programme, through weekly timetabled lessons. The school makes effective provision for sex education and drug awareness through integrated topics. When issues arise at other times they are dealt with well. The overall provision for pupils' personal development including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. It is interwoven into everything that takes place within the school. Significant improvements have been made since the last inspection, especially in spiritual, moral and social provision. This provision is a real strength of the school.

29. Provision for spiritual development is excellent. The school adopts an holistic approach to pupils' education that is clearly evident in the organisation of collective worship which makes an outstanding contribution to pupil's personal development. Pupils are all participants. They exercise choice about where, and with whom they sit, have daily opportunity to share their own extemporaneous prayers with others and to acquire an awareness of the fundamental questions of life. They develop a sense of belonging to a community. The school uses music very well as a calming influence to promote times of quiet reflection. Teachers encourage pupils to respond to the wonder and beauty of the natural world through its emphasis on environmental work. Events such as the Roman Day for Year 3 pupils and the residential visit for Year 4 pupils provide very good opportunities, through shared experiences and discussions, for pupils to develop their own beliefs and tolerance for others. There is a strong spiritual dimension in the study of art and design, drama, music, humanities and literacy. The school's aims very successfully underpin the life of the school.

30. Provision for moral development is excellent. Teachers provide very good role models that support the development of thoughtful, caring attitudes, fairness and honesty. Pupils' impromptu prayers often focus on other less fortunate than themselves, and pupils spontaneously support each other. For example, they welcome the under-fives to collective worship with a smile and an outstretched hand to help them find a place to sit. Older pupils often help to resolve playground differences without the need for adult intervention. Pupils are clear about school rules that are listed in class bases and they observe them well. Personal, social and health education lessons are organised so that pupils have an opportunity to listen to and reflect upon other pupils' feelings and points of view. These occasions reinforce good values and raise pupils' self esteem.

31. The school's provision for social development is also excellent. Teachers and other adults consistently manage pupils very well, nurturing their self-esteem and encouraging them to think for themselves and become responsible young citizens. Learning is fun and this leads to the very good relationships that are evident everywhere in the school. The school provides many opportunities for pupils to work together in co-operative learning and play situations such as parachute games. The school's residential programme for pupils in Year 4 provides them with valuable social education. They learn to develop a sense of responsibility and confidence away from home, to care for one another and to

work as a team, for example, sharing chores such as preparing and clearing up after meals. They develop their appreciation of the environment and the fellowship of their peers. The shared meal for Year 3 pupils, on the Roman Day, helped to promote good social skills. From an early age, adults encourage pupils to take responsibility for their personal belongings, such as changing independently for physical education and tidying their classrooms. There is a strong emphasis in the school for pupils to develop high self-esteem, self-confidence and self-reliance through the promotion of communication skills, making independent choices and acquiring strategies to cope with unexpected situations.

32. Provision for cultural development is good. There is a good range of multicultural books and artefacts and the school uses music well to broaden pupils' experiences such as when a visitor from Africa taught them some of his national songs and demonstrated African instruments. The school is considering how it may further raise pupils' awareness of the multicultural nature of modern British society. Pupils study and enjoy music and art from other cultures and this is reflected well in the high standard of school displays. In history lessons, pupils study social changes by examining artefacts from the past and comparing them with more recent inventions. They are enthusiastic about the developing school museum. A recent school celebration enhanced pupils' understanding of the importance of 'light' to different cultures and religions around the world. School visits arranged to support pupils' topic work, also promote cultural development such as those to the Mary Rose, a steam train and local churches. Initiatives, such as gift boxes for children in Albania, Christmas gifts and the journeys of 'Rufus Fox' have led to the exchange of letters with pen pals from several different countries. The school participates in festivals and carnivals and has whole-school musicals and drama days that enrich the cultural development of pupils. Extra curricular clubs such as country dancing, recorders and traditional crafts provide additional opportunities for the pupils who attend.

33. The community makes a good contribution to pupils' learning. The school does all it can to tap into the resources within the locality, and it makes good use of the limited number of businesses in the area, receiving valuable support from the local supermarket. There are good links with the local Christian churches. Pupils enhance the quality of life of local people; the choir visits the local nursing home and the elderly are invited to Harvest Festival. Good use is made of the locality to enhance the curriculum: the Millennium pilgrimage to Salisbury, for example, involved the whole school and parents. Year groups have good quality outings, for example to the Watercress steam line and the Mary Rose ship. The residential trip to the Springhead Trust for pupils in Year 4 enhances work in several subjects and promotes the personal development of pupils.

34. The school's relationship with partner institutions is good, the middle school and a pre-school shares the same campus. Links with the middle school are improving and there are good links with the pre-school and local clusters. The school has its own toddler and parent group.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

35. The pastoral strengths identified at the time of the last inspection have been maintained. The essence of this school is encapsulated in its mission statement "Your child is special so is our school" which contributes to an ethos that is conducive to learning. An example of the impact of this is expressed by a parent who observes that their child's "enthusiasm is mirrored by staff, who are always encouraging and focus on the positive, giving a fantastic foundation to children's education".

36. Procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare are very good. The great strength in this is the school's approach to the child within the family. The whole school community has received training through a local project that aims to improve the self-esteem and confidence of all children and adults. The local general practitioner initiated this project that includes the provision of a child and family counsellor for the area to work both at the surgery and in the schools. This makes an excellent contribution to ensure the well being, care and protection of all pupils and particularly those with particular needs. There is a good quality policy supported by rigorous systems to support health and safety and there are no outstanding issues. Many of the staff are trained in first aid. The head teacher has responsibility for child-protection and procedures comply fully with requirements. The school nurse gives very good support. There are effective links with outside support agencies for pupils with special educational needs.

37. The monitoring of pupils' academic performance and personal development is sound overall, but the real strength is in the monitoring of personal development. The educational and personal support and guidance are good overall. The school's procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are very good. Profile sheets, which give details of pupils' development,, are completed annually before parent consultation evenings. They include appropriate targets for personal development, as for example targets regarding punctuality and behaviour. These targets are reviewed regularly. The school's ethos promotes care and Christian values. Adults provide good models for the personal development of pupils, being very supportive, fun and promoting sharing. One parent sees the strength of the school as the children's happiness, and the training that staff receive from a local project identifies high levels of self worth as the key to this. The head teacher and staff know pupils and their families very well.

38. Although some very good systems are in place, the schools' assessment procedures, lack a sharp focus and are therefore unsatisfactory overall. Assessment is mentioned only briefly in most policy statements and sometimes not at all, as for example in the policy for physical education. The weaknesses result in the school lacking a complete picture of the attainment and progress of each year group of pupils in all subjects of the National Curriculum. For example the sample of pupils the school tracks in each year group, while recognised as good practice, is too small to provide a full picture of the year group, and lacks rigour unless supported by other monitoring systems.

39. Excellent procedures are in place for assessing children's achievements on entry to the school and reception teachers use these results very effectively to plan children's next stages of learning. The results of initial assessments are used well to set targets for the national tests taken by seven-year-olds. The assessments and optional tests for Year 3 and 4 are analysed satisfactorily to identify areas for improvement such as writing. However, the detail of what is needed and precisely how to address the areas identified, are lacking. The school is developing several worthwhile initiatives such as the setting of individual targets for pupils, but these are not always shared with pupils. Teachers often use observations well to ensure that work is well matched for pupils' prior attainment. In English and mathematics, teachers' marking is exceptionally thorough and conforms well to the school policy. However, there are no formal assessment procedures for the foundation subjects and assessment in science, information communication technology and religious education is under-developed. In writing, there is no evidence of a good range of genres being assessed. Pupils' individual portfolios have been discontinued. There are no subject portfolios across the curriculum to show pieces of work that exemplify specific levels of attainment to provide firm criteria and support for teachers' assessments.

40. The procedures for placing pupils on the special educational needs register are not consistent and do not follow set guidelines. There are no set criteria or assessment tests to identify the needs of such pupils. Although individual education plans have specific targets, these are not reviewed often enough by teachers, neither is the progress towards them assessed carefully. However, evaluation by learning support assistants lead to progress reports that are discussed with class teachers. The procedures for pupils with statements of special educational need are satisfactory.

41. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are satisfactory; the strength lies in children wanting to come to school. The educational welfare officer gives support where necessary. The school's procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are very good, and well understood by pupils. All staff, parents and pupils reviewed the behaviour policy and pupils have been involved in formulating their class rules. Teachers are trained to use personal and social education lessons to resolve issues. Children are clear about the rewards and sanctions that the school employs to promote good behaviour.

42. The school has provided specific training for the lunchtime welfare assistants and the headteacher values their contribution and their integral part in the system to manage behaviour. Two members of the senior management team are being trained as counsellors to support pupils who have concerns at lunch times. These factors ensure that procedures for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour are very good. Bullying is not an issue as any incidents are dealt with swiftly and effectively. Adults listen to pupils carefully, and six older pupils are appointed to befriend others at play times.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

43. The strengths identified at the last inspection have been maintained and parents consider this to be a very good school. Parents and carers are happy with standards and the standards the school achieves. They believe pupils behave very well, are keen to come to school and that honesty, trust and responsibility are promoted. The evidence of the inspection supports these views. Parents have seen continued improvements in recent years. The schools' links with parents are very good. The school is keen to know parents' views and sends questionnaires to parents to determine these. It acts on the results. The visits the head teacher makes to all homes before their child starts school makes parents feel valued. Parents appreciate the strong emphasis on pastoral support for children and their families.

44. Parents are provided with good information about the school and about pupils' progress overall. The prospectus is well presented, clear and informative and includes the home/school agreement that all parents have signed. There is a very good guide to the curriculum and this is supported by workshops, for example, on reading. The governors' Annual Report is well presented and informative. There is a meeting in November to discuss the personal targets for their children and a further consultation arranged in the spring term. Annual written reports give good information about what pupils' know and can do, but not where a child is in relation to the levels of attainment that each child should have reached; this is a weakness. Parents collect the annual written reports on their children's progress when they come to the meeting arranged in the summer term to discuss them. Parents have ready access to informal communication with teachers at the end of any school day. The inspection survey revealed, however, that nearly 20 per cent of parents who responded do not feel sufficiently well informed about progress.

45. The effect of parents' involvement on the work of the school is very good and they make a very good impact on children's learning at school and at home. Their generous contributions of time and resources are very evident. For example, parents made a wonderful contribution to the Year 3 Roman feast, take great care with the attractive presentation of the gift boxes for Albania, and have contributed to resources of exceptional quality to support reading. They enthusiastically supported the Light Party and the Millennium pilgrimage. Parents prepare fruit for the morning break every day. A mother brought her baby into school for collective worship on the theme that everyone is special. The school provides helpful notes for those many parents and volunteers who support work in the classroom. The school reaps the rewards of working very hard to facilitate the contribution of parents to pupils' learning at school and at home.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

46. The leadership and management provided by the headteacher and key staff are very good. The headteacher has a very clear vision for the school that is based on Christian principles and values. She provides excellent leadership in developing pupils' spiritual, moral and social education and a very positive atmosphere, in which pupils are truly valued. Staff also feel very well supported, professionally challenged and valued by the headteacher and governing body.

47. The headteacher and senior management team set a clear educational direction for the school by considering a number of factors. They look closely at the national demands for school improvement, such as performance management and the standards pupils attain in national tests as well as its baseline assessment of the under fives. The school addresses the concerns of parents through an annual questionnaire and the outcome of consultation evenings. Much of this analysis has resulted in effective developments for the school, such as the very detailed marking of pupils' work in English and mathematics. However, the school has not yet developed a rigorous approach to assessing pupils' attainment and the progress they are making in their learning, against daily lesson objectives. The latter are not always shared with pupils nor are there sufficient opportunities for them to evaluate the quality of their work and identify ways in which it could be improved. The school already assesses pupils' work effectively on a day-to-day basis in the Foundation Stage, and the results are used by the teachers to inform their planning of future opportunities for the acquisition of knowledge and the development of new skills. Similar assessment strategies have not been adopted throughout the school.

48. There is a very strong commitment to collaborative working in the school and staff feel empowered by the headteacher to 'take risks' when further developing their professional knowledge, skills and teaching strategies. There is a shared commitment by all staff to raise standards and their capacity to succeed is very good. The management of the school promotes this by the very good deployment of

staff that includes some specialist teaching and the careful placing of learning support assistants in the areas where they will be most effective. A particular strength is the number and quality of these assistants, many of whom have increased their knowledge and qualifications by attending appropriate training courses. Parents are effusive in their praise for the warmth of the welcome in the school and the quality of their children's education. All have a shared and very clear understanding of the school's aims and strongly believe in them.

49. The quality of the school's induction arrangements for new staff is very good, with a detailed staff handbook and effective mechanisms for ensuring that teaching and non-teaching staff are fully informed on all issues. For example, although new staff have not yet undertaken formal training on child protection, they can clearly identify the correct procedures that they should adopt. The headteacher meets with classroom assistants and lunchtime supervisors each half term to discuss areas of development, and concerns. The deputy headteacher oversees an excellent induction programme for newly qualified teachers that includes deploying them to team-teach alongside more experienced staff.

50. The senior management team has responded positively to the issues raised in the previous inspection report by ensuring that key issues such as curriculum planning and information and communications technology have improved. Curriculum co-ordinators are allocated release time to monitor curriculum planning and work in classrooms to monitor the quality of teaching and its impact on learning. At present, however, a formal assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of teaching, by each co-ordinator, lacks rigour and does not have a direct impact on improving standards in the classroom. However, the headteacher and deputy headteacher have undertaken formal monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning in the literacy and numeracy hours and have identified areas of strength, as well as development needs, across the school. The headteacher fully recognises the need to monitor the quality of teaching more closely which has led to the completion of the school's performance management policy ahead of schedule and the identification, with individual staff, of more focused targets for improving teaching and pupils' attainment.

51. The governing body is very effective and ensures that all statutory requirements are met. Governors involve themselves fully in the life of the school and have an excellent relationship with staff, parents and pupils. Their roles and responsibilities have developed well since the previous inspection with a named governor allocated to each class. Many make frequent visits to classrooms during the school year. The governors' curriculum committee receives regular briefings from staff on subject, school and national developments and governors use the co-ordinators' curriculum action plans as a tool for deciding areas for development, and the need for resources, to be included in the school improvement plan. As yet, however, a more detailed analysis, by governors, of teaching standards and their relation to standards of pupils' attainment, has not been undertaken.

52. The governors and headteacher are acutely aware of the importance of following the principles of best value when managing and allocating school funds. This attention to detail, along with prudent management and allocation of funding in the school, ensures that they manage financial resources very well. The governing body has been able to undertake such successful initiatives as employing an information and communication technology assistant to support the development of the subject. Through effective use of specific grants, they are enabling classroom support assistants, as well as teaching staff, to undertake training in the subject. The use of information and communication technology has developed well since the last inspection, and supports the curriculum very effectively. The headteacher monitors the use of the specific funds rigorously to ensure that teachers' priorities for training are linked to the school's improvement plan. The school secretary and clerical assistant ensure invoices are paid quickly and information on pupils is up-to-date on the computer system. This attention to detail further enhances the school's reputation within the community.

53. The school's accommodation is very good although, at present, the temporary library is too small. The school building is well maintained and of good quality. It includes features not often found in a first school, for example, a studio for drama and music, and a designated special needs room. This helps to ensure that the curriculum is taught effectively. Governors have set aside significant funding for the development of a library next year in the expectation that this will be a very valuable resource in developing pupils' reading and research skills. The school is extremely well cared for and provides a very attractive environment, although the playground suffers, in only moderately inclement weather, from a very large puddle that hinders pupils' opportunities to play and learn outside. The high standard of displays of pupils' work and the excellent use made of three-dimensional displays and photographs

stimulate pupils' interest and learning. The size of the school hall is adequate for including the whole school in collective worship. The very well maintained school grounds provide excellent facilities for environmental education. Some examples of this provision are; a boggy area, a meadow area, a bird hide, a Tudor Knot garden, a tyre garden and a woodland trail. The outdoor learning environment for pupils in the Foundation Stage is excellent with a secure area for the youngest children that has first class resources for physical, and personal and social development.

54. The school's very good quality and range of learning resources, make a significant contribution to pupils' learning and progress. However, resources for English are unsatisfactory overall as there are not enough dictionaries or thesauruses or displays of books in classrooms.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

55. To further raise standards of work and the good quality of provision already apparent in many aspects of the school, the headteacher, staff and the governing body should:

- (1) Further raise standards in writing by:
 - sharing consistently, learning objectives with pupils at the start of lessons ***
 - making individual targets for improvement clear to pupils ***
 - providing a wider range of resources, such as dictionaries and thesauruses, to support pupils' writing and using them regularly
 - using the review of work at the end of lessons more consistently to assess learning outcomes and share these with pupils
 - improving the balance of time between teaching reading and writing
 - reviewing at what point in the week to provide opportunities for writing to pupils in Key Stage 2
 - reviewing regularly the range of writing offered to pupils and opportunities for writing across the curriculum
 - reinforcing the progress made during handwriting lessons when pupils write in all subjects
 - moderating work across a range of genre regularly to identify targets for improvement for individuals and groups(paras. 2, 4, 7, 21, 70, 73, 75, 76)

- (2) Further increase pupils' awareness and appreciation of written language and their access to books by:
 - improving reading shared by pupils and the teacher through ensuring that all pupils can follow the text easily and by fostering more interest in the characteristics of different texts and the rhythms of the English language
 - ensuring that all reading experiences are of good quality
 - displaying books more prominently in classrooms
 - actively pursuing the planned construction of a new library and the replacement of out-of-date books ***(paras. 6, 21, 53, 54, 72, 74, 77, 78)

- (3) Refine assessment procedures so that more precise data on pupils' attainments is readily available and use the information effectively to raise standards by:
 - developing effective assessment procedures for writing, science, information technology and the foundation subjects
 - identifying precisely why some pupils do not make the expected progress in writing
 - improving the quality and consistency of reading records
 - collecting annotated examples of pupils' work to illustrate different levels of National Curriculum Attainment Targets to provide guidance for teachers' assessments
 - assessing work regularly across a year group to identify strengths and weaknesses
 - using a larger sample to track progress as pupils move through the school
 - improving the procedures for identifying special educational need and the reviewing of their individual education plans
 - provide clearer guidance on assessment in subject policy statements(paras. 1, 38, 39, 40, 47, 76, 89, 94, 106, 111, 116, 122, 124)

- (4) Raise standards in science, particularly in Years 3 and 4, by:
- developing pupils' ability to plan and carry out their own investigations
 - providing more challenging work for higher attaining pupils
- (paras. 9, 86, 87, 88)

56. In addition to the main items above, the following area for improvement should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- Further extend the monitoring of teaching (paras. 47, 50, 51, 77, 111) ***

*** indicates items already under consideration by the school

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	76
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	42

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
10	35	40	14	1	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	YR – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	282
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	23
Special educational needs	YR– Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	76
English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0
Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	20
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	19

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.9
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
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	2000	37	29	66

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	29 (29)	30 (21)	35 (30)
	Girls	29 (29)	26 (24)	28 (31)
	Total	58 (58)	56 (45)	63 (61)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88 (88)	85 (68)	96 (92)
	National	83 (82)	84 (87)	72 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	29 (29)	32 (29)	33 (29)
	Girls	28 (34)	26 (29)	28 (27)
	Total	57 (63)	58 (58)	61 (56)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	87 (95)	88 (88)	92 (85)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	282
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.

Financial information

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR– Y4

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	13.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.6
Average class size	24

Education support staff: YR – Y4

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	195

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial year	1999/2000
	£
Total income	503,685
Total expenditure	512,222
Expenditure per pupil	1,626
Balance brought forward from previous year	45,701
Balance carried forward to next year	37,164

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	323
Number of questionnaires returned	147

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	63	35	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	41	48	4	0	7
Behaviour in the school is good.	51	47	0	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	35	50	10	1	4
The teaching is good.	57	39	0	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	30	50	17	1	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	64	30	4	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	56	41	1	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	45	44	9	1	2
The school is well led and managed.	65	31	0	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	53	42	3	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	27	44	11	1	16

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

57. All 60 children in the Foundation Stage enter school in the September of the year in which they are five. All children attend on a part-time basis in the first term with the 20 younger four year olds placed in a separate base. This well-resourced classroom and outdoor learning area enables the youngest children to play and learn separately. The older four year olds are taught in the main school building. Nearly all the children have had some form of pre-school provision, many in the pre-school playgroup situated on the same campus. The relationship between the playgroup and the school is a good one with the playgroup using the school grounds for physical development and the Foundation Stage co-ordinator visiting the playgroup regularly, offering curriculum and planning advice when asked. In the term prior to children starting all families receive a home visit from the headteacher. She encourages the children to complete a booklet entitled 'All About Me'. This provides the school with useful information about the child from which to build the initial 'settling in' programme. The excellent induction programme promotes good relationships with parents and child from the beginning and children start school confidently and eagerly.

58. The overall provision for children in the Foundation Stage is outstanding. The teachers have an excellent knowledge of the children and make very good use of well-developed assessment procedures to ensure that children's skills and development needs are identified and planned for. Children with a special educational need are identified early and an appropriate learning programme put in place, that often involves support from the classroom assistant. This early intervention enables the children to work confidently in the classroom, achieve their own personal goals and make very good progress.

59. Most children enter the school with the knowledge and skills expected of children of their age, although baseline assessment results and inspection evidence show the children in reception this year achieving standards above those expected. By the end of the Foundation Stage the majority of children are likely to reach the early learning goals specified in national guidance.

60. There has been significant improvement in the quality of early years education since the last inspection. The use of a separate base has enabled the youngest children to have the appropriate environment in which to explore and develop their independent learning skills safely. Alongside this, skilful management results in curriculum planning that meets the requirements of the Foundation Stage and ensures continuity across the three reception classes. It is both thorough and demanding, effectively meets the individual needs of the children and prepares them very well for continuing their education in the next phase.

61. The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is very good overall with some excellent teaching of independent learning skills. Teachers, classroom assistants and the headteacher have a total commitment to the value and importance of early learning. No time, or opportunity for learning, is wasted. The Foundation Stage is exceptionally well managed, with teachers meeting daily to evaluate lessons and decide on the activities best suited to take the children forward to the next stage of their learning. Teachers brief classroom assistants and parent helpers on the tasks they will be undertaking and the expected outcomes. Simple, but effective observation sheets, on which pupils' learning is recorded, enable teachers to know precisely what children have achieved that day and any areas where development work needs to be undertaken. Excellent independent, stimulating, learning experiences are skilfully interwoven, throughout the day, with the teacher directed tasks. The adults actively encourage children to explore and think for themselves and give them every opportunity to build up their confidence and develop decision-making skills.

62. Children make excellent progress in their personal, social and emotional development and are achieving above what is expected nationally for their age. The stimulating environment helps them to become enthusiastic learners who eagerly join in all activities. The adults provide good role models that help the children develop excellent relationships with all the adults who work with them. As a result, their consideration for each other, both in the classroom and in the playground, is highly developed, as

is their concentration span and they thrive in their stimulating learning environment. Teachers have high expectations of the children and the children know what is expected of them. The adults ensure that learning resources are put away carefully after use and all children help to tidy up their base before going out to play. Owing to the calm and spiritual atmosphere that teachers create in the daily collective worship these young children join in happily with the whole school, demonstrating the confidence to sit quietly in a personally chosen space, amidst much older children. They are aware of the presence of God at this time and talk freely about how much they enjoy collective worship and why.

63. The children make very good progress in communication, language and literacy. They thoroughly enjoy listening to stories, nursery rhymes and watching a television programme on numbers. They demonstrate listening skills well above those expected for their age. They carry out instructions well and ask simple questions if they need an explanation. The quality of the resources and the adults' creativity in setting up exciting role-play opportunities, such as the 'Giant's Castle', make a very positive contribution to the development of the children's imagination and their communication skills. The children confidently play out the story of Jack and the Beanstalk, organising who will be which character, and what will be set out on the giant's table when he comes back for lunch.

64. The teachers foster a love of books and children know that words and pictures convey meaning. They enjoy reading to an adult and teachers encourage them to take books home to share with parents. The younger children are building up a knowledge of common words and the ability to tell the story through a mixture of known words and pictures. Teachers provide many opportunities for children to learn the relationships between letters and sounds, so that older children can use this skill as well as picture clues and word recognition, to help them work out words they are unsure of. Many of the children can recognise and name initial sounds and provide words beginning with that sound. Many can also describe what has happened in a story and what they have enjoyed about it. Teachers help children to begin to master the techniques of holding a pencil and forming letters correctly. Children frequently take the opportunity to work in the writing areas of the classrooms, writing for a specific purpose, such as making a shopping list for the Giant's wife. With adult support, the older four year olds and five year olds are able to write simple sentences.

65. Children make very good progress in their mathematical development and are achieving above what is expected nationally for their age. Most of the younger children can recognise numerals one to ten and many are able to show, using resources, what the number represents. Many can write the numeral correctly. Children understand the terms in front of, behind, underneath and beside. The older children are able to add and take away to 20, match pattern, colour and size and know that a pair is a set of two. Teachers make excellent use, throughout the day, of opportunities to support mathematical development. For example, when lining up to go to collective worship, named children are asked to be first, second, third and so on. Teachers place appropriate emphasis on practical activities that are very well matched to the prior attainment and needs of the children, and where they have the opportunity to explore and find out answers for themselves. The teachers' use of the puppet, Froggy, to set the children tasks, and to watch what they are doing, is very effective in promoting learning and thoroughly enjoyed by the children.

66. Children make very good progress in developing their knowledge and understanding of the world and are achieving above the national expectation for their age in most aspects. They are interested in the world around them and demonstrate a fascination, as they watch the beans and cress they planted grow. They explain how they planted the seeds and beans and what they have done to try and make sure they grow. Those children who planted cress were able to say why they had watered some containers and not others and what they expected to see as a result. Most children also name different parts of the body correctly and recognise the difference between male and female babies. Resources in the bases are very good. Teachers provide very well planned opportunities for children to build objects themselves and explore their properties. They organise play in the water tray with toy stingrays and sharks, to develop children's knowledge of the dangers that exist in the sea and with farm animals in the sand tray to help children name and identify these. Some of the children make good use of non-fiction books to extend their knowledge and their ability to find out information for themselves. Good quality teaching in the computer room is helping children to become familiar with computers. Parents support cookery that gives children first-hand experience of the changes that occur when ingredients are mixed or heated.

67. Teachers plan the children's physical development very well. Children are given wide-ranging opportunities both indoors, through drama and the use of apparatus, and outdoor, through bikes, benches and balls, to develop co-ordination, balance and control skills. Children make very good progress in developing these skills and are achieving above what is expected for their age. The younger children show good concentration skills as they walk along low benches, set up in a zig-zag way, to collect eggs from the hen, while others ride bikes with control, safety awareness and consideration for others in the play area. The older children know the school's health and safety rules when using large apparatus and the importance of warming up their bodies before beginning physical activities. Children show well-developed awareness of space and climb ropes and frames with growing confidence and agility.

68. Creative development is another, very well planned area. Children make very good progress and are achieving above the national expectation for their age. Teachers provide many varied opportunities for them to explore cutting, sticking, painting, gluing, and working with play dough. Many children name colours correctly and confidently choose the materials and fabrics they wish to use for given tasks. They participate with enthusiasm and very good concentration and demonstrate a sense of pride in the finished product. They say why they have made the choices and many describe what they are doing. They enjoy music and playing on the untuned instruments and have a repertoire of songs and hymns that they sing well. They very much enjoy singing the songs in the television programme they watch about numbers that helps to reinforce their work on numeral recognition. Throughout their independent learning activities children make well-reasoned choices and show a high level of confidence and consideration for others. They are genuinely interested in what other children are doing and sustain interest for a significant period of time.

69. Teachers' management of independent learning, through organised play, is excellent and makes a significant contribution to the children's very good progress towards all the early learning goals.

ENGLISH

70. The overall standard of attainment in English by the age of seven and by the age of nine years is close to the national average. However, achievement is unsatisfactory overall in both key stages. There are significant numbers of pupils with special needs and this is reflected in the numbers of pupils who do not attain the nationally expected standards for seven and nine year olds. When making comparisons it is necessary to take into account the significant variation in the prior attainment of each year group but standards are broadly similar to those reported at the last inspection. By the end of Key Stage 1, standards in reading as measured by the National Curriculum tests in 2000 are above the national average when compared with all schools, and when compared with schools with a similar intake. Standards in writing, however, though close to the national average when compared with all schools are below average when compared with schools with a similar intake. However, standards are rising in writing and this is reflected in the most recent national test results for Key Stage 1. Though the results of the Qualification and Curriculum Authority Tests for Year 3 also indicate that standards are rising overall, the school's analysis indicates that this is not so for the lower attaining pupils. The Year 4 tests indicate above average standards in writing when compared to the local authority average attainment for pupils of this age.

71. Standards in speaking and listening are in line with national expectations by the end of Key Stage 1 and when pupils leave the school, although listening is stronger than speaking. In most lessons and other situations, such as worship, pupils listen intently to their teachers and to each other although not all of the listening is active. Much is linked to pupils' good behaviour and does not necessarily impact on their learning. In some lessons however such as literacy, drama and music pupils listen intently, and make a very positive response such as was seen when using instruments to perform the rhythm of 'Jelly on a Plate'. In Key Stage 1, pupils talk about matters of interest to them such as how, a character, Tom could increase the length of his snout or straighten his tail. In Key Stage 2, pupils talk animatedly about what they have learnt in history. However, pupils rarely initiate questions or conversations and most of the speaking is in response to directions or questions by the teachers. The exception being the personal prayers that pupils offer during worship. Pupils make sound progress in speaking and listening although many pupils in Year 1 are not articulate and find difficulty in expressing themselves clearly. Pupils gain

confidence as they move up through the school owing to the sound range of opportunities in drama, and personal and social education lessons but more could be expected of many pupils.

72. Reading, by the end of Key Stage 1, is above the national average. This standard is maintained in Key Stage 2 so that when pupils leave the school they attain above national expectations for pupils of their age. In Key Stage 1 pupils read from range of familiar text. They read with a good degree of accuracy and use strategies such as their knowledge of letter sounds to attempt unfamiliar words. Most pupils talk about the characters and plots and know how to use contents and index sections in books; however skills for using dictionaries are not well developed. In Key Stage 2, pupils read a range of familiar and unfamiliar text with confidence, although with only limited expression. They use reference books to seek out information such as in a history lesson about the Romans. Higher attaining pupils use dictionaries and thesauruses confidently. Pupils make sound progress in their reading. Building on the good start made in reception they develop a secure recognition of basic vocabulary and the use of a range of strategies including 'sounding out' unfamiliar words. Higher attaining pupils in Key Stage 1 and older pupils in Key Stage 2 begin to use contextual clues and are able to predict what might happen next. However, in both key stages, pupils' ability to evaluate and discuss books and authors does not match their technical ability to read text and many base their choice of reading book solely on whether they like the look of the cover; this limits their achievement.

73. Although standards in writing are below those expected nationally, inspection evidence shows that most pupils are making good progress in Key Stage 1 and that standards are rising. Pupils are developing skills of composition and learning strategies for spelling with a good degree of success. A good example of this was seen when pupils were concentrating on the middle sound and recording their attempts. They then demonstrated their ability to use what they had learnt in writing about The Train Ride. Pupils in Year 2 use their knowledge of direct speech to transfer statements from speech bubbles to correctly constructed sentences. Most pupils in Key Stage 2 make good progress. They secure punctuation and improve the organisation of their writing, spelling and the structure of their work. There are good examples of well-constructed accurate writing in Year 4, such as the report on the Verwood Gales. Handwriting shows slower progress and although pupils in both key stages make at least satisfactory progress in their handwriting practice, this is not reflected in their everyday written work and presentation is not always as good as it could be. Lower attaining pupils, in both key stages, make slower progress but build soundly on what they already know and can do. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress overall and some pupils in Key Stage 2 make good progress in spelling as a result of additional literacy support.

74. The quality of teaching is good overall and some very good teaching was observed in both key stages. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. In Key Stage 1 teaching is never less than satisfactory and often it is very good. In Key Stage 2 there is a greater range in the quality of teaching but in the majority of lessons it is satisfactory or better. Teaching in Year 3 is never less than good and sometimes very good or excellent. Basic skills are taught well and teachers have a sound knowledge and understanding of the National Literacy Strategy and other aspects of the subject such as drama. A very good example of teachers' subject expertise was seen in Year 3 during the Roman day. As a result of excellent teaching, pupils' concentration and effort was very good and had a positive impact on the development of speaking and listening and reinforced historical knowledge. Teachers manage pupils well and have high expectations of behaviour and effort. Praise is used very effectively to foster self-esteem and learning. The outcome is that pupils listen attentively, try hard to answer questions, settle quickly and quietly to tasks and invariably work hard. In the best lessons learning objectives are clear and a good range of strategies are used to reinforce learning. In a Year 1 lesson the pupils were very enthusiastic and tried very hard to spell correctly. Weaknesses in teaching methods, such as the lack of use of a pointer when teachers are sharing a book with the class, results in 'ragged' response, particularly from below average pupils who are unable to follow the text. Pupils are not always sure of what it is they are supposed to be learning or need to do to improve owing to a lack of emphasis on the learning objectives at the start of lessons. In several lessons opportunities were missed to foster excitement about the rhythms found in the English language. In a small minority of lessons teaching lacks pace. This leads to inattention and a loss of concentration, especially when pupils are supposed to be working together in groups. Review sessions towards the end of lessons are not always used effectively to assess understanding and to consolidate learning.

75. The school has recently reviewed revised the policy for teaching the subject. The National Literacy Strategy is being implemented soundly and the school uses additional time allocated to English to develop writing and reinforce reading skills. The balance between the time spent on writing and time spent on reading is not appropriate. In some classes, time allocated to practising writing is at the end of the week and this does not allow time for the teaching to be amended to match the needs of pupils as identified by this task. The teaching of literacy across the curriculum is good and teachers provide opportunities to use research skills and write in many subjects such as history and geography. The school is beginning to use computer programs well to develop spelling and promote interest in writing. The school makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs through individual education plans, additional support in lessons and withdrawal for specific help such as additional literacy. Good use is made of learning support staff who work with individuals and small groups and contribute to the high quality of provision for these pupils.

76. Everyday assessment of pupils work through questioning and marking is good. Most written work identifies the learning objectives and most marking clearly assesses what is correct and what needs to be improved. The overall assessment of pupils' attainment and progress is, however, unsatisfactory and limits achievement. Teachers do not collect samples of work to be assessed and kept as examples of work that exemplify specific levels of attainment. Work across a year group is not assessed regularly to identify strengths and weaknesses or overall standards. There are no systems for tracking individual pupils' progress across the range of writing genres. The sample of pupils used to track progress through the school is too small to provide an accurate picture. Reading records vary in usefulness and are inconsistent. At best they record areas for improvement and help to monitor the range of reading opportunities offered to pupils. The home school link books are generally effective in enabling a dialogue to take place between parents and teachers about the reading experiences of pupils. Pupils' reports are informative and most identify targets for improvement but do not inform parents how well their children are meeting the expectations for their age.

77. The leadership of the subject is sound overall. The subject leader is enthusiastic, very well informed and provides secure guidance. As a result of her initiative, the school has created a range of very high quality materials to stimulate interest in reading and promote speaking and listening. However, books are not displayed prominently in classrooms. Planning is monitored satisfactorily to promote coverage of the Literacy Strategy but the monitoring of learning outcomes and the quality of teaching are not sufficiently rigorous.

78. Learning resources overall are unsatisfactory although the school has invested considerable sums in resourcing the National Literacy Strategy effectively and these resources also underpin literacy across the curriculum. The school is aware that library provision is unsatisfactory and has firm plans for its improvement. There are insufficient books encyclopaedias are inappropriate and reference books are limited. There are insufficient numbers and range of dictionaries and thesauruses. Those, which are available, are not appropriately matched to the needs of the pupils or used consistently as a tool to improve vocabulary and spelling.

MATHEMATICS

79. The National Curriculum tests for seven year olds in the year 2000 show that pupils attained standards in mathematics broadly in line with the national average at the age of seven. In comparison with similar schools the results are above average and this has been so over the last three years. Inspection findings are consistent with the test results. By the end of Year 4, when the pupils leave the school, standards are above the national expectation in all aspects of the subject. Achievement in using and applying mathematics is a particular strength throughout the school. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection.

80. In Year 1, pupils develop a good understanding of the number system by using practical aids such as a magnetic hundred board. They order numbers successfully and some higher attainers make two and three digit numbers with increasing awareness and understanding of the value of each digit. This is because teachers give very good oral guidance and demonstrations that inspire pupil's interest. Pupils develop knowledge of mathematical names for common two and three-dimensional shapes by looking around the school and identifying different shapes. In Year 2, pupils describe the properties of solid

shapes, such as the number of sides and corners. They classify the shapes using a diagram to help with sorting. Teachers use computer programs such as 'Decision Tree' well to support this learning. Pupils are good at estimating and use a peg to show their estimate on a number strip. Progress is good because all pupils are actively involved in the practical tasks. They sharpen their skills of estimating a number of random shapes as a result of good teaching techniques that include an element of fun. The effective provision of classroom assistants helps pupils with special educational needs to make good progress throughout the school

81. In Year 3 and 4 most pupils continue to learn at a good rate and they make good progress overall. Year 3 pupils develop their understanding of shape by exploring shapes that tessellate and making mirror image pictures as they learn about symmetry. Teachers make good links with art when pupils study Escher's tessellating pictures as a model. Numeracy skills develop well; pupils learn to calculate their multiplication tables and use this knowledge to solve simple mathematical problems. Pupils in Year 4 communicate data that they have collected through bar charts, pictograms and pie graphs using a data-handling computer program. These show favourite foods, places, stories and pop groups and pupils interpret the information to answer questions posed by the teacher or their peers. In a very good lesson Year 4 pupils made particularly good gains in their awareness of number patterns that provoked gasps of wonder as they discovered these patterns for themselves. Pupils conduct their own practical investigations and discover other patterns in multiples of numbers. Teachers help pupils to use calculators well to check multiplication facts through using division. This helps pupils to comprehend that division is repeated subtraction. Pupils make good progress because teachers ensure that their tasks are challenging and matched carefully to pupils' learning needs..

82. Lessons all follow the National Numeracy Strategy successfully and in the exemplary lessons the introductory session has a brisk pace, involves all the pupils and engages them in activities that sharpen thinking. Teaching is less successful when the first part of the lesson does not engage all pupils and lacks pace. The challenging activities, the emphasis on practical tasks, the good match of work to pupil's needs and the smaller groups in some classes all contribute positively to the good standards of teaching and learning.

83. In Key Stage 1, the teaching was good in half of the lessons and very good or excellent in the other half. In Year 3 and 4 teaching was good and occasionally very good. This led to pupils' good and often very good attitudes to mathematics. Their interest, enthusiasm and high levels of concentration contribute significantly to the quality of learning and good levels of achievement. Pupils listen attentively to teachers. They discuss their work and with their teachers' help, begin to articulate their thinking using correct mathematical vocabulary.

84. The subject co-ordinator has made a positive impact on the quality of teaching. The school has purchased good quality resources and has closely monitored teachers' planning as well as pupils' progress during lessons. The school has planned demonstration lessons, to share the very good practice of some teachers in the introductory part of lessons. The assessment of pupils' attainment and progress is good overall. Careful analysis of test results indicates that there is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls.

SCIENCE

85. Standards in science are above average by the end of Key Stage 1, and in line with national expectations by the end of Year 4. The standards in Year 4 are not as high as found during the last inspection but comparisons are unreliable owing to the variation in the prior attainment of each year group. The quality of learning is good overall. Additional tasks are planned for pupils with special educational needs who receive very good support that results in good achievement in relation to their prior levels of attainment.

86. By the end of Key Stage 1, particular strengths are in the pupils' understanding of sound and in their knowledge of materials. They know that a vibration has to happen for a sound to be made. They identify a wide range of materials and describe and classify them accurately in terms of texture and colour and know whether materials are manufactured or natural. Pupils' investigate reversible and irreversible changes, and look at which materials melt, and which shrink. However, many pupils do not

develop a sufficiently clear idea of a fair test or how to plan investigations. Higher attaining pupils, in particular, are not being sufficiently challenged by the tasks presented. This is reflected in the teachers' lesson plans, which outline clear objectives and related activities, but do not include details of more challenging work for these pupils.

87. In Key Stage 2, the school's policy of supporting the higher attaining pupils within the science lesson is beginning to have a positive impact on their attainment, as well as enhancing pupil's confidence and their levels of learning. In this key stage, strengths are in the provision of good opportunities for pupils to observe, make comparisons and predict when investigating floating and sinking and the use of accurate vocabulary in terms of gravity and upthrust. Pupils have a good understanding of the effects of forces. Their knowledge of the physical features of many plants and animals is applied well when they group and classify living things. Pupils understand similarities and differences in the main stages of life cycles of animals and flowering plants and accurately describe the process of metamorphosis. However, teachers give pupils insufficient opportunities to investigate or to identify the essential features of fair tests independently.

88. The overall good quality of teaching ensures that in both key stages, pupils usually make good progress and do so consistently in Key Stage 1 and in Year 3. However, the quality of learning opportunities in terms of investigations and for independent work in Year 4, is not sufficiently challenging for the higher attaining pupils to make sufficient progress. The deployment of the science co-ordinator to teach other year groups is, however, effective. Teachers' good subject knowledge is evident in planning, although they do not always identify learning objectives for each lesson. They organise their resources well and ensure that pupils complete the tasks given. Teachers organise pupils well and this ensures that all the activities planned are completed, that all pupils work conscientiously and acquire a good level of scientific knowledge. This develops pupils' interest in science; they enjoy the lessons and answer enthusiastically. Most pupils concentrate well and use reference books effectively when finding out new information. However, in the majority of lessons the higher attaining pupils had few opportunities to apply more intellectual and scientific understanding to their learning.

89. Although pupils work in groups in most lessons, they mostly undertake similar activities. This reflects the fact that teachers do not take the pupils' previous skills and individual levels of understanding sufficiently well into account when planning lessons. It also leads to the common weaknesses of lack of challenge for higher attainers and insufficient opportunities for pupils to carry out their own investigations. The teachers' assessment of pupils' attainment in Key Stage 2 is sometimes lower than the test results that they have previously achieved and this reflects some inaccuracies in monitoring pupils' levels of attainment. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to use information and control technology in either research or recording. While investigations are planned for each aspect of science, there is an emphasis on observation to the detriment of the pupils' devising their own experiments. However, where high levels of challenge are given pupils take responsibility for their own learning. Pupils' work is always marked regularly and pupils are praised appropriately but there are insufficient comments that encourage pupils to achieve higher standards of presentation or identify targets for future achievements.

90. The leadership and management of the subject are very good. Good analysis of Key Stage 1 assessment data has resulted in positive action to improve standards. This good use of assessment is not yet evident throughout the school. The co-ordinator provides enthusiastic leadership in developing the subject and has a clear vision about its future direction. She has worked hard to ensure that the curriculum has been updated and modified to fit the new requirements for 2000. She has plans to monitor the time allocation for the subject to ensure that all aspects of science are taught, and intends to include assessment opportunities at regular intervals so that it is clear what the pupils know understand and can do. The good range and quality of learning resources that are very well stored, labelled and accessible promote learning effectively.

ART AND DESIGN

91. By the end of Year 2 and the end of Year 4 pupils attain standards that are well above the national expectations of seven and nine year olds. This improvement on the findings of the previous inspection is a result of the high status given to freedom of choice and decision-making skills, as well as competent

subject teaching. The quality of teaching observed was very good overall with one excellent lesson in Year 4 and a very good lesson seen in Year 1. There are a number of teachers on the staff with a high level of artistic skill, experience and subject expertise that is very evident in their teaching. For example, teachers can demonstrate skills to pupils that have a very positive impact on standards and they place a strong emphasis on developing good observation. As a result, pupils respond very well and enjoy art. Behaviour is very good and pupils co-operate well, sharing resources and clearing up at the end of lessons. They become totally absorbed in their activity and concentrate well. They take pride in their achievements as these are well celebrated by the school.

92. In Key Stage 1, pupils make very good progress in developing their art and design skills. Teachers encourage them to investigate and explore a range of materials to create a portrait, such as charcoal, chalks, oil pastels and paints. Pupils confidently experiment with colours from their paint box and learn to select and clean their paintbrushes appropriately. They learn how to create mirror images and fill in their picture background with a suitable colour wash or tonal media. The way of working promotes a high degree of responsibility and independence. They study the work of significant artists and one pupil referred to Picasso's painting of a man when discussing the style he had adopted for his own painting. Pupils develop good observational skills as they complete a portrait; their self-portraits and those of their peers are often recognisable. They use modelling materials to make a puppet depicting movements similar to the wooden puppets used as a stimulus for their task. They evaluate their work and suggest improvements that could be made to their own work and that of others.

93. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 build on earlier work to develop their creative talent and artistic skills very well. Pupils in Year 3 produce very good quality environmental sculptures in the style of Andy Goldsworthy. Pupils had an excellent opportunity to experience and explore ideas for art in the natural environment. Their work is well documented using a digital camera for recorded evidence. Sketchbooks are used regularly, for example to record line drawings in the style of Matisse and Celtic designs as part of a history project. There are good examples of observational drawings, such as a vase of daffodils. The artist Gaudi's work was used as an inspiration for a class mosaic in Year 4. During an excellent lesson in Year 4, pupils developed speed in representing different figure poses by looking carefully at the human form and learning to appreciate that when the figure is drawn it should represent the skeleton underneath. They used charcoal to develop the essential need to alter and correct their sketches. There were very good gains in learning about proportion and perspective. Their observational drawings of an arrangement of natural materials were well above expectations for their age owing to very good teaching of the skills of cross-hatching and dots to show light, depth and dark. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in art throughout the school.

94. The subject co-ordinator is well trained and is currently working hard to build up a collection of prints showing the work of different artists. Teachers use these effectively as stimuli for pupils' work. There is an updated scheme of work in place, although this does not allocate the study of different artists to year groups so as to avoid unplanned overlap. As yet, the school has no assessment procedures for art, nor have examples of pupils' work been collected for guidance on expectation. There are good links with other areas of the curriculum such as literacy, music, history and religious education. Younger pupils use computer paint programs to develop control and design. The school is planning to use their digital camera to establish a web site art gallery. Art in the curriculum is enriched by the Year 4 annual residential trip when teachers use the environment well to promote observational drawing. Art is a feature of the school's garden trail and pupils produce high quality watercolours of the pond and mill house. They are given good opportunities to observe plants and insects closely and they make detailed observational drawings of creatures seen on their stream trail. After school clubs where pupils practice skills such as silk printing further extend pupils' art experiences for those who participate. By these means art makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and supports the aims of the school.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

95. Only one design and technology lesson was observed during the inspection. Judgements are supported by a scrutiny of teachers' planning and other school documentation and pupils' work on display and in their books.

96. Attainment is in line with national expectations by the end of Key Stage 1 and when pupils leave the school. This was also the finding of the previous inspection and standards have been maintained. Pupils in Year 2 can design and cut out a pattern for a simple glove puppet. They select material and assemble the puppet using simple stitches. They carry out simple evaluations including how to make improvements. Pupils in Key Stage 2 design and make photograph frames and other artefacts. They choose from a range of materials including wood, card and plastic. After creating annotated designs they model the finished product and use simple cutting tools with confidence.

97. Pupils make sound progress in both key stages. They explore simple sliding mechanisms to move figures and linkages to create moving parts in toys. There is insufficient evidence on which to form a judgement about teaching but the quality of the work seen indicates good teaching and learning as well as positive attitudes by pupils.

98. There is a sound policy statement. The curriculum is well planned and based on the guidelines of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. There is a satisfactory balance across the three elements of ideas, focussed practical tasks and designing and making. Effective use is sometimes made of computers in the design process and there are good links to other subjects including science and history.

99. The newly appointed subject coordinator is very keen to further develop the subject. She provides effective support through working alongside teachers and is beginning to compile a portfolio of work to exemplify specific levels of attainment. Resources are adequate and easily accessible.

GEOGRAPHY

100. Pupils attain standards in line with those expected nationally for geography. This is similar to the previous inspection findings. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make sound progress throughout the school.

101. Pupils in Year 1 look at the labels on a collection of food packets and tins to discover their source of origin. Teachers help them to find these countries on a world map. Pupils make simple maps of their route to school using a computer program and corresponding three-dimensional models to find out about buildings in towns. Pupils in Year 2 develop mapping skills using the local area by tracking routes to shops and a friend's house. Teachers help pupils to improve their knowledge of the world by sending a fox puppet on holiday to a variety of destinations. Whilst he is away he sends postcards and the pupils identify his current position on a map or globe. When he returns to class he shares pictures, photographs, a diary and memorabilia with the pupils such as those from his latest trips to North America, Egypt and the French Alps. Comparisons are made with the food, clothes, climate, ethnicity, roads and homes of the place visited and Verwood. Pupils in Year 2 identify attractive geographical features in the locality such as meadows, trees, valleys, rivers and lakes. They can describe some of the seasonal changes. They also recognise unattractive features which "spoil the whole environment" such as litter and the recent storms and floods. They talk about extreme weather conditions, for example a pupil in Year 2 said, "The wind was controlling the environment".

102. In Year 3, groups of pupils construct large three-dimensional maps. They know some of the Ordnance Survey geographical symbols that represent key landmarks. They learn how to use a grid to plot co-ordinates and identify the positions of the geographical features on their map. Teachers ensure that pupils in Year 4 extend these skills well by showing them how to use atlases and the index, compass points and grid references to locate countries and places. Pupils begin to identify and name European countries, capital cities, seas, mountain ranges and rivers.

103. The geography curriculum is enriched by a yearly residential visit where the pupils in Year 4 have very good opportunities for orienteering and fieldwork. Pupils gain good knowledge and understanding of springs and the water cycle. They measure the speed of flow of the water in different places. They make comparisons between village and town localities and describe places and features using geographical language. They understand the cause and effect of some recent changes. They develop their map reading skills well and practise literacy and design skills when producing simple trail guides and maps using their own keys.

104. Owing to the stimulating learning situations that the school provides, pupils enjoy geography lessons and they respond with enthusiasm. They work co-operatively with partners helping each other and they respond positively to collaborative group work opportunities. Behaviour and attitudes are good in all lessons.

105. The standard of teaching in the lessons observed was always at least satisfactory and in Year 3 the lesson was very good because the pupils were involved in a meaningful practical group task where they were required to negotiate and make decisions. The teacher used very effective strategies to maximise pupils' learning with an exciting challenge activity. A project that focused on islands linked well to their history lessons about early settlers and their needs. Lesson planning is good and this has a positive impact on standards.

106. The subject co-ordinator has worked hard to up date the geography curriculum and ensure that resources are centralised and well organised for accessibility. However, recording and assessment of the subject are underdeveloped. For example, there is a lack of subject or topic books which show pupils' progress and help staff and pupils to track previous learning in the subject. The lack of a subject portfolio containing annotated work samples to help teachers monitor standards has a negative impact on attainment. All classes benefit from the very good level of support from the local education authority outdoor education advisory team, such as provision of first hand experiences of orienteering and map work.

HISTORY

107. During the course of the inspection one lesson was observed in each key stage and a 'Roman Banquet' was held in Year 3. Discussions took place with pupils in Key Stage 1 and pupils' work was scrutinised, both in books and on display around the school. The outcome indicates that pupils acquire a good knowledge of all aspects of the subject, achieve above the national expectation by the age of seven and the age of nine and teaching is good overall. Pupils can differentiate between fact and fiction, recount key dates and times in history, for example when the Spanish Armada sailed. They describe aspects of life in the past that are different from their own, such as the food people ate in Roman times and greetings they used. Pupils with special educational needs have full access to the history curriculum and make satisfactory progress.

108. Teaching and learning are effective. Teachers ensure pupils receive a good balance between receiving facts and figures, researching information in books and on the Internet and through first-hand experience through field trips and school visits. In Key Stage 1, pupils talk about aspects of home life that are different from those fifty years ago, for example a stone hot water bottle compared to a rubber hot water bottle and the reason for wearing a poppy in November. Pupils in Year 3, through their preparation for the Roman banquet, were able to talk with knowledge and enthusiasm about the type of dress Romans wore, depending on their social position, the writing implements they used and where they settled in England. Pupils practise their literacy skills when writing about what they know and in Key Stage 2, collate their information on the Spanish Armada in a time-line.

109. Pupils across both the key stages demonstrate a real enthusiasm and interest in history and make good use of the school museum to find out more information first hand. They contribute, annually, to an appeal for boxes of things that children in Albania do not have, such as soap or a doll. They understand what has happened in that country in the past to make this necessary and they 'give' with a genuine sense of commitment.

110. The creative work that comes out of the lessons, such as the work on Celtic crosses, is of a very high standard and is presented very well in both classrooms and corridors, supporting pupils' continuous learning and valuing their contributions. Pupils are keen to achieve and show good concentration skills when re-creating their historical symbols or writing about a specific incident in time. Both the interest of the teachers in the subject and the effective resources collected by the subject co-ordinator motivate and stimulate pupils very effectively.

111. The co-ordinator's management of the subject is satisfactory overall, with the school's aims and values reflected very well in the history curriculum. Information and communication technology resources are up-to-date and support pupils' learning well. There is a shared commitment with staff to

continue to improve the delivery of the subject. The co-ordinator has addressed the demands of the National Curriculum for 2000 and teachers plan effectively to ensure the range of topics covered is comprehensive. There has been satisfactory improvement in the subject since the last inspection, particularly in the use of information and communication technology. However, the use of assessment to track pupils' achievements and progress in learning continues to be unsatisfactory. Furthermore, there is insufficient formal monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning within the subject to enable the co-ordinator to have a clear view of the teaching strengths and weaknesses.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

112. There has been a significant improvement in provision for information and communication technology since the last inspection. The main feature is a computer room with ten computer units two colour printers and two laser printers that has been in operation for about a year. This allows more efficient and effective teaching of the subject. The school is keeping up well with new demands so that standards by the end of Key Stage 1 have been maintained at the expected level. Standards in Key Stage 2 have improved and now meet those expected for pupils of this age. Standards are likely to continue to rise as pupils are making good progress in their lessons where there is a very purposeful atmosphere and the school has a good quality scheme of work that covers all strands of the subject. The breadth of pupils' work in information and communication technology is reflected well in the details given to parents in the annual written reports.

113. The school has appointed a well-qualified assistant as a computer technician. She has considerable expertise and works with small groups of pupils as well as advising teachers on technical aspects and maintaining hardware and software in good order. This contributes significantly to the very good teaching of information technology. The teaching is firmly based on planning that makes the subject relevant to pupils by choosing activities that enhance the work they are doing in other lessons as well as developing appropriate information technology skills. For example, pupils in Year 3 were designing a Roman menu to link with their history project. This enabled them to practise using several features to produce an overall design. The pupils were using different fonts and spacing items appropriately. They chose and imported suitable images from Clipart and considered where to place them and what size they should be. Pupils in Year 2 used a digital camera to take photographs to help them make comparisons with their drawings of a scene chosen by using a 'viewfinder'. Earlier in the term, this year group had been introduced to searching for information using a CD Rom about animals.

114. Children enter the school with varying degrees of awareness of information and communication technology. They quickly develop very positive attitudes to using computers and gain confidence, owing to the high level of adult support during their lessons in the computer room. The computer technician provides very clear explanations and instructions. She uses technical language at an appropriate level for the pupils' age and prior knowledge. They begin to use this when discussing their work. Clear progress in mouse control was seen in lessons for reception and Year 1 pupils. Using a simulation of 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears' pupils in the reception class learned to select items to place where they wished on screen and alter the size. Year 1 pupils were introduced to a painting programme and improved their control when making a picture of a house. Several expressed amazement when they saw the 'fill' component in action.

115. The school appreciates that it needs to make efficient use of the considerable investment it has made in the subject and ensure effective timetabling of the computer room. In order to do this teachers have thought carefully about the best ways to support literacy and numeracy sessions through the use of new technology. Pupils in Year 3 have used computers to support work in mathematics by using shapes to make repeating patterns that includes use of different types of symmetry. Pupils in Year 2 have had practice in using different keys to move and replace text. Pupils in Year 4 build well on their early word processing skills by using these and more sophisticated means, such as different ways of selecting a word they wish to change, when learning how to improve a given text through, for instance, choosing more interesting vocabulary. Step-by-step teaching, good questioning and encouragement develop pupils' confidence so they become very interested and concentrate well. The pupils learn the importance of saving a basic document on their individual computer before making alterations and the difference between the computer's 'C' and 'A' drives.

116. Although the work covered by pupils is highlighted on planning and learning assistants make notes on individual progress on observation sheets, the assessment of pupils' achievements is underdeveloped. Some work by pupils is kept on disk but this is not assessed in relation to National Curriculum requirements so is of little use to help teachers develop appropriate expectations. Teachers do not have a clear picture of the levels of pupils' skills in different aspects of the subject.

117. The enthusiastic co-ordinator manages the subject effectively, providing good support for other staff and consulting them about any changes in the school's policy. She liaises closely with the middle school and has a clear view of the current state of the subject and what is needed to further develop information and communication technology. She has formulated a clear, fully costed action plan. Further developments include the use of e-mail to communicate with the other local first school and setting up the school's website. The school has arranged further training to improve the confidence and competence of all staff.

118. The school makes good use of its computer room to benefit the community through arrangements for the computer technician to run evening courses for parents. These are proving to be extremely popular.

MUSIC

119. Standards in music throughout the school are above national expectations as teachers provide a wide range of interesting and exciting learning opportunities in music including listening to music from an appropriate range of cultures and styles. These factors also contribute effectively to promoting pupils' cultural development. Standards have improved in both key stages since the last inspection. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils sing tunefully and accurately, maintaining a steady beat and their singing matches the style of the music very well. They play a wide range of musical instruments well, holding their own rhythms when other pupils play different rhythms. Pupils know the names of most instruments they play such as tambour and claves, as well as the more unusual ones such as cabasas, gato drum and thumb piano. They also recognise and name some orchestral instruments. Pupils explain how sounds are produced and those in Year 2 read pictorial scores and understand pitch in music.

120. Pupils in Key Stage 2 build well on these skills with the result that they improve their singing, especially in terms of accurate pitch, good rhythmic awareness and dynamic range, which is extended to singing in two parts. Pupils understand the terms notation, composer and conductor. They use a grid form to notate and follow a pattern of sounds using tuned instruments. They effectively use a second grid to play two parts simultaneously, recognise chords and compose and evaluate "melodies" played. Pupils play a wide range of pitched and unpitched percussion instruments. The school's provision of a wide range of extra-curricular activities and performances further enhances standards in music.

121. The very good quality of teaching ensures the good and frequently very good, progress of pupils throughout the school. Teaching and learning are consistently good in the music studio, where teachers carefully structure modules of work. Here the pupils make good progress in their ability to maintain a steady beat and create music involving different aspects of the voice and musical instruments. Pupils concentrate well, think creatively and discuss how the compositions can be improved. Those pupils with special educational needs also make good progress.

122. The leadership and management of music are very good. The co-ordinator has a clear vision for the development of the subject. A strong contributory factor to the quality and range of music is her enthusiasm for curriculum planning, giving guidance and the organisation and auditing of resources. Music has a high focus at Verwood School and there are many occasions where large numbers of pupils are involved in concerts, especially the Nativity and Christmas concerts, Harvest and Easter celebrations. The well-planned curriculum gives good support for the non-specialist teacher, particularly for progressively developing pupils' knowledge and skills. However, assessment of pupils' attainment and progress is under developed. There is an excellent range of instruments, books and other teaching resources. Of particular note is the excellent range of drums, rain sticks and African instruments.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

123. By the end of Key Stage 1 and Year 4, pupils attain standards that exceed national expectations for their age in nearly all aspects of physical education. This is a similar picture to that found in the previous inspection. Pupils of all ages are agile and well co-ordinated and as they move through the school they make good progress in skills of balance, sequencing movements and in ball skills. The good quality of both indoor and outdoor accommodation and the good quality of resources make a significant contribution to the standards attained. The extra-curricular sports clubs for Key Stage 2 pupils further enhances their achievements.

124. Teaching is good overall in both key stages. All the teachers place a suitable emphasis on safety issues and on the effect of exercise on the body. The methods and strategies they choose support their clear learning objectives and outcomes well and promote pupils' enjoyment of physical exercise. These factors lead to an enthusiastic response from pupils who make considerable effort. In most lessons, teachers make the purpose clear to pupils so they know what is expected of them. For example, in a Year 1 dance lesson, pupils learned to perform simple dance movements well, showing a developing ability to be expressive. In a games lesson, other pupils in Year 1, showed good levels of concentration and perseverance when responding to quite difficult challenges of balancing a ball on a bat and developing control when using bat and ball. In this lesson, the teacher used peer demonstration well together with lots of encouragement to show pupils how to improve.

125. The key questions and activities given in a Year 2 games lesson promoted further progress in control and anticipation when pupils were asked to bounce a ball through a hoop laid flat on the ground to a partner using overarm and underarm bounces. Pupils in Year 2 also show confidence on large apparatus in the hall owing to the calm, pleasant manner of the teacher that results in pupils feeling secure to answer questions and make suggestions. Good time was given for lots of practice in this lesson and pupils were able to select where they worked, within clear guidelines, so they developed more imaginative ideas for moving through the apparatus as the lesson progressed.

126. In Key Stage 2, pupils build well on prior learning. They improve accuracy and control when throwing and catching balls and begin to develop their knowledge of rules and scoring to design simple small team games. Pupils in Year 3 need some help with organisation but the activities promote development of co-operative skills well. By Year 4, pupils are using a range of ways of passing the ball at different speeds and learning the skills of interception. In a very good gymnastics lesson for pupils in Year 4, very effective questioning helped pupils evaluate and improve their ability to balance on large apparatus and to concentrate well when trying to get their legs above their head.

127. In nearly all lessons the teachers' effective management of pupils promotes good behaviour and good care of apparatus. Pupils listen well to instructions and follow them carefully. However, in one Year 4 games lesson, that was satisfactory overall, the teachers' insufficient reinforcement of expectations for behaviour resulted in some restlessness and inappropriate bouncing of balls by a very few pupils when they were receiving instructions. Most teachers encourage pupils to demonstrate their work in lessons and remind others to show appreciation. However, in most lessons, teachers do not use demonstrations enough to develop pupils' skills of evaluation. Standards in this aspect of the work are not as high as they could be.

128. Pupils perform confidently in front of others as seen in a whole school assembly when over 60 pupils in Year 3 performed a moving Celtic hand dance with total concentration and involvement, interpreting the music sensitively. This made a significant contribution to the personal development of both performers and the pupils who were watching.

129. There is sound management of the subject by the co-ordinator who monitors teachers' planning and ensures that resources are well maintained and improved. Although equal opportunities are addressed in the school policy there is no mention of criteria for identification of pupils with special educational needs or for assessment. Assessment and record keeping are under-developed. Nevertheless, the work in physical education is effective in promoting the aims and ethos of the school.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

130. By the end of Key Stage 1 and Year 4, attainment in religious education is above the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. The pupils' factual knowledge of Christianity and other world faiths is good. They retell details of well-known bible stories such as "David and Goliath", and Jesus "Stilling the Storm". Many pupils, particularly in Years 2 and 3 have a good understanding of the impact made by religion on the way people live; for example, they compare Hannukah with the present day Christian worship of the symbolic candle at a christening. The quality of pupils' presentation of work is satisfactory and there are examples where sequences of lessons allow pupils to gain a clear insight into the topic being studied. This is evident in the series of six lessons linked to celebrations in Year 2.

131. As a result of good quality teaching overall, pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. Lessons proceed at an effective pace and teachers have clear learning objectives so that, throughout the school, pupils behave well in lessons and have positive attitudes to their learning. They listen well, are enthusiastic and show real interest in the subject. In the best lessons, the teachers' subject knowledge is good. Teachers plan thoroughly so that there is appropriate work that challenges and motivates the majority of pupils. A good example of this was where pupils in Year 2 discussed Remembrance Sunday and why it is important to remember special people and times. The teachers' questions, with clear prompts, led to improved understanding for the pupils. The co-ordinator's monitoring of planning, for example in Year 4, suggests the use of drama and art to improve lessons where insufficient strategies are being employed to maintain pupils' interest.

132. The whole school pilgrimage, from Old Sarum to Salisbury, as a Millennium celebration, has had a very lasting impact on pupils. They remember the experience with enjoyment that is reflected in the very good Millennium prayers they wrote. Pupils show respect for each other and the different faiths they study. The subject makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development.

133. The deputy headteacher is overseeing the subject soundly, pending the return of the co-ordinator from maternity leave. The substantive co-ordinator manages the subject well, and has ensured that the scheme of work has been adapted to reflect the new locally agreed syllabus. Resources are very good, both in range and quality. Artefacts, posters, books and videos are easily available, however, they lack any kind of catalogue or labelling system.