

INSPECTION REPORT

BINCOMBE VALLEY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Weymouth

LEA area: Dorset

Unique reference number: 113716

Headteacher: Mr L Strong

Reporting inspector: Mr J Palk
23630

Dates of inspection: 22 - 25 October 2001

Inspection number: 230331

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Culliford Way Weymouth Dorset
Postcode:	DT3 6AF
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr R Trill
Date of previous inspection:	12/12/99

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9837	R Walsh	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
1299 7	C Cheong	Team inspector	Art and design Design and technology Music Foundation Stage Equal opportunities	How good are curriculum opportunities offered to pupils?
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Bincombe Valley is a large primary school with 301 pupils on roll. The numbers of pupils has fallen in the last four years and above average numbers of pupils move to or from the school. There are no pupils with English as an additional language and few from minority ethnic groups. Thirty-five per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals which is above average. There are high proportions of pupils on the register of pupils with special educational needs. Six have Statements of Special Educational Need, which is also above average. There is an attached unit for seven pupils with statements for emotional and behavioural problems. There is a nursery class and 11 other classes, which are organised as year groups. Classes are smaller than typically found and the proportion of boys to girls is similar. Children's attainment on entry is well below average. The school is situated in an area of recognised social needs. Five of the 14 teachers including the headteacher joined the school within the last two years.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Bincombe Valley Primary School is continuing to improve in all aspects of its work. Standards are steadily rising. Teaching is at least satisfactory and good in many lessons and pupils with special educational needs are learning at an acceptable rate. Pupils now have positive attitudes to learning and behave well. There is a strong action being taken to increase the rate at which pupils make progress and the headteacher manages this very well. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The vision and action taken by the headteacher to improve the school.
- All pupils are included in all the school has to offer, whatever their needs.
- Teaching is good in Years 4, 5 and 6 and teachers strive to be better.
- Effective team working.
- Personal development of pupils is very well supported and good structures are in place to encourage good attitudes to work.
- Good links with parents, who have very positive views about the school.
- The help the school gives to the 'base'¹ in successfully re-integrating pupils back into school.

What could be improved

- Standards of attainment in English, mathematics, science and religious education.
- Balance of the curriculum; in particular the planned provision for the development of speaking and thinking skills, and religious education.
- Effective use of time.
- The regular use of assessment information when planning lessons.
- Teachers' planning and expectations in the reception year through to Year 3.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

¹ SEBD base: The school hosts a local authority support unit for seven pupils who all have statements for social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Pupils and parents know this as the 'base'.

The school was last inspected in December 1999 and was judged to no longer require special measures. Satisfactory improvements have been made since then. Standards have risen steadily and reflect more closely pupils' abilities in most subjects. Older boys are learning well. Pupils are better behaved and have a greater enthusiasm for learning. Strategies for maintaining this are secure across the school and all pupils are included. Pupils are benefiting from improved provision for art, dance and computing. Subject co-ordinators have a greater involvement and influence in the action taken to raise standards and the school is well placed to build on its achievements.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

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

This table refers to the standards achieved by pupils who left the school in July 2000.

Whilst the proportion of pupils achieving average levels in tests is close to that of other schools there is a greater proportion who do not reach the expected standards and only a small number above average. The 2001 test results are at similar levels in English and science but lower in mathematics. Lower attaining pupils generally made satisfactory progress as they moved through the school in reading and writing but unsatisfactory progress in mathematics. Lower attaining boys have not done as well in tests as girls. Their underachievement has been identified, support is good and their progress is improving.

The performance of pupils of seven year olds in reading, writing and mathematics tests has been improving in recent years. The results of test taken in 2001 are much closer to average in reading, but are well below average in writing and mathematics.

Inspection found that by the end of the reception year children are meeting the expectations in personal and social development and in physical development. They are still below the standards expected in their communication, language and literacy development, mathematical development and creative development and well below in their knowledge and understanding of the world.

Standards are more closely reflecting pupils' abilities by the age of 11 and many pupils are making good progress due to better teaching and improved attitudes to learning. There is a large number of pupils with significantly lower achievement than normally found in this age group. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress towards their targets, whilst those pupils with behavioural and emotional needs are doing well. The

performance targets for 2002 have been raised for 11 year olds. They are demanding of the progress lower attainers need to make and set high targets for higher attainers.

Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) have risen rapidly due to improved resources and meet expectations. Work seen in geography, history and physical education is in line with what is expected. In music, art and design and technology standards are good for 11 year olds. Standards in religious education are below those expected in the agreed syllabus. The lack of sufficient time and weaknesses in teachers' knowledge is having an impact on how well pupils achieve.

Some boys and lower attaining pupils were not achieving as well as they should throughout the school. With the very good action taken by the headteacher and staff to raise their personal confidence, expectations of what they can achieve have risen at the upper end of the school and their work is improving steadily.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have good attitudes to work and are keen to take part in all the school offers them.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	This is good and pupils are clear about acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.
Personal development and relationships	This aspect is also good. Pupils listen to each other, are willing to share their ideas and views and their confidence and self-esteem are improving.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Morning registration is orderly and purposeful and sets a good beginning to the day.

Boys now have much better attitudes to work and respond well to the praise for their efforts. Pupils take a greater interest in each other through responsibilities such as the school council.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	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.

Sixty-nine lessons were seen during the inspection. Nearly half of these were good or better. There were no unsatisfactory lessons. Teaching assistants² are well organised to help pupils with additional needs during the lessons and this is helping to improve the rate

² Teaching assistants: refers to those members of staff not qualified as teachers but who work with pupils individually or take charge of a small group. They work under the direction of the class teacher and headteacher and receive appropriate training. They are sometimes called learning support assistants.

at which these pupils learn. All teachers manage their classes well and the very good quality of relationships has gone a long way to cementing the improvements in pupils' attitudes.

Teaching is best in Years 4, 5 and 6. These teachers plan well for all lessons and they are clear about what different groups of pupils should achieve. Teaching is often exciting and stimulating particularly in Years 4, 5 and 6. Plenty is demanded of pupils in these classes, and no time is wasted. Marking is helpful and homework is worthwhile.

Teaching is satisfactory in Years 1, 2 and 3 but teachers do not have high enough expectations of pupils. They do not use the information about what pupils can do to set sufficiently challenging work and this inhibits the rate of learning.

The teaching in the nursery is good. Activities are well planned although more focus is needed to develop early language and mathematics skills. The work planned for children in the reception class is satisfactory but does not have a sharp enough focus on literacy and numeracy skills.

In Year 1 to Year 6 the strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy are helping to raise standards in English and mathematics. The teachers share the aims of the lesson with their classes and the time is used well to ensure that progress can be checked at the end of the lesson. The teaching of mathematics by setted groups in Year 3 to Year 6 benefits all pupils.

Some of the art, history, dance and music teaching is of a very good quality. Pupils learn very rapidly because they are fully involved in exploring and finding out.

Significant proportions of pupils have difficulty explaining and communicating their ideas, which is still affecting the rate at which they learn. Teachers do not always give enough attention to developing spoken language in their lessons.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The curriculum is coherent and there is a secure structure for planning. Not enough attention given to enriching pupils spoken language or religious education.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. There is good support available, but Individual education plans are not sharply focused.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory overall. This is good for moral and social development. Pupils are valuing themselves and others. Spiritual is satisfactory but is not developed enough. Cultural is also satisfactory. Good emphasis is placed on art and music, but not enough on other world cultures.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory. The personal development and care of pupils is good. Ways of tracking how well pupils are improving in academic work are getting better.

The parents are encouraged to play a full part in the education of their children and are kept very well informed. A good range of clubs and other activities are offered to six year olds and upwards which appeal to all pupils. There are a good range of policies and practices in place for eliminating unacceptable behaviour.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very strong and effective leadership. Clear direction given to all staff. Relationships are good at all levels. Very well focused on raising standards and improving the pupils' education.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good support to the school. Well informed. Could be better at evaluating the impact of financial decisions.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The teachers' work is regularly monitored. Co-ordinators are playing an important part in raising standards through checking planning and work and evaluating this with colleagues.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. There is good use of available funds. Better use could be made of the library and computer suites.

Teachers are continually receiving training to improve their teaching. The accommodation is good, following many useful improvements that benefit pupils learning and behaviour. Resources are sufficient. The governors seek to give best value by closely managing the budget. The school regularly checks on teaching and standards to judge its effectiveness.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils enjoy coming to school, and their behaviour has improved. • The hard working teachers. • The effort the headteacher and teachers give to meeting them and keeping them informed. • Improvements to the building inside and out. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework. • Extra-curricular activity.

The inspection team agrees with parents' positive views. The amount of homework required is similar to that of other schools and consistent with government guidelines and is judged to be appropriate. There is a good range of clubs, both cultural and sporting for all pupils and residential visits for older pupils.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The 2000 National Curriculum test results for 11 year olds in English, mathematics and science were well below the national average and in comparison with similar schools³. The results show a minority now reaching higher levels with a high proportion not reaching an average standard. These proportions reflected the fact that nearly half of the pupils were on the register of special educational needs. Their progress has been tracked by the school from the tests for seven year olds and progress is at least satisfactory.
2. The reading, writing and science results in 2001 show a continuing upward trend in the proportions of pupils reaching average standards, although the proportions below average are still too high. Mathematics test results dropped for the second year running. Boys did not achieve as well as expected. Their earlier poor behaviour and disaffection with school had an impact on the quality of their learning and despite an improvement towards the end of their last year they lacked many of the mathematical skills necessary to give their best in the test. Consequently the performance targets in mathematics were not met and the teachers' expectations were not realised.
3. Performances in National Curriculum reading, writing and mathematics tests for seven year olds have risen in line with national trends in recent years but attainment is still well below average. There are greater proportions below average but similar proportions now reaching above average in reading and writing. Boys are improving at a faster rate than girls particularly in reading, but also in writing and mathematics. This reflects the greater attention being given to boys' learning across the school. Teacher assessments for science were well below the national average. The 2001 test results for seven year olds indicates some continued improvement in reading and mathematics but attainment has not been maintained in writing.
4. The headteacher has taken appropriate action to tackle the underachievement of boys through the school. The Standards Fund⁴ is used to increase classroom support for lower attaining pupils and to train staff in the effective use of the literacy and numeracy strategies. More books of special interest to boys are purchased. A greater emphasis is placed on rewarding success by displaying work and awarding effort.
5. Performance targets for 11 year olds to reach in the 2002 National Curriculum tests have been raised to average levels. This reflects the pupils' progress in tests from Year 2 to Year 4 and is particularly demanding of the progress to be made by lower attaining pupils. Strategies such as 'booster' classes and setting for mathematics are in place but more needs to be done to identify individual needs to help teachers keep a track of pupils' progress towards these targets.

³ Similar schools: for the purpose of making more accurate comparisons of test performance, schools are grouped by the proportions of pupils entitled to receive free school meals.

⁴ Standards Fund: allocations of funding from the DfES rather than through the local education authority. Amounts are determined centrally and school may use the funds to target national and urgent priorities.

6. Inspection evidence found that children in the Foundation Stage⁵ achieve well in their personal, social and emotional development and physical development. They enter with low attainment in these areas and are on course to reach expectations by the start of Year 1. Children make satisfactory progress in literacy development, mathematical development, creative development and their knowledge and understanding. Attainment on entry is poor in these areas and the range of ability is narrower than typically found. Children's skills in these areas are below expectations by the end of the Foundation Stage, and well below in their knowledge and understanding of the world. Learning in these areas is not improving fast enough in the reception year.
7. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 with different levels of attainment make satisfactory progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Progress in speaking skills is below that expected and consequently pupils do not develop sufficient vocabulary to explain themselves or their emerging ideas. This has an adverse effect on their learning. This weakness is not yet being addressed and many pupils find it difficult to cope with the increased demands of written and spoken instructions later on. Additional support is helping meet some of these difficulties but there is no structured approach to developing spoken language across the school.
8. Now that pupils' attitudes and behaviour have improved the rate of learning is accelerating in Years 4, 5 and 6 and the proportions of pupils reaching expected levels in English, mathematics and science is close to average. Better teaching and high expectations supported by a closer matching of work to ability are also contributing to good learning. However standards of work in reading, writing, mathematics and science are still below average and some underachievement still persists in speaking and investigative skills. Reasons for underachievement of lower attaining pupils in reading, writing and mathematics are being correctly identified and tackled. Challenging targets have been set for this group of pupils that seeks to raise their attainment above the expected rate. The headteacher and co-ordinators now regularly check on progress towards these targets. Smaller classes with increased support from teaching assistants help pupils make the best use of literacy and numeracy lessons. Setting for mathematics has been extended from Year 3 to Year 6 with real gains in pupils' confidence. However, pupils remain well below expectations in their ability to apply strategies to solve mathematical problems. More still remains to be done to ensure that the individual assessment information on pupils forms the basis of learning objectives during more lessons, but indications are that boys in particular are steadily making up lost ground.
9. Pupils with special educational needs are making satisfactory progress towards meeting their individual learning targets. However, there is no record of pupils making sufficient progress to move off the register. Sound provision is made for those pupils who have specific learning difficulties in English and mathematics and they benefit from trained teaching assistants who help in many lessons. The provision for those pupils who have behavioural difficulties is comprehensive and detailed, and they make good progress towards the targets set.

⁵ Foundation Stage: there are three stages identified in the primary phase of education. The Foundation Stage begins when children reach the age of three and finishes at the end of the reception year; typically before the child's sixth birthday. It is a distinct stage in preparing children for later schooling and is based on six areas of learning.

10. A lack of sufficient time and teacher expertise in teaching religious education has led to standards that are below expectations of the agreed syllabus. Coverage of the syllabus is patchy across the school and the work set is often undemanding.
11. Standards in ICT are now meeting expectations. The improvements have been rapid as a result of improved teaching and the installation of more computers into a central location. Art and design, design and technology and music have greater emphasis since these were key issues at the last inspection and standards now exceed expectations. The teaching is good and a good programme of activity help pupils acquire the skills to achieve well. Pupils meet the expected standards in games, gymnastics and swimming which is broadly similar to the last inspection. Overall, standards in history and geography are broadly in line with other 11 year olds. Pupils do not undertake enough investigations in these subjects to achieve as well as they could. This reflects the finding of the last inspection.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12. The school has improved on the achievements reported in the last inspection. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good and the majority of pupils are eager to learn. There is now a strong sense of purpose in the way pupils start the school day. A good number of pupils are keen to play a full part in all the school offers. The wide range of clubs are popular and members give their full commitment. The dance club is particularly successful in attracting boys who are spending their lunchtime practising for a local event. Pupils, including those with special needs, are enthusiastic about their learning and are keen to discuss their work. Pupils, working in pairs or groups, share equipment and information unselfishly and safely. The majority of parents responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire agreed with inspection findings that their children enjoyed the experience of being at school.
13. Standards of behaviour are consistently good throughout the school and help all pupils get on with learning. Pupils understand what is expected of them and the great majority follows the school rules, which they themselves have helped to create. At lunchtime in the playground, where some lively play is enjoyed, behaviour is now good. Although some incidents of aggressive behaviour have occurred, staff dealt with these quickly and effectively. At present there are no exclusions in force and pupils previously excluded from lessons have all been reintegrated into classes. Pupils' understanding of what constitutes unacceptable behaviour is strong and is a major factor in the successful inclusion of pupils from the attached 'base' into some lessons, assemblies and play times.
14. Pupils' personal development is good. In both Foundation Stage classes there is a happy, caring atmosphere, in which children feel secure. Pupils like their teachers and teaching assistants and feel well cared for. Boys and girls are confident to approach adults with any worries they might have and are willing to listen to what others might say. They show interest and respect for each other's feelings, ideas and work, no matter what their abilities. Pupils' confidence in themselves is growing rapidly. Pupils are beginning to share their own beliefs and views more readily during discussions, but there is still some way to go before the majority of pupils in the school have these skills. The school successfully ensures that praise is given to boys and girls equally and this shows in the way boys put themselves forward for positions of responsibility in the school, for example, becoming a member of the school council⁶ or meeting visitors. The school council is particularly effective in

⁶ School council: the school council is made up of pupils from Year 6 who represent each class in the school. They meet with the headteacher to discuss issues that are of current concern to pupils.

developing citizenship; the representatives from Year 6 take responsibility for putting forward ideas and opinions from the classes to the headteacher and staff. The council has recently managed to find playground buddies for some of the new younger children.

15. Attendance rates are satisfactory. At present, however, they are slightly lower than the national average for a school of this type and size, which is caused by parents taking their children out of school for late summer holidays. The school documentation emphasises to parents their responsibilities in this respect, and the importance of consistent attendance and the impact this has on their child's learning. The school creates a happy and welcoming environment, which encourages good attendance in pupils. The registration process is used effectively, but the practice of going into assembly almost immediately breaks this positive start. Pupils start back to work quickly and quietly after breaks and staff treat latecomers seriously, with any disruption being kept to a minimum. Registers are meticulously maintained and controlled, and comply fully with all the statutory requirements but they are not taken to a central place of safety which could cause a problem in an emergency situation.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

16. The quality of teaching is continuing to improve since the last inspection, and there are no unsatisfactory lessons. The best progress in the quality of teaching and pupils' learning is in Years 4, 5 and 6. The teaching is lively and the learning objectives for pupils with different needs are clearly focused. Consequently pupils' learning is very nearly always good.
17. Teaching is satisfactory in the reception class and Years 1, 2 and 3. There is not enough that is good or very good and consequently progress is not as quick as it needs to be given the poor attainment on entry. The teachers plan an interesting variety of activities that appeal to boys and girls and also meet the needs of lower attaining pupils. They intervene to support pupils and to probe their understanding. However, the planning does not go far enough in identifying more precisely what different ability groups are to learn. As a consequence activities are not always successful at taking pupils forward. There is not always sufficient challenge given to the small number of higher attaining pupils in the lessons and this holds back their learning. The targets for pupils to reach are based on reliable assessment information but these are not followed through and addressed in the planning. The planning is better where there are clear objectives set out for each of the ability groups. Pupils and teaching assistants know what to achieve and learning is much better. The use of marking as a means of providing feedback to pupils on how well they are doing is inconsistent in these classes and does not always follow the school's good marking policy.
18. Teachers across the school have a secure knowledge of the subjects they teach and their preparation is thorough. They give pupils clear instructions as to what they expect and judge the amount of time needed for pupils to complete the work. Consequently pupils do not become frustrated or confused. This has considerably improved attitudes to learning and also helped eliminate unacceptable behaviour in lessons. Teachers manage their classes very well. There is a judicious use of praise, and the strategies are consistently applied in all classes. The teachers listen to what pupils have to say and are careful to ensure that boys as well as girls are asked questions or take on responsible duties such as handing out work books or operating the equipment. The relationships between teachers and pupils in the

lessons are very good and this is helping the large group of older and lower attaining boys catch up on some essential basic skills in literacy and numeracy.

19. Teachers in Years 4, 5 and 6 are clear about what the pupils have achieved and plan accordingly. They use the final part of the lesson to check on how well the pupils have done and use this information to help in updating class targets. These are shared with the pupils and this is having a positive effect on pupils' learning and behaviour.
20. The overall quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. There are many good elements, but the quality of planning varies between the two classes. Teachers and teaching assistants plan well together and are clear about how to support children in the different activity areas. In the nursery this is very well organised through an activity tracking system which keeps all the adults informed as to the experiences children are getting. Both the rooms are set out to give children a good choice and to help them make decisions about what to do after they have left an activity. The behaviour and social development of children are very well managed and this encourages children to use the time well. Teachers' subject knowledge is satisfactory overall. The teachers' planning in both classes, however, does not make enough use of such guidance as the 'stepping stones'⁷ to ensure literacy and numeracy skills are taught systematically. In the reception class, planning does not always reflect the Early Learning Goals⁸, the appropriate curriculum for children of this age group. Consequently the teacher is not clear about what to expect of children in this age group. Teaching assistants are not given enough guidance on how to support children's acquisition of communication, language and literacy skills during class teaching and this reduces their effectiveness.
21. Baseline assessment is carried out in great detail, however, the knowledge gained is not yet being used to teach reception children new things. This is holding up their progress a great deal. Teaching opportunities are being missed because precise individual targets are not set.
22. Throughout the school, literacy and numeracy are both taught effectively and the rate of learning in reading and writing has improved. Good introductions to lessons ensure that pupils have clear insight into what is to be learnt. The national strategies are delivered consistently in all classes, and the planning follows the guidelines. However the main teaching part of the lesson in numeracy does not always go far enough in engaging pupils thinking or helping them work systematically and this affects the rate of progress in some lessons.
23. The quality of teachers' questioning of pupils varies across the school. In the better lessons questions challenge pupils to think about how they arrived at an answer or invite speculation. The teacher might lead with "*Why do you think?*" or "*What might happen?*" However too often the questions seek simplistic answers and are not incisive enough in developing speaking or thinking skills.

⁷ Stepping stones: show the knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes children need to learn during the Foundation Stage in order to achieve the Early Learning Goals.

⁸ Early Learning Goals: these are the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage. They refer mainly to achievements children make in connection with the six areas of learning: communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; personal, social and emotional development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical development and creative development.

24. Practical and group work is well thought out, particularly in art, music, history and dance. The use made of computers to help pupils learn is good.
25. All teachers are aware of the pupils on the register of special educational needs but the individual education plans are not drawn from the assessments teachers make and consequently do not form a regular part of lesson planning. Teaching is sensitive and generally attention is given to ensuring that the work set is appropriate and progressive. Learning support assistants are well qualified, experienced and skilled at giving support and encouragement in a range of activities. They have a positive impact upon pupils' attitudes and their learning.

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

26. A key issue for action from the last inspection was to improve curriculum planning by giving greater attention to the expressive arts and to ICT. The school has made good progress in this aspect and the range of opportunities available to all pupils is now good in art, music, dance and design and technology. What is provided for pupils in ICT has been improving since the last inspection and the new computer suite has brought provision up to expected levels.
27. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities, which support and add to the physical education and arts curriculum. They have a broad appeal and include boys and girls in their membership. Some take place after school and some in the lunch hour so that they encourage pupils from Year 1 upward to participate.
28. The curriculum provided for children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory, and an appropriate range of experiences is provided across all six areas of required learning. However, tasks sometimes do not ensure that prior attainment is being precisely built on and children are not always given sufficiently challenging tasks. The key areas of literacy and numeracy are not given enough attention, and staff expectations are not always high enough in these areas.
29. The quality and range of learning opportunities provided for six to 11 year olds are satisfactory. The appropriate statutory curriculum is in place. The school curriculum is sufficiently broad to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum, but it is not sufficiently balanced. The overall teaching time is low, giving too little time for the foundation subjects to ensure good continuity and progression in research and investigative skills. The time given to teach religious education is below the percentage required by the locally agreed syllabus. The school does not make best use of the time available in the school day. The assembly at the start of the day, immediately after registration, breaks the warm and positive start encouraged by all teachers and also means that younger pupils going back to class for literacy or numeracy have to sit and listen for well over half an hour. The amount of time taken by different teachers for reading at the start of each afternoon is variable and not always used to best advantage.
30. There is a satisfactory focus on the basic skills of literacy and numeracy with the strategies for these being consistently applied in classrooms. This has helped improve teaching and consequently the rate of pupils' learning. However, the school is not yet doing enough to accelerate progress in the development of pupils' spoken language in a planned and systematic way. Whilst attention is given to

developing pupils' investigative skills in science and mathematics in Years 4, 5 and 6, this is underdeveloped in other years.

31. The school is successful in ensuring equal opportunities for all pupils and provision in this area is good. The school is working hard to raise the self-esteem of boys and their involvement in the curriculum and the life of the school. Most boys are keen to learn.
32. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, have full and equal access to all aspects of the curriculum. The school makes appropriate provision for pupils with special educational needs, however this aspect of the school has not developed sufficiently since the last inspection, when it was judged good. Recent changes put into place following the appointment of a new co-ordinator in September have not yet had time to take effect. The special educational needs Code of Practice is fully implemented and effective procedures are in place for the identification and assessment of these pupils, but the quality and use of individual education plans are not rigorous enough to ensure that pupils move off the register. A good level of additional support is provided, particularly for those with behavioural and specific learning difficulties. Pupils from the SEBD base⁹ are very well supported whenever their programme permits them to join the main school classes and their timetable allows them to join the main school for lunch and play times.
33. The school's provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good. Appropriate sex and drug education is taught within the curriculum. The recently completed 'Improving Self-Esteem and Confidence in Children and Adolescents' project¹⁰ for parents and staff, has had marked effects across the school, especially with boys who are now much more willing to learn.
34. The overall provision of pupils' personal development through spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and remains strong. The school continues to make good progress in developing this aspect of its work, which has had a significant impact on the good attitudes, behaviour, and relationships of pupils who develop well personally and greatly improves their confidence and self-esteem.
35. Pupils' spiritual development is promoted appropriately through planned collective worship often involving Christian ministers from the local community who come into school to lead assemblies. However, apart from this, there are insufficient planned opportunities across the curriculum to promote spiritual awareness and opportunities are often missed to give pupils a sense of awe and wonder. High priority is given to equipping pupils with a clear set of moral values, which is effectively reinforced by a clear pastoral care policy. This is consistently applied by the whole staff who provide pupils with good role models, and who encourage them to behave well, show consideration to others and develop a clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong. Social development is strengthened by the warm relationships between adults and pupils. Pupils are encouraged to work well together in class and play amicably on the playground. The promotion of values such as friendship and caring for others forms an important part of school life and is well provided for. Cultural development is promoted appropriately through visits to local places of interest including Dorchester museum and by visiting theatre groups and artists. However, more needs to be done to make pupils aware of the rich diversity of cultures within the wider community.

⁹ SEBD base; see note 1. This aspect of the school's provision is reported separately in paragraphs 62-65.

¹⁰ ISECCA: a local education authority initiative.

36. The school has developed good links with the local community. Leaders from the community are welcomed into the school to speak to pupils about their roles and issues, and community volunteers also regularly help with listening to readers. Visits to Weymouth College to complete a design and technology project were seen as both enjoyable and productive, and the models pupils produced are in a very attractive display in the school. This activity has had a big impact on standards in design and technology in school as well as raising the profile of pupils in the wider community. A local firm of solicitors recently sponsored an in-school art course and exhibition which in addition to attracting many parents into school, also contributed to the high standards of art work produced by pupils. Pupils fund raise and contribute to a number of charities each year. Other activities, for example when pupils make and sell cakes, are used to promote initiative and enterprise. The school also holds training activities for both parents and friends in computing and literacy that are helping to raise parental expectations.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

37. The school has satisfactory systems in place for assessing pupils' attainment and progress in most areas of the curriculum. Recent developments in evaluating test and performance data have led to a greater understanding of where boys and girls differ in attainment and in those aspects of English and mathematics where attainment falls significantly behind expectations. Subject co-ordinators are using this information to support staff in planning and also in providing training. However, assessment systems are not yet complete in some important subject areas, for example, in mathematics where there is no comprehensive and consistent assessment and record keeping system which track progress in lessons.
38. Test data is being used to set year group targets but how these are to be achieved is not clear. Although the pupils have individual targets to help in this process, these are often too vague and do not always identify specific attainment to be reached. Consequently the progress of individuals towards a particular attainment in number or reading is not clearly linked to raising the attainment of the cohort.
39. Simple, but good, assessment is done at the start of the children's time in nursery. There is an extensive assessment undertaken again at the start of the reception year but this assessment takes too long as staff do not start teaching properly during this process and it leaves too little teaching time during the first term, especially in the key areas of literacy and numeracy.
40. The information gained from assessments is not used regularly to set precise targets for the most urgent aspects that individual pupils need to improve, and this includes pupils with special educational needs. Consequently some basic skills such as correct letter formation are getting missed. The overall quality of individual education plans is satisfactory. However, whilst some of the targets set are sufficiently detailed and achievable in the short term, many are less precise and do not always indicate the small crucial steps necessary for pupils to achieve to make progress. Reviews of individual plans are usually termly. Whilst this might be appropriate for pupils with more profound needs, for many pupils reviews and assessments need to take place at much closer intervals.
41. The school's procedure for monitoring the personal development of pupils is good. The school has a comprehensive and effective behaviour policy, which is applied

consistently by teachers and support staff. The policy contains strategies to deal with poor behaviour, including time given to offenders to consider the implications of their actions. A system of rewards and sanctions results in most pupils adhering to the school's clear code of conduct. The effectiveness of this policy is shown by the reductions in behaviour problems since its introduction two years ago. Any bullying is dealt with seriously by staff and strategies are in place to channel the dominance of the bully into more fruitful activities as well as providing help for the victims.

42. The school is caring and supportive, which makes a significant contribution to the quality of education existing in the school. Teachers and support staff know the pupils and their families extremely well, and deal sensitively with any problems as they arise. Classroom assistants are enthusiastic and committed to improving attainment levels, and they provide invaluable support to individual pupils. The pastoral care provided by staff is good. Discussion groups are used effectively throughout the school in encouraging pupils to take responsibility for their own actions, and also as a vehicle for communicating any fears or concerns in a non-threatening climate.
43. The school records attendance electronically and regularly monitors attendance patterns. Parents are aware of their responsibility to authorise and notify the school in the event of their child's absence, and any unsatisfactory absence is followed up by the school and if necessary the education welfare officer, who makes regular visits to the school. The school also takes advantage of contributions from other professionals including a speech therapist and educational psychologist. The educational behaviour unit is particularly successful in developing strategies, which allow pupils to be integrated back into mainstream education.
44. There is an effective child protection policy in operation in the school that is responsive to concerns. There are effective measures in place for ensuring pupils' health and safety, with regular inspections and annual risk assessments of the buildings and equipment. Any minor injuries to pupils are handled competently by staff trained in first aid, and are fully documented in the school's accident book. The storage of design and technology tools in one of the resource areas creates a safety hazard and should be relocated to a safer area.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

45. The school forges very good links with parents. A very high proportion of parents returning the questionnaire (97 per cent) felt comfortable in approaching the school with questions or problems. This high level of satisfaction underpins the recent successes in turning around pupils' attitudes to school.
46. The quality and scope of information provided to parents on curriculum topics and other school activities are good. The school prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents are well constructed and contain detailed and comprehensive information. The annual report is especially inviting, with school and community information interspersed with competitions and useful advice to parents on helping their children with mathematics and English. Parents receive regular informative newsletters, and important school policies, including behaviour and attendance documents are shared with parents in order to gain their commitment. The success of these activities over the last two years has seen a dramatic reduction in pupil behaviour problems and an increase in pupil attendance. Questionnaires are used

to gather parents' perceptions on the effectiveness of important policies, such as behaviour; these also have the effect of improving parental commitment.

47. School reports are comprehensive and give parents a clear picture of their child's progress. These are supplemented by formal and informal discussions on pupils' performance but these invitations are not always taken up. Parent governors are active in providing a positive link between parents and school. Homework books provide a valuable communication link between home and school and a number of parents find these useful for encouraging a home-school dialogue. Parents with children with special educational needs are fully involved in reviewing individual education plans.
48. The school encourages parents to become involved in the learning process. Governors and volunteers giving up substantial amounts of time to help supervise activities made the recent residential trip to Springhead possible. As well as this, parents assist in the classroom and with extra-curricular activities, including the cycling proficiency course held in the summer that could not take place without their help. There is also an active and successful parent, teacher and friends' association, which further promotes home-school liaison, and raises considerable funds to boost school resources and give pupils chance to see theatre groups.
49. Arrangements for starting school are satisfactory, with parents and carers visiting the nursery three times as part of the induction process. The written information given to parents when their children start school is clear but lacks information about the curriculum for this age group. Parents assist well with playing games in the nursery and are able to borrow story boxes to encourage their children to read and play with at home, which is good. Not enough is done, however, to encourage parents of younger children to get involved in school activities at the start of the day.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

50. The headteacher has a very clear vision for the school and in a little over a year has skilfully brought all the adults together to work as team. His strong commitment to providing the best for all pupils however difficult their behaviour has led to robust procedures, consistent approaches to rewarding pupils and building ever stronger links with the families and carers of the pupils. These are having a positive impact on standards and pupils' achievement.
51. All aspects of leadership and management have continued to improve since the last inspection two years ago and the role of the subject co-ordinators, a key issue at the last inspection, is being addressed well, in spite of recent changes in staff. The headteacher has re-aligned responsibilities to make the most of the personal skills of his staff. Co-ordinators now have the time to monitor teaching in some identified areas of the school linked to areas of greatest need and also the time to evaluate standards. The teaching teams have been strengthened by the appointment of three team leaders - a system that is very much in its early days but which acts as an effective channel for school policy ensuring that the improvement plan is constantly reviewed and updated. These documents are succinct and clear. They provide a very good tool for the governors to check on the action being taken to address issues from previous inspection reports.
52. The governors offer a tremendous amount of support to the headteacher and carry out their statutory responsibilities conscientiously. The headteacher's

straightforward approach to sharing information means that the governing body understands the strengths and weaknesses of the school very clearly and that governors are informed fully on any action being taken. Reports are of a good quality. Their own evaluation strategies are informal but work well. The large number of parent governors helps keep the local community constantly informed of the progress and improvement in school. Their resolve to support the school and their children is helping raise expectations of parents and staff. The governors share attainment information with the headteacher but do not yet systematically evaluate the impact of their spending on teaching and learning.

53. Monitoring of teaching and learning is effective. Now that pupils' attitudes are positive throughout the school, teachers are demonstrating real commitment to improving their practice. There is regular monitoring of literacy and numeracy with clear targets given on how to improve practice. The headteacher has taken the lead in evaluating performance data and involves team leaders in the findings. Information is being gathered on the performance of pupils at the end of each year group in English and mathematics and realistic predictions made of each year group's performance. The school development plan and literacy and mathematics development plans identify the proportions to reach expected levels but they do not go far enough in identifying how this is to be achieved.
54. Whilst boys attainment is identified as a concern there is no specific identification of which boys could achieve expected levels and how individual education plans could help in this process. The school now needs to bring together its assessment information and data information targets to ensure that planning of lessons is addressing these needs for individuals and groups.
55. The overall efficiency of the school is good. The school is making very good use of all the resources available to it. There is less expertise in the authority for tackling the raising of achievement in schools with characteristics similar to this school and changes in the local authority team to support raising attainment in numeracy and literacy has been broken by changes in personnel. The funding of additional teaching assistants has benefited those pupils with behavioural problems and the training for them has meant that they work effectively in most lessons. Funds have been used to improve the quality of the environment both inside and out and this has benefited pupils and the parents. The school is an attractive place to come and work in and this has raised morale amongst staff and pupils. Pupils are justly proud of their school. A large carry forward has been retained to offset the possibility of a continued fall in numbers. Much of this carry forward is scheduled to support the continued and increased release of staff to monitor and train other teachers.
56. Performance management is in place. Out of necessity, with the headteacher newly arrived 12 months ago, it has focused on improvements in teaching quality and does not fully address standards. However the process is effective. Staff have been trained to act as appraisers and all members of staff including teaching assistants and meal time staff are part of the process.
57. The very recently appointed special educational needs co-ordinator is committed, enthusiastic and diligent in his co-ordinating role. Although newly in post he ensures that all pupils have access to any necessary support and that their needs are met in lessons. The co-ordinator liaises well with fellow teachers and is in regular contact with local authority services. Early contact is made with parents as soon as concerns are noted about their children and parents are involved in all

stages of the Code of Practice. The experienced governor is knowledgeable, helpful, well qualified and gives the co-ordinator very good support in his new role.

58. Since the last inspection there have been significant teaching staff changes, including the appointment of the present headteacher, who is the fourth new headteacher of the school in the last four years. High priority has been given to retaining good staffing ratios of both teachers and learning support assistants, which has a positive impact on pupils' learning, particularly those with special educational needs who benefit from generous staff allocations. The caretaker works hard to improve the school environment to effectively support pupils' learning.
59. The school's accommodation is good and the administration is effective. The administrative staff are efficient and use new technology well to contribute to the smooth running of the school. The school is amply provided with good academic and recreational facilities, which fully meet the needs of the National Curriculum. The school library is underused as a resource with limited opportunities for pupils to undertake independent research. The layout of the classrooms is used effectively to promote learning, and the displays of pupils' work in the classrooms and the communal areas are of a good standard and reflect current school projects. Good use is made of the enclosed outside playing fields and environmental areas, providing a stimulating learning environment which benefits especially pupils' physical education and science activities. Since the last inspection, both premises security and the outside play areas have been improved and the recent additions of a quiet garden and an enclosed five-a-side/netball pitch are set to enhance the enjoyment felt by pupils of the school's amenities. The nursery and SEBD units are spacious and their play areas are safe and in good condition. All the accommodation and external areas are very clean and well maintained by caretaking and cleaning staff.
60. Resources overall are satisfactory. However, information and computer technology generally is underused in the teaching of pupils with special educational needs.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

61. In order to build on the achievements of the last two years the governors and headteacher and staff should;
- (1) **Raise standards in English, mathematics, science and religious education by:**
 - a) increasing the opportunities for pupils to speak and write for different purposes in a range of subjects; (Paras 83 & 85)
 - b) developing pupils' mathematical reasoning skills and investigative skills in science; (Paras 30, 87, 90 & 99)
 - c) providing more opportunity for pupils to use literacy and numeracy skills by carrying out research and enquiry; (Paras 84 & 97)
 - d) ensuring teachers have the knowledge and expertise to follow the agreed syllabus of religious education. (Paras 10 & 148)
 - (2) **Improve the balance of the curriculum and provide for the systematic development of spoken language by:**

- a) providing sufficient time in the week to teach the religious education syllabus; (Paras 10, 29 & 145)
 - b) identifying in medium-term planning how the Programmes of Study for speaking and listening are to be taught. (Paras 7, 30 & 83)
- (3) **Use time more effectively by:**
- a) considering how best to use the start of morning and afternoon sessions; (Para 29)
 - b) meeting the recommended minimum taught hours of lessons; (DfEE Circular 7/90 Management of the school day). (Para 29)
 - c) timetabling the use of the library. (Para 84)
 - d) monitoring the effectiveness of 'quiet reading times' on pupils' reading development. (Para 84)
- (4) **Improve the use of assessment information by:**
- a) identifying pupils' most urgent attainment targets (level descriptors) in English, mathematics and science, and using these in lesson planning; (Paras 37, 40, 86, 94, 96 & 107)
 - b) involving all teachers in continuing to develop an agreed method for formative assessment of pupils' reading, writing and problem solving abilities and their investigative skills in science; (Para 37)
 - c) analysing results of tests to identify particular weaknesses in pupils' knowledge and understanding; (Para 38 & 109)
 - d) making use of assessment information to improve the quality of individual education plans by setting short achievable targets. (Para 32)
- (5) **Improve the quality of teachers' planning and raise expectations in reception year through to Year 3 by:**
- a) monitoring planning to ensure that there is sufficient challenge for different ability groups; (Paras 17, 81 & 96)
 - b) identifying specific learning outcomes for different ability groups; (Para 17)
 - c) improving the information given to teaching assistants in the daily planning so they are clear about what is to be learnt; (Paras 106 & 121)
 - d) identifying and addressing the 'stepping stones' to learning in the Foundation Stage planning. (Paras 20, 28 & 66 –73)

Minor issues, which should also be considered as part of the action plan:

Provide more opportunities for developing children's knowledge and understanding of the world. (Para 75)

Improve the school's approach to teaching pupils the knowledge and understanding needed for life in a multicultural society. (Para 35)

OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES

SEBD Base

62. The school hosts a local authority support unit for seven pupils who all have statements for social, behavioural and emotional difficulties. Two boys who are nominally in the base are integrated fully into the mainstream of the school, whilst one pupil, with support, joins a Year 6 class for mathematics and another for games. The remainder of pupils is taught in the base except for a weekly dance session, which they share with a number of Year 6 pupils.
63. Individual education plans formulated from pupils' Statements of Special Educational Need are detailed and contain clear individual learning and behavioural targets. Whilst the overall standards of literacy and numeracy are well below national expectations, the pupils are making good progress in relation to their prior abilities. The school places a high priority on integrating pupils from the unit back into classes and there is evidence that a number of pupils have made significant progress towards achieving nationally expected levels in the end of key stage tests. Some pupils make gains well above expectations. Teaching in the unit is good overall. Teachers know their pupils well and have high expectations of both learning and behaviour. Lessons are well planned and assessments of pupil performance and behaviour are used very effectively to modify learning activities. Particularly detailed records are kept of pupil progress and behaviour. Patience, concern, supportive behaviour management and carefully directed questioning characterise good lessons. The pace is appropriate and good attention is given to praising efforts and raising pupils' self-esteem. The teaching assistants who work closely with the teachers give good support. They have an equally extensive understanding of the needs and abilities of individual pupils. The high quality teaching and support have a positive impact upon the good progress that pupils make in both learning and behaviour.
64. The base is well managed by the teacher in charge, who together with her teacher colleague and learning assistants is both experienced and well qualified. The school has very good links with all concerned agencies and good liaison is maintained with the local education authority special needs inspector. The links with parents and carers are good. They visit the school regularly for reviews and discussions. Formal reviews of individual statements take place annually, but the school also encourages informal meetings with parents to discuss progress or concerns.
65. The base is well resourced, it is brightly decorated and provides an attractive learning environment. However, it is effectively isolated from the main school and this restricts the opportunities for interaction between all pupils and teachers. The school has recognised that to make best use of the base and the expertise of the teaching and support staff, the base needs to be situated within the main school building. Proposals have been made to the local education authority to this effect.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	69
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	45

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	10	17	39	0	0	0
Percentage	3	14	26	57	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. When the total number is substantially less than 100, add care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one and a half percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR-Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	20	281
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	96

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR-Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	13
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	106

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	22
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	31

Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	7.3	School data	0.9
National comparative data	5.2	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 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	17	13	30

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	8	9	11
	Girls	12	12	8
	Total	20	21	19
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	67 (66)	70 (59)	63 (71)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	12	12
	Girls	12	8	11
	Total	21	20	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	70 (66)	67 (72)	77 (78)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	21	19	40

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	9	13
	Girls	12	12	17
	Total	20	21	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	50 (56)	53 (60)	75 (71)
	National	75 (70)	72 (68)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	7	11	13
	Girls	13	12	18
	Total	20	23	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	50 (65)	58 (79)	78 (71)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	232
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	5	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR-Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	14
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18
Average class size	23

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	13
Total aggregate hours worked per week	375

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	33
Number of pupils per FTE adult	10

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	6.4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	6.6
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2

Financial information

Financial year	2000-01
	£
Total income	710,170
Total expenditure	662,553
Expenditure per pupil	2,202
Balance brought forward from previous year	10,294
Balance carried forward to next year ¹¹	57,911

¹¹ The carry forward included a large element of roll over for pupil number adjustments, capital works, additional teaching assistants salaries to the end of the academic year as well as devolved funds for the provision for pupils with special educational needs. The anticipated carry forward for this financial year is substantially reduced.

Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	275
Number of questionnaires returned	120

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	54	40	4	0	2
My child is making good progress in school.	49	44	2	3	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	36	55	5	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	28	45	7	4	16
The teaching is good.	67	30	0	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	46	41	8	2	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	71	27	2	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	63	35	0	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	45	45	6	0	4
The school is well led and managed.	64	34	0	1	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	52	43	2	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	31	41	13	1	16

To assist in interpreting these percentage please note that figures do not always round up to 100 per cent. One per cent represents one response, five per cent represents six responses, 50% represents 59 responses.

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

66. The last inspection found that the youngest pupils in the school received a good start to their education and this is still the case. The adults working in both the nursery and the reception class provide safe, happy and caring environments for children in their first years of school. They make good provision for the children to develop personal and social skills through play and both classes successfully emphasise working and learning together. Progress is, however, not consistent between the two classes and in all areas of learning. In the reception class not enough attention is given to the guidance developed by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA)¹² and expectations are low. In both classes literacy and numeracy development is not structured sufficiently for children to build on what they already know and can do.
67. Children enter the school with low levels of attainment, particularly in communication, language and literacy and in mathematical understanding. This is confirmed by an initial assessment of what children can do and understand. Progress towards the Early Learning Goals in personal, social and emotional development and in physical development is best and they reach the expectations. In other areas of their learning, progress is steady but the majority of children are still below average in their communication, language and literacy, mathematics and general knowledge and understanding at the end of the reception year. Teaching is satisfactory, but there is not enough continuity as children move from nursery into the reception class to ensure children maintain a good rate of learning. Planning has improved since the last inspection but more needs to be done to track children's progress and refine the expectations for different children.

Personal, social and emotional development

68. The adults give good support, and children develop motivation and confidence. They make decisions for themselves and show pride in their achievements. Teaching is good in this area in the nursery and satisfactory in the reception class and most children reach expectations by the time they leave the reception class. The adults manage the nursery class well, making sure children have chance to take decisions for themselves. They organise equipment such as glue pots or small play equipment so that children learn to take charge of putting away and getting out what they need. However, in the reception class such independence is not sufficiently extended. Further opportunities need to be found to develop their independence and self-confidence; for instance, by having a system for children to self-register when they arrive in the classroom or to record when they have completed a task. Expectations in this aspect are too low.
69. The adults provide a good role model for the children, which encourages the children generally into treating both adults and other children with friendship. Adults make it clear how children should behave and mostly children behave well. A small but significant number of boys are not always aware of the needs and feelings of

¹² QCA: The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority produce guidelines on how the Programmes of Study can be organised through each key stage. These guidelines are available for schools to use as part of a scheme of work.

others and will call out during discussions or disrupt each other's play. Support in the lessons is well directed to support these children so that they other children get the most from the activities.

Communication, language and literacy

70. Children make reasonable progress in language and literacy development. Teaching is satisfactory. The adults make sure that there are enough carefully structured activities for children to listen and talk. Stories, such as 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears' are used well and children are helped to make up their own versions with a collection of props. For example, bears' ears and Goldilocks' plaits provided the stimulus for a lovely retelling by a group of five year olds. In the nursery class, the role-play area is used very well to encourage focused speaking. Adults model conversations well in a baker's shop when pretending to buy cakes. In the fire station, adults use a real phone connection from the other end of the room to ask for help in putting out a fire. By experiencing role play, in the bear's house and the shop, children are developing confidence with spoken language, including mathematical vocabulary. By the time they are five very few children ask questions or develop conversations at average levels.
71. Staff use some appropriate strategies to develop writing, reading and phonic skills but these do not go far enough to pick up on the language deficit the children experience. For instance, in the nursery, too few labels are provided. The labels used mainly consist of one word, and adults miss opportunities to draw attention to them. Similarly, in the reception class adults model writing infrequently. Not enough written questions or writing prompts are provided to give children something to aim at when trying to write for themselves. This aspect of literacy is not planned for systematically and consequently many children leave the reception class unable to write with gaps between their words and many letters formed incorrectly.
72. There is an effective programme for developing children's knowledge of letter sounds and children are making reasonable progress in acquiring other reading skills. They enjoy books, hold them the right way and understand that the pictures tell a story. A few can talk about what they are looking at. Only one is able to name any parts of a book. Very few of the older children have a working understanding about how books work or are able to act as readers. A few reach average standards by the end of their reception year but the majority are below average.

Mathematical development

73. Few children will attain the level expected of them by the time they leave the reception class. Progress though the Foundation Stage is too slow, although some good activities are provided to encourage children to count in the nursery with the use of rhymes and songs such as 'Ten little fire men'. There are not enough planned activities for children to develop numeracy through exploring pattern, sorting and matching number in the reception year. Consequently, these early experiences and knowledge gained in the nursery are not built on sufficiently or quickly enough. Too little is done to challenge children to learn more and expectations are too low in this area. For instance, at the time of the inspection pupils in the reception class were forming long patterns of ones but were not being challenged to make a more complex pattern.

74. Children are learning to use some mathematical language satisfactorily to describe measures, position and shapes, but children have difficulties retaining this language. Staff and parents provide a weekly session of games in the nursery, which are often mathematical in nature, and this is working well.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

75. Overall, children's knowledge and understanding of the world at the end of the Foundation Stage is likely to be well below the level expected nationally for children of this age. Teaching is satisfactory. In the reception class, staff encourage the children to talk about themselves and their families; for example, at the circle time on Mondays, which helps increase their confidence and attainment in speaking and listening to others.
76. The weekly planned themes are used well to develop children's limited knowledge and understanding and thought goes into providing good activities that develop children's experiences, for example, hatching eggs, or the visit of a local fire engine. In the nursery, staff provide many good opportunities to extend understanding through role play and small world play. Consequently, children's progress is better in the nursery than in the reception class. Good use is made of photographs to record activities and special events that help children gain a sense of the past. Children are becoming familiar with the seasons and their local environment. Practical teaching opportunities are sometimes missed to further children's knowledge and understanding, for example, by the close study and drawing of autumn leaves or a walk round the school grounds to watch the trees change colour and talk about local landmarks.

Physical development

77. Children achieve well in this area and reach standards that are similar to other children by the end of the reception year. They learn to balance on the stilts and run and jump with care and consideration for others. The youngest children cut materials and threads to precise lengths, which they then stuck down onto their collage of 'red'. Each class has a good outdoor play area, with exciting wheeled and other play equipment. The children are very enthusiastic and there are always sufficient adults available to help teach them how to make the best use of the equipment. However, the chance for this area to enrich children's social development through planning for co-operative play is underdeveloped.

Creative development

78. By the time they leave the Foundation Stage, children's attainment in creative development is below that normally expected for children of this age. Creative activities are provided by staff regularly and children learn to express themselves through role play, music, movement and art. They make sound progress with their creative and aesthetic skills. Many pupils join in satisfactorily with singing rhymes and songs and clapping rhythms. Teaching is satisfactory. However, in a music lesson the learning goals were too broad and opportunities were missed to learn different ways of striking or shaking the instruments or learn the language of dynamics and pitch.
79. The teachers provide a suitable range of activities for art and crafts; for example, in the nursery, children are provided with a very wide range of red materials to form a collage. Children express their ideas in drawing, painting, cutting and sticking, and

modelling. Their drawing shows a range of skills with the highest attainers showing some features of a person, while omitting most detail. However, most children draw only basic heads with arms coming from them. Children's art is well displayed.

ENGLISH

80. Tests show that standards in English are well below those typical for 11 year olds nationally. Inspection findings broadly reflect these results, although there is continued improvement. Significant numbers of the current Year 6 are attaining below average standards in reading and writing but the proportion of pupils who achieve average levels is in line with expectations. There are a small number of pupils reaching above average levels.
81. When pupils enter the school they lack confidence in speaking and their listening skills are poor. Reading skills are poorly developed and very few have sufficient pencil control to enable them to write. Despite making satisfactory progress, a large majority of pupils start Year 1 with standards below expected levels. Similarly in Years 1 and 2 satisfactory progress is made but inspection findings confirm that attainment is below average in speaking and listening, reading and writing by the age of seven. Whilst there have been improvements in teachers' planning as a result of the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy too much of the work planned for six, seven and eight year olds does not sufficiently challenge pupils.
82. Nine, ten and 11 year olds are achieving well. Boys in particular show greater motivation and enthusiasm for English. This is very much related to the quality of teaching and much higher expectation of work at the upper end of the school. The introduction of initiatives such as additional literacy support by trained staff and the reading recovery programme have helped all pupils including those with special educational needs to attain satisfactory standards in relation to the targets set on their individual education plans.
83. The lack of consistent opportunity to develop speaking and listening skills across the school inhibits pupils' development of vocabulary to explain their ideas or communicate their findings. A few teachers encourage careful listening and clarity of speech but a more consistent emphasis is required to improve the pupils' vocabulary for each subject. In many lessons there are insufficient opportunities provided for pupils to express themselves by putting forward their own views or encouraged to fully extend their own vocabulary. As a result many pupils are hesitant when speaking and lack an enriched vocabulary when explaining their thoughts and often need support to pronounce words correctly. Some teachers are satisfied with a few word answers and do not encourage pupils to respond confidently to questions by discussing constructively and using appropriate specialist terms relevant to different subjects. There is an inclination for many pupils to sit passively unless specifically guided by teachers to contribute orally.
84. The school has successfully raised pupils' attainment in reading by encouraging pupils to read regularly at school and at home. Boys have responded well. Most pupils now regularly take their reading book home and many belong to the local library. Although attainment in reading falls short of expectations by 11 most pupils make good progress and achieve satisfactory standards by regularly practising their reading. Standards are similar to those expected in Years 3, 4 and 5 reflecting the recent improvements in attitudes and teaching. Higher attaining pupils develop fluency and confidence in their reading by using the appropriate strategies to decode new words. They identify the main characters and express opinions about the main events in the story. There are a significant number of pupils who are unable to use context clues to read unfamiliar words in more challenging texts. The school has recognised that many pupils, particularly boys, become disenchanted

with reading and have tried to improve the range of interest books available. A new attractive reading scheme has recently been purchased to encourage younger pupils to read but the school library is a dual purpose room and is not used sufficiently for accessing information books. There is little or no planned opportunity for pupils to use the reference section of the library and this restricts pupils' learning of research skills. The group reading session timetabled after lunch is not always used effectively to improve reading skills and techniques.

85. Writing standards are improving across many curriculum subjects particularly at the upper end of the school. Pupils learn to organise their writing coherently and by the age of seven higher attainers write logically sequenced sentences on the Land of Dinosaurs and a list of instructions for getting ready for assembly. Too many pupils make numerous spelling mistakes in their writing and their handwriting skills are not well developed. Pupils' progress in writing is limited in Years 1 and 2 by the large number of low level work sheets which prevents pupils expressing themselves and developing style. Older pupils' are achieving well, but the limited vocabulary of lower attaining pupils affects their overall attainment, particularly in imaginative writing. Nine, ten and 11 year olds use a wide range of styles and write for a range of audiences and purposes, for example, imitating the style of famous authors such as Leon Garfield and Gillian Cross. Many pupils know the conventions of drama scripts, poetry, direct speech, and instructions and prose writing. In the best instances punctuation and grammar skills are in line with national expectations but many fail to reach these standards. Spelling is often weak with insufficient opportunities to use dictionaries to check spellings and enrich vocabulary. Handwriting and presentation are given high priority in many classes at the upper end of the school. However, standards are variable particularly for younger pupils where handwriting lacks fluency, good joins and insufficient attention is given to good presentation. There are limited opportunities for younger pupils to write about their scientific findings or express their thoughts in extended writing, for example, in history and geography, which restricts their overall progress in writing.
86. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Teaching in most lessons in Years 4 to 6 is good. Most teachers' planning is detailed and closely linked to the National Literacy Strategy framework, which ensures that all pupils including those with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in their lessons. However, in Years 1, 2 and 3 the expectations are too low, pupils are insufficiently challenged and the pace of lessons is too slow. In the best lessons, learning is very effective because pupils are well motivated and challenged by the high expectations of work and behaviour set by teachers at a brisk pace and homework is used effectively to support pupils learning. Useful assessment procedures have recently been introduced including broad targets set for individual pupils. The school recognises that assessment needs to be developed further to set specific targets to improve teaching and learning. The co-ordinator has opportunities to monitor teaching and learning. She has identified the need for more opportunities to develop pupils' oral skills including drama presentations and for pupils to use word processing more effectively in order to develop extended writing. Literature is beginning to make a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through the analysis of different stories in a wide variety of settings, although multi-cultural awareness is underdeveloped.

MATHEMATICS

87. Tests show that seven and 11 year olds are attaining standards below those expected in numeracy and other areas of mathematics. Inspection findings broadly reflect these results although standards are higher amongst 11 year olds due to the effectiveness of numeracy teaching in Years 4, 5 and 6. Standards have continued to improve steadily from a low base four years ago, but the proportion of pupils with poor reading and comprehension skills remains high and this affects their attainment generally. Pupils have a reasonable grasp of recorded methods for dealing with numbers and calculations but they lack confidence when applying these skills to their work without help, and are unsure about their mathematical knowledge in areas such as space and measures.
88. Although boys have attained significantly less well than girls in the tests there are a greater proportion of boys on the register. There was no noticeable differences in the way boys are taught and throughout the school boys are achieving at similar rates to girls.
89. Standards achieved by the present Year 2 pupils are below those expected. Seven year olds lack confidence and security in a range of number facts to ten. Whilst they can complete many exercises, there is not enough asked of them during the lesson to challenge their thinking. The work set is narrowly number based. When investigation work has been set they are not encouraged to work logically or systematically. The development of mathematical thinking in this stage of their learning is not given a high enough priority.
90. Lower attaining pupils in Year 3 are making good progress. The teaching assistant provides practical support in helping pupils set out ways to find doubles and successfully encourages pupils to use a 100 square rather than their fingers. Lessons are well prepared and the introduction provides a good level of expectation that holds pupils' attention. However, not enough time is given to asking pupils how they solved some of the problems nor in directing pupils to make use of their number facts when doubling larger numbers. Learning is better in the top set and pupils benefit from hearing how others worked out solutions. These pupils are generally more articulate and the teacher makes good use of this to move pupils forward.
91. Standards in Year 4 are average. Most of the pupils use strategies such as near doubles or rounding up to the nearest ten when calculating mentally. Their knowledge of measures and shapes is also close to expectations. Lower attaining pupils are improving at a good rate whilst higher attaining pupils are beginning to reason and speculate, for example on how one could calculate a perimeter by using a formula. The teacher skilfully involves all abilities in the main part of lessons using carefully chosen questions and plenty of praise.
92. Standards in Year 5 are average and proportions of higher attaining pupils are close to that expected. Progress in the lessons on fractions is very good for the average and higher attainers. The relationships between fractions of different values are practically demonstrated and a strong visual element is maintained throughout the taught part of the lesson. Questions are well matched to different abilities in the class and this means that as the lesson progresses pupils become increasingly confident to have a go at establishing a relationship between fractions in the same family. In another lesson, the material was too challenging for a small but significant number of pupils, uncertain about what a fraction is and how fractions relate to each

other. This adversely affected what they could get from the otherwise well prepared lesson.

93. Teaching is satisfactory in Years 1, 2 and 3 and good in Years 4, 5 and 6. Individual lessons are well planned and all teachers place emphasis on the three parts of the lesson. Teachers' knowledge of the National Numeracy Strategy is stronger at the upper end of the school and this allows them to respond quickly to how pupils are thinking and to develop the relationships between known number facts and how these inter-link. Teachers use homework sensitively to improve pupils' knowledge of number facts as well as encouraging investigations into such things as units of measure and shape. Some teachers are very clear about the language to be used during the lesson and this is clearly displayed. In these lessons learning is more effective.
94. The setting of pupils for mathematics in Years 3, 5 and 6 is benefiting average and higher attaining pupils. The teaching in these sets is good, very good, and in one lesson outstanding. They are making good progress in their lessons and over time. The teaching invites them to reflect on their thinking processes and encourages systematic ways of working. The sets for lower attaining pupils are taught satisfactorily. The short session mental mathematics is delivered well and the focus part of the lesson is also successful. The pupils lacking in personal confidence in mathematics are encouraged to answer questions and clear modelling of the process helps them with their later work. However, scrutiny and observation of lessons shows that the pupils are not set work that is specifically matched to what has been identified by teacher assessments or earlier performance data. Consequently those receiving support from teachers or teaching assistants benefit, but those working independently are not sufficiently extended and do not make enough progress in this part of the lesson to significantly close the gap in attainment.
95. In Year 3 there is greater differentiation in this part of the lesson, but in both sets the challenge for pupils should be greater. Here the weaker part of the lesson is in the focused teaching. Not enough opportunity is given for pupils to demonstrate or discuss how they would solve a problem and teachers do not model the mathematical thinking to support their understanding.
96. The co-ordinator has succeeded in establishing the numeracy framework throughout the school. She has maintained the momentum of improving the quality of teaching through many lesson observations and feeding back to staff on analysis of work. There is still a need to improve elements of the taught part of the lesson and more observations are needed to help move this forward. The co-ordinator is very well organised and uses all available time to secure small improvements in the subject knowledge and expertise of teachers. Some of the planning in Years 1 and 2, however, does not have enough detail when set against the bold learning objectives set out in the numeracy strategy.
97. The school has a good range of resources for supporting number and lesson planning. Despite a collection of 'big books' these were not in use during inspection. The pupils' use of information technology to support and develop mathematical knowledge, skills and understanding is undeveloped. This is because the suite is relatively new. Whilst computer skills are being quickly built up pupils are not yet secure in mathematics programmes. In other subjects mathematics is

rarely used, and this means that the pupils' chance to use their skills in a variety of circumstances is limited.

98. Test results are used to track pupils' progress and set targets for the cohorts, based on the information obtained, but the link between this data from the test results and the targets is not sharp enough. Teachers are not tracking pupils' attainment through the targets rigorously enough and some teachers still have unchecked targets from September. Better use of these is needed to clarify objectives for individual pupils.

SCIENCE

99. Since the previous inspection, test results in science for seven and 11 year olds have risen overall at just below the rate of improvement seen in other schools nationally. Inspection evidence indicates that a number of significant factors affect pupils achieving more highly. These include the large number of pupils with special educational needs, the lack of challenge in some lessons and an insufficient emphasis placed on independent investigative work, where pupils can use the knowledge they have gained in science. The major factor restricting achievement is the pupils' weak language skills. They find using science specific language difficult and this restricts the quality of the observations they make. For example, 11 year olds could not recall the words *dissolve* and *solution* although they clearly understood the process of creating a solution by dissolving a solid in a liquid.
100. Inspection shows that whilst some pupils are working at and occasionally above the levels expected nationally, the majority of pupils are working below this level. Most pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 achieve well during lessons because of good, challenging teaching and the majority build on their previous knowledge and understanding.
101. Six year olds know that animals need food and water to survive and understand that humans and their pets have different diets. Good use is made of a tale from Winnie the Pooh to teach ideas about 'appropriate' food but discussions are brief and limited by their general knowledge. In Year 2, pupils take part in a novel game situation to show their understanding of what they need to do to be *healthy*. The class teacher uses the situation well to support their moral development when reinforcing the importance of accepting that it is not always possible to win and that the winners should be congratulated. Most pupils have a reasonable understanding of a healthy life style, but as with the younger pupils, discussion and recording are limited by weak vocabulary and writing skills.
102. Pupils in Year 3 show expected levels of learning when planning and carrying out a simple experiment to test the absorbency of different types of paper and card. At the end of the activity it was clear that many understood that materials could be described as *absorbent* and *non-absorbent*. A few more able pupils make confident predictions and offer reasonable suggestions to describe the observed results. They have some understanding of *fair testing*. One pupil suggesting that, "*You have to use the same amount of water*". However the majority of pupils find it difficult to describe their findings. Few of their observations are recorded even though a list of findings is written up on the board. Year 5 pupils show enthusiasm and interest when considering the diet of people in the workhouse, in a science lesson linked to a history topic on the Victorians. They use numeracy skills appropriately to interrogate a chart giving the weekly allocation of various foods and a number of pupils incorporated science specific language in their discussions such as *protein*, *carbohydrate* and *vitamins*. Many understand that a healthy diet needs both protein and vegetables.
103. Year 6 pupils make reasonable predictions about what will remain when a liquid evaporates from a solution. One pupil outlines the condensing and distilling process quite accurately, but within the class there are a considerable number of pupils who do not understand what *prediction* means and ask for *hypothesis* to be explained. Most of the more able pupils do understand the concept of *fair testing*, with one pupil pointing out the need to use identical petri dishes and another suggesting that different pipettes would be needed to ensure that the solutions did not mix. In

another Year 6 class pupils show good recall of previous lessons when planning and carrying out an experiment to discover the quickest method of dissolving sugar in water. They use scientific language such as *solvent*, *dissolve* and *evaporation* when discussing their method. However their limited language, noted elsewhere in the school, restricts development. For example, when the class is asked the question, only one pupil readily offers that when a solid is dissolved in a solvent it forms a *solution*. In another example it takes the teacher some time to get the pupils to suggest that "*Heat the solution*" is more scientific than "*Make the solution hotter*". It is clear that many pupils understand the concept but do not have the appropriate vocabulary to answer questions. However, when carrying out the experiments groups show great enthusiasm and interest. They use their good understanding of *fair testing* to identify the most efficient method of creating a solution and in the final part of the lesson make clear links with their predictions and findings. They arrive at a sound conclusion. Good links are made with numeracy when pupils compare temperatures and times and consider how best they might record their results in future lessons – an agreement that all times should be reduced to seconds. Although there are some exceptions in Years 4, 5 and 6, currently pupils are not confident in deciding for themselves how to record the data they have collected. Neither are they given sufficient opportunities to use the schools' software and hardware in ICT to measure, record and interpret data gained in science activities.

104. Throughout the school pupils with special educational needs achieve appropriately in comparison with their prior attainment. Generally teachers and assistants support pupils well in the classrooms. In the best lessons they are given individually focused, challenging work, which allows them equal access to the science curriculum and they make expected progress as a result.
105. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, with some good and very good teaching observed in Years 5 and 6. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed. In the majority of lessons teachers plan their work carefully. They set appropriate objectives and provide a suitable range of activities including practical experimental work. They make good use of their own secure subject knowledge and adopt a range of challenging questions to focus pupils' attention and extend their thinking and understanding. Overall, the management of pupils in science is good. Teachers are competent in ensuring a smooth transfer from discussions into practical work and time is used efficiently. In one very good lesson on solutions the teacher made good links with prior learning and set very clear objectives. She also made good use of scientific vocabulary and encouraged pupils to make comments and predictions. As a result the pupils were fully involved in the lesson and concentrated well. They moved quickly and confidently into the investigation using their time well and working at a very productive pace.
106. Teaching assistants give good support, particularly to those pupils with special needs. Their work is obviously most effective when teachers share the learning objectives with them, and are given clear instructions on which aspect of learning to concentrate upon. Some individual educational plans lack detail of the small essential steps that lead to learning and progress which limits the effectiveness of the teaching assistants and has a negative effect upon achievement in science for pupils who are guided by them.
107. Science teaching has some shortcomings. When the teachers' expectations are too low, the lessons lack a brisk pace, and planning does not take account fully of the

different abilities of pupils. Teachers provide pupils with too many photocopied sheets for recording work, and rely too heavily on textbook exercises. This reduces the opportunities pupils have for developing independence in learning. Some teachers appear to lack confidence in the investigative aspect of science and consequently there is some imbalance in the provision of this part of the Programme of Study.

108. The analysis of pupils' work shows that there is considerable variation in the quality of presentation, but that overall it is unsatisfactory. This is mainly as a result of pupils' poor language and writing skills and the large number of pupils on the special educational needs register. There are examples of helpful supportive marking where pupils' mistakes are identified and suggestions made as to how they might improve.
109. The co-ordinator has overseen the introduction of a scheme of work based upon a modification of the QCA document, and a curriculum learning map has been introduced to ensure appropriate cover of the various areas of science. The results of statutory tests are analysed to highlight strengths and weaknesses. Currently however there is little evidence to indicate that such analyses are being used to focus teaching on the weaker areas. The school has prioritised the development of pupils' scientific vocabulary and has identified the need to develop and consolidate scientific skills through a greater emphasis on investigative work, and the use of information and computer technology to measure, record and interpret data.

ART AND DESIGN

110. The attainment of seven year olds is in line with that generally found across the country, while for 11 year olds it is better than that normally found. This is better than the last time the subject was inspected¹³. Good teaching and high expectations in Years 4, 5 and 6 are the reason for this improvement.
111. Seven year olds make acceptable progress. They draw and paint satisfactorily. When illustrating their weekend activities in their books or painting pictures, most represent the human figure with reasonable proportions and use materials with acceptable skills. When encouraged they are able to evaluate their work and suggest improvements.
112. Older pupils are developing good knowledge of different artists. They are beginning to understand the methods and styles that these artists used, and try to apply this knowledge to their own work. At the time of the inspection strong examples of this were Aricoboldo's fruit and vegetable faces and Picasso portraits. Pupils are developing a good level of skills using diverse media; for example, a digital camera to pursue ideas of patterning with everyday objects, and charcoal in a study of light and shadow in their own faces. They are encouraged by skilful and knowledgeable teaching to look closely, experiment with materials, and develop their abilities to appraise their own work and make improvements. Pupils use sketchbooks to try out ideas well and are not reluctant to adjust or try again without always being directly asked by the teacher. Skills of observational drawing are underdeveloped in Years 1, 2 and 3.

¹³ The last inspection of foundation subjects and ICT was made in 1997. The last inspection two years ago was a Section 3 inspection. A full inspection of standards of foundation subjects was not carried out at that time.

113. Throughout the school, links with other subjects such as history and geography provide good opportunities for pupils to practise skills such as printing rooftops and painting factory buildings as part of their display of work in Year 5 about Victorian Britain. Pupils with special educational needs and challenging behaviour are integrated well in lessons, and the practical nature of the learning objectives helps ensure that all pupils have the opportunities to make progress at the same rate as their peers.
114. The subject is well managed. The policy and whole-school planning documents are well written and helpful. The co-ordinator is clear about how the subject needs to develop. In the planning there is a good balance between art as a subject in its own right and its use to support learning in other areas. The school has used outside visits and experts well. There is a good art and design exhibition of the school's work each summer. The school has a good range of art materials and a good, recently bought collection of reproductions of artist's work, but it needs more books to support the subject. Art is displayed very well in the school and helps to enliven the buildings, especially at Key Stage 2.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

115. It was only possible to see one lesson during the week of the inspection. Judgements on teaching, attainment and progress are based on that one lesson, as well as discussion with pupils and teachers, an analysis of pupils' work in books and on display, and a scrutiny of teachers' planning. Standards are in line with expectations for pupils aged seven and better than is typically found for 11 year olds. For pupils with special educational needs, at both key stages standards are in line with those of their peers. This is better than the last time the subject was inspected.
116. Design and technology is rightly given good emphasis with the emphasis on the stages of the design process. Evidence from the work seen shows that pupils are taught the different stages of designing an object from the initial idea through sketches and consideration of materials. They move on to the making stage, and then evaluate their efforts. Seven year olds draw and label designs for a puppet rabbit, complete with carrot, satisfactorily for their age group. They go on to use a range of materials and methods to make their puppets. They work safely. The evaluation stage and key vocabulary were left out from an otherwise successful lesson, which reduced the impact of the learning.
117. In Years 4, 5 and 6, standards are good, as a consequence of good teaching. Teachers use outside visits and experts well; for example, working with the local college, pupils observed machinery on a building site and drew sketches to help them build model cranes and diggers back at school. Experiences such as these improve their attitudes to creative lessons. Pupils learn skills of making hinges and connecting materials, and use these skills to make model buildings and eye-catching display boards. There are good links with other subjects; for example, with religious education, by the designing and making of a torana, a Buddhist welcome gateway, in Year 5.
118. The school follows a well-written, detailed scheme for design and technology, and teachers' planning for this area is generally good. Co-ordination of the subject is good. Information technology is used a little to support the subject, but this is too limited in scope.

GEOGRAPHY

119. There was insufficient work in the sample from Years 1 and 2 to judge the standards reached by seven year olds. Six year olds are familiar with places around the school and talk about why they prefer one to another. Most pupils show the main features of their favourite places, such as the railings in the playground, trees and bushes. Their pictures show a reasonable awareness of scale and relative positions. Very few pupils in the Year 1 class describe how you might get to a place in school such as the bear's house or the computer room but directional and positional language are weak.
120. There was no geography taught further up in the school during the inspection, as the main focus was on history studies. Work looked at in the books of pupils from Years 3 to 6 meets expectations. There is a broad coverage of the Programmes of Study with good emphasis on local and world studies. The pupils have produced extensive work from their studies of the Caribbean islands, rivers and the locality of Weymouth. During discussions with pupils they showed a sound knowledge of what the places were like and how they are similar or differ from each other. Nine year olds are clear about the main features of Weymouth and what distinguishes it from other parts of the country and describe how places such as the clock tower have changed over time because of pressures from traffic and tourism. Ten year olds are knowledgeable of the countries and continents of the world. There is very little evidence of geographical skills such as field work being developed in pupils.
121. Teaching in the one lesson observed was satisfactory. The first part of the lesson was taught to both Year 1 classes whilst the individual and group tasks were planned by each of the teachers. The main objectives of the lesson were delivered well and good use was made of digital photographs to check on pupils' knowledge of the school and what key features distinguished one place from another. The teacher's planning in one class set out specific questions that were used effectively to develop the pupils' knowledge about their favourite places around the school. In the other class the objectives were sufficiently challenging for the different abilities but were too general in nature. There was not enough guidance given to the teaching assistants to show how they could develop pupils' answers, for example by recording information on a school map or listing different viewpoints.
122. From the sample of work it is evident that teachers are secure in delivering the knowledge part of the schemes of work. A great deal is covered in the time given to geography. However, there is not enough emphasis given to developing fieldwork skills across the school and geography does not fulfil the potential it has for encouraging enquiry and developing pupils' numeracy and data-handling skills. Literacy skills are developed adequately with the use of some good quality books and other reference materials.
123. Geography is in a better position than it was at the last inspection and the co-ordinator has done well to establish a cycle of topics through the school in her first year that deal systematically with geographical knowledge. She is aware of some of the areas for improvement following her review of planning and work is well placed to continue raising the standards reached by pupils.

HISTORY

124. Standards of attainment are in line with national expectations by the age of seven and 11 and similar to those when the subject was last inspected. Apart from two

history lessons, observations are based on information from other sources including discussions with pupils and examination of past and present work including displays.

125. By the age of seven pupils are developing a sense of chronology and an awareness of differences between the ways of life now and in the past. Pupils compare playground days past and present, and items found in a Victorian house, with the present day. Pupils learn about the everyday life of famous people and events such as Florence Nightingale and The Great Fire of London. By the age of 11 pupils knowledge of daily life and customs of various periods is extended by studies of the ancient Greeks, Romans and Victorians. During inspection there were some good examples of older pupils using extended writing to support their learning such as the life story of a poor Victorian and extracts from the Greeks at war.
126. Most pupils including those with special educational needs have positive attitudes towards history lessons. During inspection older pupils were captivated by the very good role play of their teacher participating in a typical Victorian classroom scene where they were very responsive to instructions. The teaching in this lesson was particularly effective. The teacher drew pupils into the daily routine of Victorian life. Pupils show high levels of interest when they use historical artefacts or have the opportunity to visit places of interest such as Scaplens Court to gain first hand experiences.
127. The teaching in one lesson was particularly effective. In the best lessons, teachers have good subject knowledge and confidence in handling the lesson. They manage pupils well, have high expectations and a good understanding of the needs of pupils. This has a positive impact on the learning of all pupils including those with special educational needs. Resources are used well to support pupils' learning and teachers use good questioning and demonstration techniques. The new co-ordinator has clear ideas to develop the subject including providing more artefacts, identifying further investigative work and using local history more effectively to support pupils' learning. She currently has no opportunity to monitor teaching and learning across the school and accepts that assessment procedures to support pupils' learning are underdeveloped.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

128. Seven and 11 year olds reach standards that are in line with national expectations. This is a significant improvement on the findings of the last inspection. At that time the development of staff expertise in teaching the subject and the range and quality of equipment were identified as priorities in the school development plan. Resources are now good with a well-appointed computer suite and 15 hours of delegated teaching support allocated each week. Each classroom also has a computer and printer. Through their ongoing training teachers are developing a secure knowledge and understanding of the subject. This has improved their confidence and enables them to set clear tasks for the pupils and give easily understood explanations of what the pupils are expected to learn.
129. Seven year olds are confident when using the computer and are quickly developing appropriate key board skills. Most pupils open programs independently and understand the technical vocabulary such as *space bar*, *mouse*, *click* and *text*. Pupils correct and reorganise the text by using the insert and delete functions. They use the shift key to type in capital letters and save and print their work with

increasing independence and confidence. Five year olds are progressing quickly and many already use the tools of an art programme to add names to their pictures.

130. Eleven year olds create a presentation using sound buttons, sound pictures and sound word art. The slides included a picture drawn by them, transferred from an art programme and inserted into a slide. This is demanding work and pupils are ready to use these skills in their history and geography work. Eight year old pupils use a word processor in a literacy activity to punctuate text taken from the files 'Three Bears' and 'Goldilocks'. Many are confident at deleting the lower case letters and replacing them with capitals. Having correctly punctuated the texts they save them and print them independently. These skills are recently acquired but are secure and reflect the good support they are receiving from teaching assistants.
131. In a Year 5 lesson good use is made of a computer spreadsheet to develop pupils' understanding of how formulae work and by the end of the lesson they calculate the cost of buying 20 items within a limited budget using the formula = [sum b1:b20]. Eleven year olds use *Lego control* to investigate physical phenomena in science linked activities. A group of pupils on the special educational needs register log in and use the program to reinforce prefixes in an activity linked to the literacy hour.
132. Many pupils enter the school with very little experience of using computers and relatively few have access to them at home. Pupils, including those with special needs, make good progress throughout the school in developing their skills because of well-informed teaching and appropriate support.
133. The quality of teaching and support is good overall. Lessons are well planned with good links made to other subjects, particularly English, mathematics and science. Teachers make good use of and encourage the technical vocabulary of ICT and this helps pupils' understanding of the subject.
134. There is good management of ICT by the well-informed and enthusiastic co-ordinator. Plans are in hand to continue the monitoring of teaching already started by the headmaster. There has been a considerable commitment to improving provision for ICT involving the governors, headteacher and staff but there are no whole-school assessment procedures in place to monitor the progress and attainment of pupils. However, proformas have been prepared and will soon be introduced allowing for the appraisal of both effectiveness of teaching and the coverage of the subject.

MUSIC

135. By the end of both key stages pupils reach levels higher than that normally seen which is an improvement since the last time the subject was inspected. These good standards are due to strong, knowledgeable teaching and enthusiastic pupils who enjoy their music lessons very much. This good level is achieved without the added benefit, at the present time, of locally provided specialist musical instrument teaching.
136. Six and seven year olds sing unaccompanied tuneful answers to questions sung to them by the teachers. They sing sweetly, and are able to control the pitch, tempo and volume of their voices well. Seven year olds sing a good range of songs and hymns enthusiastically with a good level of concentration and will to improve. In music lessons, with simple instruments pupils are able to hold a rhythm using

unpitched percussion satisfactorily to accompany a familiar song about a ship's captain. They can explain the names of the instruments and the type of sounds they make. Pupils are also able to evaluate their own efforts, know their strengths and weaknesses and how they can improve their class's performance.

137. Teachers use good techniques to captivate and involve pupils. For example, in Year 5 the teacher used a lively Irish folk tune as a stimulus. The pupils individually improvised a rhythm using a variety of sounds, adding a regular beat and different volume to their performances that they happily shared with others. They have good knowledge of tempos and rhythms and work well together as a whole class, developing their understanding of a 'tune' to a poem made up by the teacher especially for the lesson.
138. The good quality of teaching in music is spread evenly across the school and this benefits pupils' learning. It is best where teachers have good skills and very good personal knowledge in the subject, such as in Years 2 and 5. The school has good systems and schemes in place to ensure that pupils' knowledge, skills and confidence in the subject are being systemically developed through the school. The subject is well led. Teachers regularly record pupils on tape to assess the progress of skills, and are currently developing a straightforward assessment and record-keeping format.
139. Pupils with special educational needs and challenging behaviours are integrated well in lessons, and the practical nature of the learning objectives helps ensure that all pupils have the opportunities to make good progress. Pupils are given good opportunities to perform outside school in the local community, which includes older pupils taking part in a choral festival with other schools. Information technology is not currently used in the subject.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

140. Evidence from the lessons observed found standards in games, gymnastics and dance met expectations. Standards in these areas are higher than when the subject was last inspected. Most pupils reach the standard in swimming expected by the time they reach 11 years of age. Pupils make expected progress in developing control and co-ordination in gymnastic skills when running, jumping and balancing. They are broadening their experiences of dance activities and are acquiring competence in a range of games and swimming skills. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported, and take a full part in lessons. They make sound progress and achieve results that enhance their self-esteem.
141. Seven year olds demonstrated sound co-ordination and moved with control and care around the hall. They have some knowledge of the circulatory system and one or two know that blood is pumped around the body and that the heart beats faster with exercise. In gymnastic lessons they are able to create simple movement sequences involving stepping, jumping and skipping actions and pay careful attention to good body positions. They handle apparatus safely and co-operate well when setting it up. In the playground they move freely, and most take part in a range of chasing games.
142. In a Year 3 lesson pupils show expected levels of ball control and co-operate well with each other when practising soccer skills. They responded well to suggestions made by other pupils on how they could improve their technique. The teaching of a

dance lesson to Year 4 pupils led to some outstanding responses to a track from *West Side Story* because the teacher encouraged all the pupils to evaluate and study their performance. Time was set aside for pupils to rehearse any changes they wanted to make and the teaching assistant was particularly effective in maintaining the positive involvement of two special needs pupils. In a Year 6 lesson pupils also worked well together to create partner sequences in gymnastics. Pupils included matching, following and balancing actions in their sequences and chose challenging ways of beginning their work on the apparatus. In extra-curricular activities older pupils show appropriate understanding of attacking and defending techniques in netball and soccer games.

143. Overall the quality of the teaching is satisfactory. Teachers are enthusiastic about teaching physical education, and have appropriate subject knowledge. The co-ordinator is successfully developing colleagues' confidence using a training programme that includes dance and gymnastics courses. There is still too much emphasis placed on completion rather than on the quality of movements performed in some lessons. In the best lessons, planning is good with clear learning objectives outlined, appropriately challenging tasks set and a brisk pace maintained. Teachers and teaching assistants are attentive and supportive giving plenty of practical advice that ensures successful learning.
144. The subject is well led by the enthusiastic co-ordinator who has overseen the production of the physical education policy document and the current scheme of work that is shortly to be reviewed. The provision for a number of extra-curricular activity benefits the physical education curriculum as does the experience gained by older pupils at an outdoor activity centre.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

145. Standards in religious education are lower than those expected within the locally agreed syllabus. This is a similar picture to that reported last time the subject was inspected. The amount of time allocated to the subject is below that recommended and evidence from inspection indicates that not all teachers are consistently following the Dorset agreed syllabus. Evidence is drawn from five lessons, teachers' planning, a limited amount of work and displays, together with discussions with staff and pupils.
146. Six and seven year olds develop an awareness of Christianity and the Old Testament through the stories they hear such as Zacchaeus, the feeding of the five thousand and David and Goliath. They learn about Christian festivals and are familiar with the major events of the Christmas story. However, it was evident during inspection that most pupils had little knowledge of stories from either the Old or New Testament. Seven year olds begin to understand customs and celebrations of world religions and appreciate the importance of the Torah and Shabbat to Judaism.
147. Pupils in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 learn the symbols associated with Christianity by visiting the parish church and there are regular visits from the local vicar and other Christian denominations. Pupils appreciate the importance of pilgrimages in world faiths and compare their significance to Christians, Muslims, Jews and Buddhists. They use information books to make posters to display the actions of various world religions. However, many pupils are confused when comparing the beliefs and values of different religions. Pupils have opportunities to examine personal

thoughts and feelings in their religious education and personal, social and health education lessons.

148. The quality of teaching is satisfactory but pupils do not learn as well as could be expected. Many pupils' are not interested in the subject and concentration is difficult to maintain when the lessons are not well matched to pupils' needs. Some teachers lack subject knowledge and fail to offer appropriate resources to support pupils' learning. Insufficient time is allocated to the teaching of religious education lessons resulting in pupils not finishing their work. There are limited planned opportunities across the curriculum to promote spiritual awareness from an early age and insufficient attention is given to making pupils aware of the diversity of cultures including religions within the wider community.
149. The co-ordinator has built up more resources and artefacts to support learning. She has an opportunity to see pupils' religious education books but no opportunity to monitor teaching. Assessment procedures are underdeveloped. There is a regular auditing of standards but this does not lead to significant improvements in teachers' lesson planning. The co-ordinator has identified the urgent priority to review the syllabus to ensure there is a clearly defined logical approach to developing pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding in the subject.