

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **RADIPOLE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Weymouth

LEA area: Dorset

Unique reference number: 113717

Headteacher: Mrs Sue Stockham

Reporting inspector: Mr Graham R Sims  
28899

Dates of inspection: 18<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> November 2002

Inspection number: 247396

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Radipole Primary School Radipole Lane Weymouth Dorset
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr William Stone
Date of previous inspection:	17 <sup>th</sup> November 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
28899	Mr G R Sims	Registered inspector	Information and communication technology	The school's results and pupils' achievements How well pupils are taught How well the school is led and managed What the school should do to improve further
09146	Mr M Brennand	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well the school cares for its pupils How well the school works in partnership with parents
22397	Mr S Fowler	Team inspector	Science Design and technology	The quality of the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils
22352	Mrs F Gaywood	Team inspector	Geography History Religious education	Special educational needs
20230	Mrs J Clayphan	Team inspector	Art and design Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage English as an additional language	
20846	Mr A Wilson	Team inspector	English Music	
10611	Mr M C James	Team inspector	Mathematics Physical education	Equal opportunities

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Radipole Primary School is situated in a northern suburb of the seaside town of Weymouth, in Dorset. It has 426 pupils on roll between the ages of 4 and 11 and is much larger than most primary schools. There is a significant imbalance in the number of boys and girls in three year groups, although numbers across the school are almost equal. The school is popular, and an increasingly large proportion of pupils comes from outside the school's immediate catchment area of Radipole. While the socio-economic backgrounds of most pupils are typically average, there are increasing social and economic problems within the local area, although very few pupils take up their entitlement to free school meals. Very few pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds and no pupils are at an early stage of learning to speak English. The percentage of pupils who join or leave the school, other than at the usual times of joining or leaving, is below the national average. Fourteen per cent of the pupils have been identified as having special educational needs, which is an average proportion. Eighteen pupils receive help from outside specialists for a range of needs, including dyslexia, various learning difficulties, and emotional and behavioural problems. Six pupils have statements of special educational needs. Children start school in the September of the year in which they have their fifth birthday. At the time of the inspection, all children in the Reception classes were attending for mornings only. The attainment of children when they start school varies considerably, but overall is at a similar level to others of their age. Although the staffing situation is relatively stable, the school has suffered from the long-term absence of a number of teachers in recent years.

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

Radipole Primary School is a good school, with a number of very good features. Consistently good teaching enables pupils to make good progress in their learning and to achieve standards which are above average in most aspects, apart from writing. The school is led and managed very well by the headteacher. She is supported very well by her two senior teachers and a team of dedicated teachers and assistants, who provide pupils with a good range of learning opportunities. There is a happy and productive atmosphere throughout the school, which provides very good value for money.

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

- The school is led and managed very well by the headteacher and her two senior teachers.
- Staff cater well for pupils' personal development, resulting in positive attitudes and very good behaviour and inter-personal relationships.
- The teachers provide consistently good-quality teaching which helps pupils to make good progress and achieve standards which are above average in many subjects.
- The school caters very well for pupils with special educational needs.
- The provision for music is particularly good, and pupils achieve high standards in this subject.
- The school promotes an active partnership with parents, who feel welcome in school.

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

- The quality of pupils' writing, particularly in the junior school.
- The way teachers mark pupils' work and help them to learn from their mistakes.
- The accommodation for children in the Reception and pupils in Year 5.
- The school's use of information and communication technology.

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan, which will be sent to parents and carers of all pupils in the school.*

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

There has been a good degree of improvement since the last inspection in November 1997. The school has tackled its previous key issues very effectively. The provision for, and standards in, geography and religious education have improved. The quality of the teaching in Year 3 has improved so that pupils maintain the good rate of progress achieved in Years 1 and 2. Procedures for assessment are now very good and the information gained is used well when planning the curriculum. Subject coordinators are having a much greater impact in leading their subjects and helping their colleagues. There are much better procedures for strategic planning, which is now carefully linked to the school's annual budget. Considerable efforts have been made to improve communication with parents, and this is now a strong feature of the school. Other improvements have also been made. Teaching is now monitored more effectively which has resulted in improvements to the overall quality of the teaching. Governors have become more actively involved in strategic planning and have a greater awareness of what is happening in school. Enthusiastic input from the music coordinators has resulted in

further improvements to standards and the quality of pupils' participation in musical activities. A computer suite has been installed, although the full benefits have not been realised because of unreliable equipment. Standards in all subjects tested at the end of Years 2 and 6 are higher now than at the time of the last inspection and have improved at a similar rate to the national trend.

## 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			similar schools <sup>1</sup>	Key	
	all schools				2002	
	2000	2001	2002	2002		
English	C	C	B	A	Very high	A*
Mathematics	B	D	A	A	Well above average	A
Science	C	D	B	A	Above average	B
					Average	C
					Below average	D
					Well below average	E
					Very low	E*

In 2002, the school's national test results at the end of Year 6 were above the national average in English and science and were well above average in mathematics. The overall results were well above the average for similar schools. In all three subjects, results are better now than at the time of the last inspection, and have risen at a similar rate to the national trend. The school sets itself appropriately challenging targets and was successful in meeting them in 2002. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 2 were just above the national average, and the average for similar schools, in reading and writing and were well above average in mathematics. Since the last inspection, there has been a gradual rise in standards at the end of Year 2, in line with the national trend, but more marked in mathematics than in writing.

Although it varies widely, children's attainment when they enter the Reception classes is typical for their age. Children make good progress in all areas of learning in the Reception, and by the time they start Year 1, most children exceed the expectations for this stage of their education. The inspection findings show that pupils continue to make good progress in Years 1 and 2, and achieve above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. The standards in English observed during the inspection were higher than those obtained in last year's national tests, a result of good, lively and interesting teaching. Pupils continue to make good progress in Years 3 to 6. By the time they leave school, overall standards are above average in English, mathematics and science, although there is a big difference between pupils' achievements in reading and those in writing, which is the weakest aspect of their work. Although most pupils achieve the expected level of competence in information and communication technology, progress in this subject is not as good as in the other main subjects because the teaching is hampered by the unreliability of the school's equipment and insufficient opportunity for pupils to consolidate their skills. Standards in geography and history are also above average. Standards in art and design, design and technology, physical education and religious education are average. Overall, pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Most pupils enjoy school and have very good attitudes towards their work. They respond positively to their teachers and work hard to live up to the high expectations that the school sets. They are proud of their school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. The great majority of pupils behave very well both in and out of lessons, and the school is an orderly community. Pupils are polite to adults and to each other. In some lessons, pupils have a tendency to become very fidgety and a small number find it difficult to maintain their concentration.
Personal development and	Good. The school gives pupils numerous responsibilities to which they

<sup>1</sup> The school's results are compared both to the national average (i.e. the average of the results of all schools in England, where pupils took National Curriculum assessment tests at the end of Year 6) and to the average for similar schools (i.e. the average of the results for all schools whose pupils come from similar socio-economic backgrounds, determined by the eligibility of pupils within the school to receive free school meals).

relationships	respond well. As a result, they develop increasing maturity. Relationships between pupils and teachers are very good.
Attendance	Satisfactory. The level of attendance is just above the national average, although the nature of the seasonal holiday trade in Weymouth means that a number of pupils miss school because of holidays taken during term time. This can have an adverse effect on their learning.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 and 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	Good

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

The overall quality of the teaching is good and pupils are keen and enthusiastic in lessons. As a result, pupils make good progress in their learning throughout the school. The teaching was very good in almost a third of the lessons observed during the inspection, and no unsatisfactory teaching was seen. Teachers plan their lessons well, offering pupils a rich and interesting curriculum in which the teaching in one subject often enriches and aids pupils' learning in another. The school caters well for pupils of all abilities, and the recent increase in the number of teaching assistants has had a particularly beneficial impact in this respect, allowing more attention to be given to both the more and the less able pupils. Pupils with special educational needs learn well because of the very good procedures for identifying their needs and providing additional support. The teaching of both English and mathematics is good, but the writing skills which are taught well during English lessons are not consolidated as effectively as they could be through written tasks in other subjects. Another reason for the somewhat slower progress in the development of writing skills is the quality of teachers' marking, which is not analytical enough. Pupils are not given sufficient indication as to how they could improve their work and they do not spend enough time correcting their work and learning from their mistakes. Numeracy skills are consolidated well, particularly during the mental mathematics sessions, but also, when appropriate, in other subjects. The teachers' confidence in the teaching and use of information and communication technology varies widely, but is not helped by having to cope with computers which do not function reliably. There are some very good examples of the use of new technology but, generally, not enough use is made of it and pupils do not learn new skills as quickly as they do in some other subjects. Throughout the school, the very good relationships between staff and pupils and the pupils' positive attitudes to their work contribute significantly to pupils' learning.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The school fulfils statutory requirements. The curriculum for pupils throughout the school is rich and broadly based and very relevant to the needs of all pupils. Extra-curricular provision in the school is varied and extensive.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. The coordinator provides very good leadership for this aspect of the school's work. Procedures for identifying pupils' needs are good, and careful thought is given as to how to meet these needs. There are good links with external support agencies. A learning support teacher and a team of teaching assistants provide very good support for these pupils and contribute significantly to their progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The school has appropriate procedures in place for helping pupils with English as an additional language. At present, the school has no pupils who are at an early stage of learning English.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. There is good development of pupils' spiritual and cultural awareness as pupils are taught to value their own individuality and are made aware of the wide diversity and customs of other cultures. The provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good. Teachers provide positive role models, pupils are taught to take responsibility for their own actions, and many opportunities are provided for them to work together and help others.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. The pastoral care and attention given to pupils' welfare, health and safety is very good. The school has very good procedures for assessing pupils' attainment, and keeping careful track of their progress.

How well the school works in partnership with parents	Very good. The school fosters strong and positive links with its parents, who feel welcome in school. Parents are kept well informed about what is happening and their children's progress. Many parents help the school in practical ways, as individual helpers or through the active parent-teacher association, and make a good contribution to pupils' learning.
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## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides very good leadership and manages the school very well. As a result, the school runs efficiently and effectively. She receives very good support from the deputy and assistant headteachers, and subject coordinators have become much more effective leaders.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors fulfil their statutory obligations well. They are supportive of the school and have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are thus making a stronger contribution to the management of the school than at the time of the last inspection.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The headteacher's own analysis of the school and the school's development plan show that there is a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. The headteacher and her senior staff monitor teaching and learning effectively, but subject coordinators are not as involved as they could be in this process.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The school makes good use of its accommodation and resources, although greater use could be made of computers as teaching aids. Finances are managed very efficiently, as is the school administration. The school uses very good procedures to compare its performance with others, to consult parents, staff and pupils, and to ensure that its funding and specific grants are spent in the most cost effective way.
Adequacy of staffing, accommodation and learning resources	Satisfactory. The school is well staffed, particularly with regard to the number and quality of teaching assistants. The accommodation is satisfactory, overall, but poor for children in the Reception and pupils in Year 5. A new building project is to commence in the near future and should rectify this problem. Subjects are adequately resourced, but equipment in the computer suite is unreliable and this hinders pupils' learning.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children are happy at school.</li> <li>• The school promotes positive attitudes, and standards of behaviour are good.</li> <li>• The teaching is good and their children are making good progress.</li> <li>• The school is welcoming, and it is easy to approach staff with any concerns or problems.</li> <li>• The school is led and managed well.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The amount of homework given to their children.</li> <li>• The information they receive about their children's progress.</li> <li>• How closely the school works with them.</li> <li>• The provision for extra-curricular activities.</li> </ul>
[The views of parents are based on those expressed by the 19 parents who attended the parents' meeting and the 260 parents (65%) who returned the parents' questionnaire, some of whom also enclosed written comments]	

The inspection findings agree with all of the positive views expressed by parents, but find little justification in the concerns expressed by a small minority of parents. Numerous improvements have been made since the last inspection to ensure that the school works closely with its parents and that they are kept well informed about their children's progress. The school's procedures in this respect are very good, as is the very wide range of extra-curricular activities on offer. Parents have conflicting views about homework. Some would like more, others less. Inspectors observed appropriate use of homework during the inspection, but it is not always set consistently. The school has agreed to review this aspect of homework.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

#### **The school's results and achievements**

1. In the National Curriculum assessment tests at the end of Key Stage 1<sup>2</sup> in 2002, the school's results in reading and writing were just above the national average and the average for similar schools. In mathematics, the results were well above both averages. Since the last inspection, there has been a gradual improvement in the school's overall results, in keeping with the national trend. The most marked improvement has been in mathematics, but there has been little change in the results in writing. The range of attainment in reading was wide, with most pupils achieving the nationally expected standard of Level 2, and over a third achieving the higher Level 3. Although almost all pupils achieved Level 2 in writing, very few rose above this to achieve Level 3. In contrast, four out of five pupils achieved Level 3 or very close to this level in mathematics. The inspection findings show that the standards of pupils currently in Year 2 in reading and writing are above average and somewhat better than indicated by the previous year's national test results. This is the result of the school's focused attention on raising standards in English and consistently good teaching since these pupils have been in school. Pupils are achieving above average standards in mathematics. In both subjects, pupils are making good progress and achieving well.
2. The results of the national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2002 were above the national average in English and science and well above average in mathematics. When compared to similar schools, the results were well above average in all three subjects. This group of pupils made good progress between the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, and their overall results were well above the average for schools with pupils of similar prior attainment. Although there have been fluctuations in the school's results since the last inspection, notably in 1998 and 2001, the overall trend is one of improvement at a similar rate to the national trend. Standards in all three subjects are significantly higher now than at the time of the last inspection. In 2002, just over three-quarters of the pupils achieved the nationally expected Level 4 in English but, of these, over half achieved the higher Level 5. A higher proportion achieved Level 4 in mathematics, and almost all pupils achieved this level in science. In both of these subjects, over 40 per cent of the pupils achieved the higher Level 5. The inspection findings show that standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are above average in all three subjects. Pupils are making good progress and achieving well.
3. In 2002, the school achieved its targets in English and exceeded them in mathematics. Targets for the coming year reflect a rise in aspiration and are appropriately challenging. In addition to setting overall targets, the school sets targets for individual pupils. These are discussed and negotiated with the pupils, and are helping to focus their attention on what they have to do in order to raise their level of attainment. The school has been using its target-setting procedures effectively over the last two years.
4. The school has raised its awareness of the differing needs of individual pupils and works hard to ensure that all groups of pupils are given appropriate challenge and achieve as well as they can. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in both key stages in relation to the individual education plans and targets set for them. Standards are very carefully monitored. There is no evidence of any under-achievement, because their support and work

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<sup>2</sup> The words 'Key Stage' refer to the different stages of learning in schools. Children start school in the Foundation Stage, which caters for children aged 3 to 5 and generally refers to children who are in the Nursery, Reception or Early Years classes. Key Stage 1 is the first stage of compulsory primary education. It caters for pupils aged 5 to 7 and refers to pupils who are in Years 1 and 2. Key Stage 1 is also frequently synonymous with the term Infants. Key Stage 2 is the second stage of primary education. It caters for pupils aged 7 to 11 and refers to pupils who are in Years 3 to 6. Key Stage 2 is also frequently synonymous with the term Juniors. At the age of 11, pupils start Key Stage 3, which marks the beginning of their secondary education.

are well matched to their needs. This is largely due to the small-group arrangements made for them and the additional excellent support provided by the special needs learning support teacher. Although a few parents question whether the school does enough to stretch the more able pupils, no concerns emerged during the inspection in this regard. A significant proportion of pupils exceed the nationally expected standards, indicating that the school is enabling these pupils to achieve at an appropriate level. There are no pupils in school at present who are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language or who need additional English language support. There have been some pupils in the past who received help, and the headteacher is clear about the relevant person to contact and the procedures to follow when necessary. The school has a very small number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, and they are all well-integrated members of the school community, who make similar progress to their peers.

5. As in many schools, girls achieve better results than boys in English at the end of both key stages. The differences in attainment in mathematics and science are much less marked. The school is well aware of the different levels of attainment, and the English coordinators have devised a wide-ranging action plan in order to boost the attainment of boys in English. It is too early to judge how effective this plan has been, although first indications are that it is having success, and nothing was observed during the inspection to indicate that boys and girls are treated differently, or that either group is disadvantaged in the way they are taught.
6. Children enter the Reception year with broadly average levels of attainment. By the time they start Year 1, most children have achieved the expected standards in the required areas of learning, and almost half of them are working beyond the expected level, especially in communication, language and literacy and in their mathematical development. Children with special educational needs attain at lower levels, but still reach the expected standards in many aspects of the areas of learning. The good progress which starts in the Reception continues throughout the school, so that when pupils leave the school their overall standards are above average and they are well equipped for the next stage of their education.
7. The inspection findings show that the school's actions to improve standards in English are bearing fruit, particularly in Key Stage 1, where pupils are achieving above average standards in the four key areas of speaking and listening, reading and writing. This is an improvement on the previous year's national test results. The action plan is also having an effect, albeit less marked, in Key Stage 2. Here, overall standards are above average, but this reflects good standards in reading, speaking and listening and only average standards in writing. Speaking and listening skills develop particularly well in Years 1 and 2 as a result of the many different strategies used to encourage this aspect of the pupils' development. By the end of Year 6, most pupils are confident in speaking in front of others and they listen attentively to what others have to say. Individual attention from adults supplements the good teaching of reading in Years 1 and 2, so that pupils make good progress in learning to read. By the end of Year 6, even the least able pupils read independently, whilst the more able pupils read confidently from a good range of literature. Pupils' writing skills are developing well in Years 1 and 2, but the written work of pupils in Key Stage 2 is inconsistent in its quality and presentation. Pupils have good knowledge of the strategies they need for writing, but do not always put these into practice when asked to work independently.
8. Pupils of all abilities make good progress in mathematics and achieve above average standards by the end of Years 2 and 6. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a clear understanding of addition and subtraction and place value. Most pupils carry out a range of practical and problem-solving activities successfully and the more able pupils try to discover their own ways to find solutions. By the end of Year 6, pupils display good mental agility with numbers, and most are confident in using different methods of calculation or developing their own strategies for solving problems. Many pupils find mathematics an exciting subject, and use their mathematical knowledge well in other subjects, such as science and design and technology.

9. Pupils make good progress and achieve above average standards in science by the end of Years 2 and 6. Scientific skills are developed systematically throughout the school, and pupils achieve well in the aspect of investigative science. Pupils develop a good understanding of how their work in science relates to other areas of the curriculum, and features such as the recent science week help pupils to develop a good breadth of knowledge, understanding and skills. Pupils talk about their work in science with confidence. They present their work well, and clearly enjoy the subject because of the practical way in which it is taught.
10. The school's provision for, and standards in information and communication technology have improved since the last inspection and pupils achieve the expected standards in most aspects of the subject by the end of Years 2 and 6. However, the unreliability of the computers in the school's computer suite hinders pupils' progress and deters teachers from making greater use of new technology in other areas of the curriculum. As a result, although their overall progress is satisfactory, pupils could be achieving more.
11. In design and technology and physical education, pupils make satisfactory progress and achieve average standards by the end of Years 2 and 6. In religious education and art and design pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2 and achieve above average standards. The teaching is not quite as skilful in these subjects in Key Stage 2, where pupils make satisfactory progress and achieve average standards by the end of Year 6.
12. The school's provision for history and geography is good. The curricula for these two subjects are carefully thought out and complement each other well. As a result, pupils make good progress throughout the school, developing their skills well, and achieving above average standards. Provision for music is also good, particularly at Key Stage 2, where many of the lessons are taught by a subject specialist. Pupils make good progress throughout the school and achieve above average standards by the end of Year 2. Standards are well above average by the end of Year 6, boosted by the additional input from instrumental music lessons and additional musical activities organised by the school.

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

13. Pupils' attitudes to the school are good, and the high standards that were noted during the last inspection have been maintained. From the earliest days, the great majority of the pupils enjoy coming to school. Children in the Reception class have very good attitudes to learning. They concentrate well for considerable periods of time, sit quietly and listen well to their teachers and to each other. Pupils in the rest of the school respond positively to their teachers and try to live up to the school's high expectations. This is borne out by interviews with pupils and parents' responses to the inspection questionnaire, which indicate that the vast majority are happy in the school. In lessons, pupils are attentive, think seriously and settle quickly and sensibly to tasks. During the inspection, there were numerous occasions, particularly when the teaching was good, when pupils demonstrated high levels of enthusiasm. They generally work hard and concentrate well, when working as individuals or in a group. Pupils also have a positive attitude to completing their homework. Interest in extra-curricular activities is good. Many pupils support a range of activities, including a concert group and the junior choir, and clubs for mathematics, yoga, draughts, recorders, football and netball.
14. Pupils with special educational needs contribute well in lessons and are successful in joining in, often because of the very good support they have from teaching assistants in the classroom. This support is unobtrusive but ensures that pupils gather their thoughts appropriately. Other pupils have very mature attitudes and are very tolerant and helpful to them in lessons and outside, demonstrating acceptance and a caring attitude. This enables pupils with special educational needs to be fully integrated in all areas of the school's work, where appropriate.
15. Throughout the school, the pupils' behaviour is very good. In assemblies, at playtime, in the dining hall and when moving around the school, pupils show respect for one another by sitting quietly, holding doors open and being supportive of one another. Pupils behaved well in almost all of the lessons observed during the inspection. As a consequence, teachers are able to

concentrate on teaching, enabling pupils to make good progress. Most pupils listen attentively to the teacher but, in some lessons, particularly where the pace drops, pupils have a tendency to become restless and allow their minds to wander rather than listening to their teacher. Occasionally, some teachers are a little too tolerant of a lack of cooperation. These occasions are, however, in the minority. No incidents of bullying or racism were observed, and interviews with pupils confirm that such incidents are very rare. No pupils have been excluded from the school in the last year.

16. Relationships amongst pupils and between pupils and staff are very good. These positive relationships help pupils to develop self-confidence and raise their self-esteem. Pupils are generally polite and considerate to one another. By Year 4, pupils work well with a partner, quietly and with cooperation. Group work, much of it mixed gender, also encourages pupils to interact with each other and makes a good contribution to their personal and social development. Pupils make good progress in their personal development. By Year 3, pupils have the confidence to become members of the school council, which has significant responsibility. During the week of the inspection, pupils decided, of their own accord, that the arrangement for the use of footballs in the playground was not working and that it needed to be reviewed, a sensible decision, with which teachers and inspectors agreed. Older pupils are also involved as playground 'buddies', requiring them to show high levels of understanding and maturity. Pupils respond with maturity in many lessons but, in some lessons, they have a limited sense of urgency and do not always demonstrate the levels of independence and concentration which the teachers expect and which are shown in other lessons. The teachers spend much time establishing clear expectations in terms of listening and independence, but there are still a number of children who need constant support from an adult.
17. The level of attendance is just above the national average and, as such, is satisfactory. Little time is spent chasing up absences, as parents are quick to inform the school when their children are absent. The nature of the local economy, with its dependence on the holiday trade, means that a number of parents take holidays during term time, and this has a detrimental effect on the overall level of attendance and pupils' progress. The great majority of pupils arrive punctually each morning, which allows a prompt start to lessons.

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

18. The overall quality of the teaching throughout the school is good. Three-quarters of the lessons observed during the inspection were good or better, and almost a third were very good. The proportions of good and very good teaching were higher in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 than in Key Stage 2. Nearly all parents feel that their children are being taught well, and the inspection findings endorse this view. Although the teaching is stronger in some classes than others, a perception commented on by some parents, there are no classes in which the teaching is weak. When this consistently good quality teaching is given to well-motivated pupils, who behave well, try hard and are eager to learn, good learning results and accounts for the good progress pupils make throughout the school.
19. The quality of the teaching has improved since the previous inspection. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed during this inspection, and there was a higher proportion of good and very good teaching than before. There has been particular improvement in the teaching of geography and religious education, which was highlighted as a weakness in the previous inspection because it was not providing the pupils with sufficient breadth or depth in their learning. The strengths mentioned in the previous inspection, such as the teachers' generally good knowledge and expertise, their collaborative planning, the way they cater for the range of ability and previous attainment within their class and the good use of questions, have been maintained. Specific weaknesses, such as their over-reliance on worksheets and a lack of challenge for some pupils, have been rectified.
20. Improvements have resulted from the school's concerted efforts to develop teachers' expertise. A carefully devised programme of lesson observations has now become accepted practice and has given staff a common understanding of features of good teaching and has led to informed reflection and valuable professional dialogue. Through the development of

assessment procedures and analysis of the school's national test results, teachers have a much better awareness of how well their pupils are achieving and what pupils need to do in order to improve. The setting of individual targets for pupils has also been a helpful innovation. Whole-school aspects, which have been targeted for development, have also led to improvement, such as the development of pupils' writing skills which has resulted in a higher proportion of pupils gaining Level 5 in English than before. Planning procedures have improved, as staff now set out clearly what pupils are to learn which helps them to focus on the most important aspects of the lesson. The employment and effective deployment of many more teaching assistants has also had a significant impact on the quality of teaching and the support for specific groups of pupils, particularly those with special educational needs but also, indirectly, for the more able pupils.

21. The overall quality of the teaching of English is good, and its effectiveness can be seen in the improvement in the school's results in English at the end of Year 6 over the last five years. At Key Stage 1, the teachers have a good awareness of the differing needs of pupils within their classes and plan well to meet these needs. This awareness is not as well developed at Key Stage 2, and groups of pupils are sometimes given work which is either too hard or too easy for them, which leads to occasional restlessness or loss of concentration. Throughout the school, however, teachers demonstrate a good understanding of the National Literacy Strategy, which has been used effectively to raise standards, particularly in reading, speaking and listening. The structure of language is taught well during English lessons, and good emphasis is given to the acquisition of subject-specific vocabulary, for example in science. However, the pupils' writing skills are not consolidated as effectively as they could be through written work in other subjects, and teachers' expectations of what is acceptable writing in these situations are not always as high as they could be. There are also marked differences in the presentation and quality of work produced for some writing exercises and, for example, the recording of pupils' science investigations, which often show a much greater degree of care and interest.
22. The teaching of mathematics is good and has improved since the last inspection. The teachers make good use of the National Numeracy Strategy, paying particular attention to practical and problem-solving activities and ensuring that planned work is suited to pupils' needs. Mental activities at the start of each lesson are having a positive impact on the development of pupils' abilities to handle numbers and to master different ways of performing mental calculations. Pupils particularly enjoy the mental activities, but also settle well to written and practical tasks and show the ability to collaborate with others as and when required. Good attention is given to developing pupils' mathematical vocabulary. Mathematical skills are developed appropriately through other subjects, such as science and design and technology, and the development of pupils' mapping skills helps them to develop a good understanding of coordinates.
23. The overall quality of teaching and learning in science, geography, history, music and religious education is good. In art and design, design and technology, information and communication technology and physical education it is satisfactory. There are no subjects in which the teaching is weak, but some teachers still lack confidence in the teaching of information and communication technology. This is partly due to the unreliability of the school's equipment, but there also needs to be a deeper understanding on the part of subject coordinators and class teachers as to how new technology can be used more effectively as a tool for learning in all areas of the curriculum. In contrast, some teachers show a good level of expertise in the subject and enjoy using computers in interesting and imaginative ways as an aid to teaching. There is also some good expertise in the teaching of music, which has been instrumental in raising standards in this subject since the last inspection. The teaching of religious education is handled particularly well at Key Stage 1.
24. The quality of teaching for children in the Foundation Stage is good. As a result, children make good progress in their learning. Teachers and other adults have very high expectations that children will listen attentively and behave well. This creates an atmosphere conducive to learning. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and teach early skills, such as the

recognition of phonic sounds, very well. As a result, children develop confidence and are eager to learn more. The nursery nurses provide very good quality support, and all adults work as part of a close and effective team. The local authority's decision that children only attend school in the mornings during the autumn term affects teaching because teachers feel pressured to cover a lot of ground in a few hours each day. Children work hard and feel tired at the end of the morning in a way that is not usually seen in Reception classes. Children with special educational needs receive good support, which enables them to achieve well during their time in the Reception. A number of parents stated how pleased they were with the provision for their children in the Reception classes, commenting how the teachers managed to keep their children interested and focused, and the inspection findings endorse these views.

25. Teachers throughout the school plan with the coordinator for special educational needs in order to take account of pupils with special educational needs. They give as much support as they can to individuals, asking questions well so that these pupils can join in. Teaching assistants are fully cognisant of both pupils' needs and teachers' intentions, and make a significant contribution to pupils' success. Small groups of pupils are also supported well by knowledgeable and effective teaching assistants, and this is a strong feature of the teaching in the school. The work for these groups is well planned and focused to specific needs where necessary, and tasks provide an appropriate level of challenge. Teachers and assistants have high expectations with regard to pupils' behaviour and liaise well in order to achieve this. At present, feedback from assistants to teachers is generally informal and is rarely noted in written form. Thus, there is no written record of this potentially important evidence that would help the co-ordinator for special educational needs to join in the process, from time to time, and would support her record keeping. Certain pupils are withdrawn from normal lessons once a week in order to receive extra help from the learning support teacher for special needs. Her work is organised by the coordinator, and she also has weekly contact with the parents in order to provide appropriate homework. She is expert in many different forms of special need, and her specialist teaching and advice make an invaluable contribution to the teaching force of the school, as she also liaises with the teacher of each pupil assigned to her. A number of comments were received from parents, who are pleased with the support provided by the school and the progress made by their children with special educational needs, and the inspection findings certainly endorse these views.
26. Overall, teachers have good subject knowledge and there is particularly good individual subject expertise in some parts of the school. Good use is made of this expertise in a number of classes. In Year 6, for example, a science specialist teaches both classes for science, whilst the mathematics coordinator provides mathematics teaching for her class. One of the music coordinators teaches a number of classes in Key Stage 2 and this has been a significant factor in the improved standards achieved by pupils in this subject. In some subjects, there is a difference in the confidence of teachers in Key Stage 1 and those in Key Stage 2. This applies particularly to art and design and religious education and this is reflected in the progress pupils make and the standards they achieve. In religious education, for example, some teachers at Key Stage 2 are not particularly comfortable with the syllabus and miss opportunities to deepen pupils' religious understanding because their questioning is too shallow. Teachers' knowledge and confidence in the use of information and communication technology have improved significantly since the last inspection, but there are still aspects of the curriculum for which some staff need further training in order to be able to deepen pupils' understanding.
27. The overall quality of teachers' planning is good. Teachers are conscious of the differing needs of the pupils in their classes and, for most lessons, plan work at different levels according to pupils' needs. In this way, more able pupils are provided with sufficient challenge, whilst lower-attaining pupils are given sufficient reinforcement activities to help them consolidate their learning. Teachers are good at drawing links between one subject and another. During the inspection, for example, the lessons and activities planned for a 'healthy eating day' in Year 3 helped pupils to develop skills and understanding in science, physical education and English, as well as contributing to their personal and social development. The

pupils responded very well to the carefully planned activities. In geography and history, teachers link content and skills well and provide good cross-curricular experiences. Particular emphasis is given to learning through practical experiences in science. Similarly, in music, a strength of the teaching throughout the school, is the way teachers organise lessons to ensure that pupils have the maximum time possible to enjoy and learn from hands-on experiences of musical instruments. Basic skills in other subjects are also taught well. For example, a particularly strong feature in both geography and history is the way pupils are provided with the opportunity to develop their research skills, their understanding of chronology and the use of maps. Writing skills are taught well during English lessons but, particularly at Key Stage 2, these skills are not always consolidated as effectively as they could be, especially through pupils' written work in subjects other than English.

28. Teachers' expectations are generally appropriate, in many respects they are good, but in some aspects they could be higher. Pupils' writing, particularly at Key Stage 2, is still the area of greatest weakness, yet teachers do not have such high expectations for pupils' written work as they do for the finished product in some other subjects. In many subjects, for example, pupils present their work well. A significant factor in this is because teachers offer pupils ample opportunity to choose how they will record their work. Work in religious education and science, for example, is neat and clear and set out well. Work in history is presented attractively. Yet these standards are not reflected in much of the pupils' writing in English, and teachers' expectations with regard to pupils' handwriting and presentation in English are too low. In the sample of work from one class, for example, the quality of pupils' presentation and the care taken over their work declines as the term progresses, even though it is evident that pupils are acquiring new skills and learning more about the structure of language. In many of the classrooms, there are well-presented and attractive displays and an orderly learning environment. This quality, however, is not universal, and the occasionally more cluttered classroom with trays of blunt and broken pencils, speak of lower expectations to the pupils. Expectations with regard to the standards required in physical education also vary, and some teachers do not always ask pupils to develop enough quality and finesse in, for example, their gymnastic movements, which affects the standards being achieved. In a few classes, the teachers' own presentation of work on the board leaves much to be desired.
29. The teachers employ a good range of teaching methods. In the best lessons, teachers use questioning very well to probe and enhance pupils' understanding. Teachers introduce their lessons well, and give clear explanations. In mathematics, pupils' understanding is consolidated well through mental activities at the start of each lesson and as teachers adopt the good strategy of getting pupils to explain how they arrived at their answers. Most lessons are conducted at a good pace, which helps pupils to maintain their concentration. But this is not always the case and, in some information and communication technology lessons, teachers are not good at ensuring pupils work productively. Many teachers use resources well in order to aid pupils' learning. Particularly good examples were observed during the inspection in religious education and in science. One teacher also allowed pupils to learn from the builders on site. The appropriate use of individual whiteboards for pupils to communicate their answers to the teacher ensures that all pupils remain focused and helps teachers to spot immediately if individuals or groups of pupils are struggling. Although much of the curriculum for information and communication technology links in well with work in other subjects, few teachers are yet making further good use of new technology to help pupils learn in other subjects.
30. The weakest aspect of the teaching is the way teachers assess pupils' day-to-day work. Although the school has a marking policy, it is not followed consistently. Teachers mark pupils' work promptly, but the marking is generally limited to ticks and encouraging comments and is often not incisive enough. The marking often ignores errors made by the pupils and rarely contains comments to show them how they could improve or what follow-up is expected. In physical education, teachers often use pupils to demonstrate good practice, but opportunities are usually missed for pupils to discuss and evaluate the quality of the work seen, which would help them identify the areas where they might improve their performance. Most lessons end with a conclusion in which the teacher attempts to draw together what

pupils have learnt from the lesson. Sometimes, these sessions either do not occur or are too short to adequately check pupils' understanding or celebrate the work they have done. Some of these sessions, however, are managed well and pupils' learning is consolidated as a result.

31. Four out of five parents feel that the school provides their children with the right amount of work to do at home, but a number of parents commented on the variable practice throughout the school. Specific criticisms focused on the lack of consistency, the differences between parallel classes in the same year group and the quantity of homework given, which is too much at times, and not enough at others. The school acknowledges that consistency has been an issue, but that this aspect has improved. Further guidance has recently been given to staff and issues with regard the setting of homework have been identified. The practice observed during the inspection was felt to be appropriate and it is clear that pupils often benefit from work they have done at home.

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

32. The overall quality of the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils is good and has improved since the previous inspection. The school's curriculum is broad and balanced, and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. The learning opportunities provided for the school's youngest children are good and introduce them to a wide variety of experiences that provide a good basis for their future learning. The provision for religious education meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. There are comprehensive and well-developed policies for personal, social and health education, including citizenship, sex education and drugs awareness.
33. At the time of the last inspection, the breadth and balance of the curriculum were good, although there was no clear definition of what was expected from year to year. There was no adequate mechanism for checking the curriculum balance for different subjects across the school, and curriculum coordinators had insufficient opportunity to review planning in order to gain a clear overview of their subjects. Appropriate steps have been taken to remedy these weaknesses and the school now provides a carefully considered framework of policies and schemes of work for all areas of the curriculum. Planning and provision are satisfactory in information and communication technology, physical education and religious education and good in all other subjects. A recent audit carried out within the school shows that each subject is given an appropriate allocation of time. Curricular provision is now good. The school has refined and developed its long-, medium- and short-term planning to take account of parallel classes, and all policies and schemes of work have been updated to meet the requirements of the latest version of the National Curriculum.
34. The school has recognised the importance of catering for pupils' personal, social and health education by developing a comprehensive scheme of work that can be taught either as a discrete subject or as part of the normal curriculum. It deals with a whole range of issues, such as accepting responsibility, environmental awareness and the importance of caring for both ourselves and for others. Health education is an important aspect of this curricular area, and the good attention paid to pupils' health education was evident in the very successful Healthy Eating Day held in Year 3 during the week of the inspection. Regular visitors, such as the local police and dental and nursing health teams, contribute to this area of learning and all pupils have regular access to the Life Education Van<sup>3</sup>. Pupils have an opportunity to express their own views and opinions through the school council, and the emphasis placed on the importance of the school community makes a significant contribution to the development of the right sort of attitudes and relationships amongst pupils. All pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6, except those withdrawn by their parents, have access to formal sex education lessons.

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<sup>3</sup> This is a mobile classroom, staffed by specialist teachers, run by an educational charity to promote personal development, socially responsible attitudes and healthy lifestyle choices.

35. The good implementation and high priority given to the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have begun to make a positive impact on pupils' learning and, consequently, standards of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics have risen over the last three years in both key stages. Skills are reinforced on a regular basis and are taught in a well-planned and structured way. Teachers feel confident with the structures of the frameworks, which help them to develop a consistent approach to teaching these subjects. The thorough approach to monitoring literacy and numeracy ensures that teaching and learning are effective and are appropriate to the needs of all pupils.
36. The overall provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Curricular arrangements are stimulating and frequently highly individual. Pupils with a statement of special educational need are well integrated, and careful thought is given about how to ensure the maximum support and minimum difficulty for all concerned. The school makes full use of outside support agencies, and takes all opportunities to use expertise and advice to the full. Good links have been made with the secondary school to enable as smooth a transition of pupils as possible, when they leave.
37. The school's very good provision for extra-curricular activities involves a considerable number of pupils and enriches the curriculum. Activities take place both at lunchtime and after school. The music curriculum, for example, extends well beyond the National Curriculum, with plenty of opportunities for pupils to learn to play a musical instrument, sing in the school choir, play in the school orchestra or recorder group, and participate in concerts and school assemblies. In physical education, there are also broader opportunities for pupils to receive coaching in a wide range of sporting activities, such as football, rugby, orienteering and netball, and to participate in sporting competitions against other local schools. During the summer term, the school makes effective use of its own swimming pool that is financed through the very good support of the active parent-teacher association. There are other clubs, such as those for humanities, mathematics, yoga and draughts that contribute to the considerable breadth of extra-curricular activities available for pupils. In addition, pupils in Years 4 and 6 are given the opportunity to participate in residential visits.
38. The numerous links which the school has with its local community provide an extra dimension to children's experiences of the wider world, making this aspect of curricular provision very good. In conjunction with Dorset Wildlife Trust, funding has been secured for a wildlife club and willow sculpture. The local arts outreach service and the police forensic team provide pupils with the opportunity to participate in projects. Students from the Prince's Trust carried out a community project to improve the playground, based on ideas put forward by pupils. In conjunction with a local superstore, pupils were involved in a healthy eating project. Each year, the school council meets to decide which charities will be supported. Action Aid in Uganda is always supported, linked to the school's harvest festival, and this year pupils will be raising money for Comic Relief and the RSPCA. The school council takes responsibility for organising how money will be raised, and this helps pupils to develop a sense of personal responsibility and citizenship.
39. Overall, the school is effective in ensuring that all pupils are given equal access to the statutory curriculum and all other activities provided. The school has a policy for equal opportunities and each curriculum policy has within it a reference to equality of opportunity. Careful consideration is given to ensuring that classes in each year group are situated in close proximity and receive equal access to areas such as the computer suite and the school library. Year groups plan together and, in some years, such as in Year 6, lessons are arranged to ensure that both classes receive equal access to teachers with particular subject expertise. The school is, therefore, successful in ensuring that all pupils have equal access to all activities regardless of their gender, special needs, or particular gifts or talents.
40. The school's links and relationships with partner institutions are very good. The school is a member of the local education partnership and also has good links with its feeder secondary school. Part of the brief for the newly appointed sports coordinator is to develop sporting links with all schools in the local partnership which will further enhance the existing involvement in

local leagues and competitions in football, rugby, netball, swimming, tennis and rounders. Together with the local authority's music coordinator, there is a joint schools choir working towards the second year of a shared performance and, in conjunction with other south coast schools, there is involvement with longer-term music projects. The school provides work experience places for students and, during science week, a camera obscura was hired for pupils to experience, and teachers from upper schools also came to contribute their expertise. All of these projects and activities enrich the opportunities and experiences available to pupils.

41. The development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is good, overall. The strategies for promoting moral and social awareness are very good and make a significant contribution to the positive relationships which flourish throughout the school. There has been good improvement since the last inspection in the school's arrangements for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
42. There is a clear set of values underpinning the work of the school, securely based on the value and importance of the individual. These are reflected clearly, for example, in the 'value boards', a feature of many classrooms, on which pupils often, quite independently, write down the good qualities shown to them by a friend. This awareness is also reinforced in religious education and personal, social and health education lessons, where teaching challenges pupils to contemplate issues such as pride, courage or fear. Teachers' use of display in many rooms, particularly in Year 1, creates a calm and reflective atmosphere, often enhanced by the playing of relaxing music. Similarly, the 'quiet area', designed by pupils, demonstrates tolerance for individual differences by providing an alternative to the more boisterous playtime activities. Teachers regularly remind pupils of their uniqueness, for example by asking them to bring in and discuss a treasured object. Assemblies strongly reinforce the notion of each child's individuality by asking pupils to reflect on the talents that are within them, waiting to 'flower' as they grow up. There is still some room for development in this aspect, as there is no structured plan for the themes covered in assemblies.
43. Pupils' moral understanding and their sense of right and wrong are developed very successfully throughout the whole curriculum. Teachers foster cooperation with others and expect the pupils to take responsibility for their own actions, with frequent reminders of the need to respect the rights and feelings of others. This is clearly reflected in the very good standards of behaviour observed in lessons and around the school, and the politeness with which pupils treat adults and each other. The only exception to this occurs in the computer suite, where pupils are sometimes slow to react to instructions and unwilling to share resources. The introduction of a school council has had a very positive impact on pupils' awareness of moral issues. It has enabled pupils throughout the school to become involved in drawing up the behaviour code. For example, they have been involved in suggesting fairer and more sensible ways of using the playground during playtimes to make it safer for everyone. Both through the school council and personal, social and health education lessons, pupils are enabled to become involved in wider moral issues, such as the protection of sea creatures, and have used their own initiative to raise donations to charity.
44. The school's promotion of pupils' social development is very good. The very positive examples set by all adults make a significant contribution to the very good relationships which permeate the school. At every opportunity, staff demonstrate that they value the contribution of all members of their class equally, and the vast majority of pupils respond by doing the same. The teachers also create regular opportunities for pupils to work in groups. In numerous lessons seen where this was the case, pupils almost invariably worked harmoniously and were willing to listen to what their friends had to say. By giving their time generously to provide a very good range of activities at lunchtimes and after school, the teachers provide still further opportunities for pupils to build strong relations or develop their capacity for working as a member of a team. Residential visits in Years 4 and 6 also help pupils to become independent and to use their initiative through activities such as orienteering. Moreover, they are encouraged to take on responsibility for looking after others through the 'buddy' system, or on

specific occasions, for example when pupils in Year 5 act as partners for pupils in Year 2 to ease their transition to Year 3.

45. The school's provision for pupils' cultural development is good. The school works hard and successfully to make pupils aware of the rich cultural diversity of the world in which they live and within their own community. It achieves this by encouraging pupils to develop positive images of modern worldwide cultures through teaching in subjects across the curriculum. For example, there are regular opportunities to listen to and enjoy African, Irish and Native American music, to appreciate the beauty of Aboriginal art, or to read modern Caribbean poetry. The headteacher has successfully raised teachers' awareness of multi-cultural diversity by organising appropriate in-service training. This has led to a number of positive initiatives, such as the organisation of visits from a pupil's grandmother to talk about Jewish traditions and from a representative of the local Islamic centre. The school acknowledges and celebrates festivals such as Chinese New Year, Diwali and Christmas to promote pupils' appreciation of the many similarities between the various cultures. Teachers also ensure that pupils are fully aware of their local and national heritage, for example by inviting them to dress up for and celebrate Golden Jubilee Day or through a visit to school by a 'Roman soldier'.

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

46. This is a caring school, which has maintained the high standards that were noted at the last inspection. The pastoral care and attention given to pupils' welfare, health and safety is of a very high standard. Staff act as good role models and work hard to nurture good relationships with pupils and to build trust. The school has very good procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress and keeping careful track of pupils' progress.
47. The arrangements for child protection and the care of pupils are good. The nominated staff have attended training on the recent procedural changes, and their roles are clearly documented in the staff handbook. Relationships with the local support agencies are good. Care for pupils with special educational needs is good, with trained staff allocated to ensure effective provision. Arrangements for health and safety are also good. The concerns raised at the last inspection over record keeping have been addressed by introducing a programme of fire drills, a fire risk assessment policy and procedures to ensure compliance with COSHH<sup>4</sup> regulations. The school has appropriate procedures for ensuring pupils' safety when accessing the Internet.
48. Procedures for monitoring and promoting pupils' attendance are good. The overall level of attendance is tracked using a computer program, and this also helps build up a good picture of absence trends. Registers are completed according to statutory guidelines and information regarding absence procedures is set out clearly in the school's prospectus. As a result, little time needs to be spent chasing up absences. Good attendance is encouraged through attendance certificates, which are given to those pupils who achieve 100 per cent attendance.
49. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and for eliminating oppressive behaviour are very good. Staff, lunchtime supervisors, parents and pupils were all involved in producing a good whole-school behaviour policy. Within this policy, each class sets its own rules, with pupils taking the lead in suggesting what should be included. As a result of their involvement, pupils respect the rules and have a clear understanding of them. They rely on a good balance of rewards and sanctions. Stickers, house points, student of the week awards and certificates all recognise and encourage good behaviour. Appropriate sanctions, in the form of time out of varying length depending on the nature of the indiscretion, are also applied when necessary. Staff apply the procedures consistently and, as a result, most problems are resolved quickly. Discussions with parents during the week of the inspection confirmed that they consider the behaviour in the school to be good. Bullying occurs very rarely, but

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4 Control of Substances Hazardous to Health.

instances are dealt with effectively. Through assemblies, thought for the day and circle time<sup>5</sup>, the staff spend a lot of time teaching children about relationships and their behaviour towards one another.

50. Procedures for monitoring and assessing pupils' personal development and progress are good. Class teachers and support staff know their pupils well and are, therefore, in a position to provide good support for pupils' personal needs when necessary. The end-of-year reports contain a detailed analysis of each pupil's personal development.
51. The school provides very good care for pupils with special educational needs. Individual education plans are used well to target academic and behavioural problems. Teachers remind pupils frequently about their targets and how they should work towards them. Assessment procedures for these pupils are very good. Careful records are kept of pupils' attainment and progress. The school monitors its processes to ensure that tasks and language are appropriate to pupils' needs and tracks the progress of individuals and groups of pupils to ensure that they are achieving at an appropriate level. The informal system of communication between teachers and assistants could be improved by implementing a written system of communication in order to provide a better insight into the day-to-day learning of some of the pupils.
52. One of the key issues of the previous inspection report was to improve assessment procedures, and this has been accomplished very successfully; they are now very good. The school has drawn up, and successfully implemented, a whole-school assessment policy, alongside strategies for data analysis and target setting. The two coordinators have worked hard to improve the quality of assessment and to ensure that all staff are familiar and confident with both the procedures for assessment and how the information gained should be used. This has resulted in a successful whole-school approach. The current procedures are very strong in the core subject areas of English, mathematics and science. They are detailed in how and what is assessed, and a well-planned calendar ensures that assessment is regular and appropriate, with rigorous evaluation of key skills. In most other subjects, formal procedures have been introduced recently and these are beginning to have a positive effect on the development of knowledge, skills and understanding in these curricular areas. Procedures for assessing the attainment and progress of the school's youngest children are clear and relevant. Teachers constantly assess their children's progress in class, so they know their children well and provide tasks at carefully judged levels of difficulty which enable children to make good advances in their learning.
53. The use the school derives from its assessment procedures is very good overall. The school uses assessment data extremely well at a strategic level. The systematic analysis of the results of formal testing in English, mathematics and science is very good, and highlights various issues for staff to deal with. The information gained helps staff to decide on the organisation of ability groups in English and mathematics, the tracking of individual achievement and the achievements of different groups of pupils. It is also used efficiently for the setting of school and group targets and, in some cases, such as in mathematics and writing, individual pupil targets. This helps to ensure that teachers' planning in English, mathematics and science meets the needs of all groups of pupils. It also helps to identify pupils with learning difficulties, as well as higher-attaining pupils. It has resulted in raising standards in previous areas of weakness. For example, a close analysis of the performance of pupils in the national science tests in Year 6 revealed a need to improve their understanding of scientific terminology. As a direct result of this analysis, each year group has been given a list of scientific vocabulary to master, and this strategy led to a significant increase in the number of pupils achieving higher grades in the 2002 National Curriculum tests. Although assessment is most detailed in core subject areas, there are appropriate procedures in most

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<sup>5</sup> During 'Circle Time' pupils discuss a wide range of personal and general issues. All pupils agree that no interruptions should occur and only one person at a time will speak. Respect for other pupils' views will occur at all times and, therefore, pupils feel confident that they can talk with ease and free from any form of interference of interruption from other children.

other subjects, where individual subject portfolios of work are maintained in which pupils' work is matched against National Curriculum standards.

54. The procedures to monitor pupils' academic progress are good overall. The school has a good picture of how individuals and groups of pupils are performing in English and mathematics, as data from assessment is analysed thoroughly and the results are recorded clearly. The resulting individual targets are sent home to parents each term, so that they understand what their children need to do to improve their work. The results of the teachers' assessments are monitored carefully, and staff meet to agree on levels of work within the school and to consider them against national criteria. Regular meetings are held amongst staff to consider the level of success against predictions for pupils' targets, and governors are involved in the target-setting process. Targets that are not achieved are analysed to determine why this has happened and to develop what course of action should be followed. This routine monitoring has successfully developed a shared understanding of the purpose of assessment and the need for agreement about what pupils have achieved. Records are used to enable the school to track progress as pupils move through the school and these are maintained efficiently.
55. Although the school's procedures for assessment are now very good overall and have a positive impact on curricular development, arrangements for day-to-day assessment are less effective. The school does have a marking policy, but this is not followed consistently. The purpose of individual work is not always made clear and marking rarely contains comments that would indicate to pupils what follow-up is expected to allow them to achieve further success.

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

56. The school's partnership with parents is very good. Parents are very positive in their support of the school. They are encouraged to come into school both by the headteacher and class teachers, and they feel that any concerns are resolved quickly. Issues regarding communication with parents, which were raised at the previous inspection, have been dealt with effectively. As a result, most parents feel that the school has improved since the last inspection and that relationships between the school and parents are better.
57. Parents returning the questionnaire and those attending the pre-inspection meeting agree that the school promotes good attitudes and behaviour amongst pupils who are keen to come to the school. They feel that teaching is good, that their children are making good progress and that the school is led and managed well. Some parents raised concerns about the amount of homework given to their children, how well they are informed about their children's progress, how closely the school works with them and the provision for extra-curricular activities. The inspection findings considered these views to be largely unfounded.
58. The links that the school has with its parents are very good. In response to the concerns raised in the previous inspection, the headteacher assigned the deputy head to carry out a thorough review of how the school communicated with parents. Two years ago, the school evaluated these improvements via a parental questionnaire and the response was very positive. Particular praise was accorded to the curriculum information evenings, together with the improved open-door approach and an increase in the number of consultation evenings from one to three per year.
59. The quality of information provided for parents is very good. The school prospectus, newsletters, consultation evenings, curriculum information sheets and full end-of-year reports all provide a good range of information on the work of the school. Considerable effort has been made to improve the annual reports to parents. Not only do they contain information regarding areas that have been covered within each subject, but they also give an indication of the level at which each child is working and whether this is an appropriate level for their age.
60. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept very well informed at every stage about the school's provision for their child's needs. Parents attend regular meetings to review

targets for their children and to set new ones where necessary. Parents are very supportive of their children. There is good liaison between the learning support teacher and parents, particularly with regard to the setting of work for pupils to do at home.

61. The impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school is very good. A small army of around 50 parents helps regularly with activities in lessons and school visits. Historically, the parent-teacher association has been very active, a circumstance which continues to this day. Through a range of activities, they raise significant sums of money each year. The money has been used for the construction of a new room so that a computer suite could be created, improvements to the junior outdoor play area, the purchase of stage blocks and playground games. This year, improvements are earmarked for the infant playground. On a practical level, members of the association help with litter picking, weeding, painting outdoor furniture, caring for the outdoor nature reserve and repairing the swimming pool. All of these factors help to enhance the environment which children experience on a daily basis.
62. Good relationships with parents are fostered from the time children join school in the Reception classes. Teachers and assistants in these classes have very good relations with parents and carers, who are welcomed into the school at the start and end of each day. Parents give valuable help at home by hearing children practise their sounds and by sharing books regularly with them.
63. The contribution of parents to their children's learning at home is good. For many parents, education is high on the list of priorities and they are, therefore, keen to support their children with reading and homework. They will often accompany their children on library and museum visits. Overall, parents are keen supporters of the school and their positive approach, together with the improvements to consultation evenings, curricular information and annual reports, makes a positive contribution to pupils' progress.

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

64. The overall quality of the leadership and management provided by the headteacher, the school's senior management team and the subject coordinators is very good and has improved since the last inspection. The school now has a stable and very effective management structure and has dealt well with its previous weaknesses. Governors have a much better involvement in strategic planning and monitor the school's finances carefully. Procedures for planning school development are thorough, and staff have a clear understanding of the school's main priorities. The school now complies with all statutory requirements, including requirements for a daily act of collective worship and the provision of statutory information within the school prospectus.
65. The headteacher herself provides very good leadership and has a very clear view of how she wants the school to develop. She has her finger very firmly on the pulse of the school, and has a very good understanding of the school's strengths and aspects that need to be improved. She provides clear direction for the staff and is attempting to bring in change at an appropriate and measured pace, taking into consideration the views and apprehensions of the staff, but ensuring that the school continues to move forward. The school has an effective management structure, within which tasks are delegated well. Staff have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities and are guided by a clear set of school aims. Important new initiatives are dealt with effectively and, as a result, standards are continuing to rise. Under the headteacher's leadership, the ethos of the school has improved. Staff are now working together more effectively as a team and feel motivated to play their part in improving the learning experiences provided for the pupils.
66. The deputy and assistant headteachers provide excellent support for the headteacher and have also been instrumental forces in bringing about improvement. As well as fulfilling roles as key stage coordinators, they have taken on responsibility for particular projects. The deputy headteacher has played a major part in analysing and then improving the school's communication with parents, whilst the assistant headteacher has worked with staff and pupils to revise and improve the school's behaviour policy. Both teachers also have

classroom responsibilities and lead by example in providing other staff with models of good teaching practice. The three senior teachers provide a very good, stable triumvirate which gives the school clear direction.

67. The role of the subject coordinator has developed well since the last inspection, and most subjects now receive good leadership. There is a much more corporate atmosphere amongst the staff, and coordinators have dealt effectively with the previous key issue to work alongside their colleagues and have a greater influence on the subject planning of the year teams. Some subjects have two coordinators, one for each key stage, and this arrangement works well in most instances. In mathematics, for example, the two coordinators have contributed significantly to the improvement in standards. The very good standards achieved in music are attributable in no small measure to the expertise and enthusiasm shown by the music coordinators, whilst the knowledge and keenness shown by the humanities coordinators ensures good breadth to the curricula for geography and history. The Foundation Stage is led well by an experienced teacher who ensures that good procedures are in place to promote children's learning and that all adults involved with the education of the school's youngest children work together well as part of a close-knit team.
68. Although the overall coordination of information and communication technology has been satisfactory, the considerable diversity of the role has meant that not all aspects have been carried out as effectively as they could have been. More thought needs to be given to how various responsibilities within this role are delegated, in order provide a more manageable load which allows the coordinator to provide clear subject leadership and ensure high standards of attainment. Individual coordinators do not yet take sufficient responsibility for the use of new technology within their own subjects, and insufficient technical support is available to ensure that the school's equipment functions reliably. At present, the coordinator's energies are too frequently diverted into maintenance of computers rather than subject leadership.
69. The coordinator for special educational needs is an experienced, knowledgeable and thorough senior member of staff, who manages the provision for these pupils very well. She has highly effective, efficient links with her team of teaching assistants and the support teacher. Her systems for recording and storing data are also efficient, with very good procedures for reviewing and altering individual educational plans for academic and behavioural purposes. The school has made an important decision not to use the local education authority's support but, instead, to use the budget to buy in its own, dedicated teacher. This has already had a very positive impact on the school's work, because the learning support teacher, employed on a part-time basis, knows what the school needs and can be extremely flexible in the type of assistance she can offer. This ensures a focused approach and very good value for money. At the time of the last inspection, the school was criticised for its lax attitude to the spending of its budget for special educational needs, but this is not now the case. Every effort is made to spend the money wisely and it is now used effectively to maximise support. The governor with responsibility for special educational needs is also a qualified teaching assistant and, as such, is ideally placed to recognise needs and to monitor the effectiveness of any provision. The appointment of so many well-trained, well-organised and flexible assistants has been a very important factor in the improvement of the overall provision for pupils with special educational needs. Other resources are also much improved, and this area of the school's work is now very successful.
70. The school is managed very well. A comprehensive staff handbook gives clear guidance to staff on day-to-day procedures, and management issues are dealt with at regular weekly staff meetings. Efficient office staff and an assistant who helps with reprographics and resources provide valuable assistance for the headteacher and the staff. During the inspection, there was considerable disruption to the office and staff facilities, yet good-natured and cooperative attitudes ensured little disruption to the daily management of the school. The lack of suitable accommodation for staff, exacerbated by the significant increase in the number of assistant staff, and the necessity of having a split break time has reduced opportunities for staff to engage in educational dialogue and discussion, and staff do well to cope with inadequate facilities for this purpose. Aspects of school life that previously received scant attention are

thought about in more detail. For example, a teacher has recently been given the responsibility for coordinating all aspects to do with pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school has also taken appropriate steps to formulate a policy to promote racial equality, although pupils are already well versed in respecting others, regardless of race or background. Despite the considerable demands on their time, the headteacher and staff cope well with the increasing bureaucratic demands made of them. Particularly time-consuming are the repeated requests for information which has to be gathered and collated in different ways and for different agencies, and the increasingly detailed ways in which the school has to track the spending of money which has been allocated from different sources.

71. The governing body fulfils its statutory duties well and this marks an improvement on the previous inspection when they were not sufficiently involved in the running of the school. Since that time, the committee structure and the terms of reference have been redrafted and, through this process, the knowledge of governors has improved, so that they now have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They are now involved with the headteacher in drawing up the school development plan and in setting targets, which was not the case when she arrived. Expertise amongst governors, particularly in regard to building work, has been invaluable in saving the school money. The governors have a sound understanding of all the areas that affect the school, and the headteacher appreciates the support that they give her. The curriculum committee of the governing body is very well informed. The governors are becoming increasingly involved in the life of the school, setting targets and regularly inviting curriculum coordinators to address their meetings.
72. The school has established good procedures to monitor and evaluate its own performance, but does not yet involve all subject coordinators sufficiently in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in their own subject areas. The headteacher, her two deputies and two staff team leaders have key responsibilities for monitoring the quality of the teaching, teachers' planning and pupils' work. The introduction of regular monitoring has been managed carefully and sensitively by the headteacher and has had a beneficial impact on the quality of the teaching and on teachers' morale. There is a different focus to each round of monitoring and the findings are used to identify areas for improvement and training needs. Coordinators are expected to review schemes of work and identify assessment strategies, and time is available for them to carry out other monitoring activities. At present, however, few coordinators make use of this opportunity which means that they are not as well informed as they could be when drawing up their annual action plan.
73. The school's procedures for appraisal and performance management are very good. A team of senior teachers manages the systems very well, and governors are properly involved in the setting of targets for the headteacher. Targets set for individual teachers are linked to the school's main development priorities and are proving another useful tool for improvement and acting as a focus for raising standards. A good range of training opportunities is provided for staff, through attendance at training courses, visits to observe leading teachers in other schools and appropriate use of expertise which exists amongst the school's own staff.
74. As a result of its programme of monitoring, the school looks critically at all aspects of school life and pupils' performance. The school has a very good system for drawing up the school development plan, which identifies the most important areas for development. This is an improvement since the previous inspection highlighted the need to improve its strategic planning. The effectiveness of the biennial development plan can be seen in the very good range of improvements which have occurred since the last inspection and the steadily rising standards achieved by the pupils.
75. Overall, the school makes very good use of its staff, resources for learning and accommodation, and this is having a good effect on the standards which pupils achieve. Getting the best from the accommodation has presented the greatest challenge, but use of the buildings has improved considerably since the previous inspection. The two classes per year group have now been located next to one another, thus allowing teachers to share ideas and resources. Additional funding, through the seed challenge initiative, was secured to

extend the library and install a computer suite, and more televisions have been purchased to free up what used to be the television room.

76. The school is very good at financial planning. The school development plan sets out the educational priorities, which are currently directed to funding good quality teaching assistants and resources. Since the last inspection, changes have been made to the way each subject is funded, leading to a significant improvement in efficiency. The day-to-day routines and procedures for financial management are good, being well managed by the administrative staff. The governing body also plays its part well in setting the budget and exercises careful financial control through its finance committee. Good account is taken of the school's aims and priorities identified within the school development plan. The school spends within its means, despite the low level of funding, and has managed to carry forward a sum of money to the following year, which is appropriate in light of the current building works which are being undertaken.
77. The headteacher has a very good understanding of the principles of best value. This is exemplified by the way she has directed her efforts to making the best use of the available accommodation. The school operates within a very tight financial budget, receiving the lowest sum per pupil of any primary school in Dorset. It is constantly comparing the buy-back options provided by the local authority with outside agencies. In the case of special needs, it managed to improve its provision whilst saving money by outsourcing this service. It is also a member of the Weymouth and Portland Partnership which has been set up to look at which services can be more effectively outsourced as compared with those offered by the local authority. All building work goes to tender, and the school is fortunate in having building expertise amongst the governors who have not only saved the school surveyor's fees but ensured that the building work is carried out at the best possible price. The headteacher and governors are very aware of how the school's standards compare with those of other schools and they consult parents, pupils and staff over major changes. Taking account of the very tight financial constraints within which it operates and the progress made by pupils, the school is judged to provide very good value for money.
78. There is an adequate number of teaching staff to meet the demands of the curriculum. In recent years, the school has significantly increased the number of teaching assistants, so that the overall staffing situation is now good. This marks an improvement over recent years, when the school has suffered from a number of instances of prolonged staff absence. All members of staff form a dedicated and enthusiastic team. Teachers are appropriately qualified and experienced in the full range of subjects of the curriculum. There are good procedures in place for supporting newly qualified teachers, and all staff new to the school are properly briefed and assisted. The procedures for monitoring the performance of individual teachers are effective, and needs identified through this process, together with the priorities of the school improvement plan, are used very appropriately as a basis for planning future training for staff. Teaching assistants work closely with teachers, and they are well briefed to fulfil their roles. They contribute significantly to pupils' progress. Secretarial staff, lunchtime supervisors, the caretaker and cleaning staff are also seen as very much part of the staff team, all of whom carry out their duties conscientiously and efficiently.
79. The accommodation is adequate for the number of pupils, although there are currently some significant shortcomings. The school's site is very attractive, with pleasant play areas and nature areas provided for the benefit of the pupils. The swimming pool provides a notable enhancement to the accommodation, as do the various grassed areas around the school. Many of the classrooms in the main buildings are bright and airy, with plenty of room for pupils to carry out a range of activities. The installation of a computer suite adjoining the library marks a significant improvement since the last inspection. However, the accommodation currently available for children in the Reception classes and for pupils in Year 5 is poor. The space available for the children in the Reception is very limited, and although staff and children do their best, the restricted space makes it very difficult to carry out many activities. The outdoor accommodation for these children is also inadequate to allow frequent access unless the children are closely supervised. In Year 5, staff and children work wonders to

produce the work that they do. These pupils have no immediate access to the toilets or other central facilities without having to cross the main playground, which is particularly inconvenient in inclement weather. Fortunately, through the good planning of both staff and governors, the school is currently undergoing a major re-building programme. New office and staff room accommodation is presently nearing completion, and planning has just started for the building of four new classrooms, which should alleviate the current problems.

80. The provision of learning resources is satisfactory, overall, and good in subjects such as mathematics, history, physical education and religious education. It is also good for the teaching of pupils with learning difficulties. The school's resources for information and communication technology improved significantly shortly after the last inspection when a computer suite was installed. However, the school has experienced problems with the equipment from the outset and over the last two years it has become increasingly unreliable. This unreliability is having an adverse impact on the teaching and use of information and communication technology. The position is aggravated by the fact that the school has been unable to obtain regular and reliable technical support. Although the resources for children in the Reception are satisfactory overall, the provision of outdoor equipment, especially wheeled vehicles, is inadequate to provide a full range of activities for children's physical development.

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

81. In order to improve the quality of education provided and the standards pupils achieve, the governors, headteacher and staff should work together to:

Improve the quality of pupils' writing\*, particularly at Key Stage 2, by:

- raising teachers' expectations of what is an acceptable standard of writing;
- improving the quality of pupils' presentation;
- paying greater attention to the process of drafting and redrafting and giving enough time for pupils to consider how to improve the quality of their writing;
- ensuring that better use is made of opportunities to develop pupils' writing skills through subjects other than English;
- making greater use of information and communication technology as a tool for reviewing, evaluating and modifying their work;
- being more rigorous in the marking of pupils' writing.

*(Paragraphs 1, 7, 21, 27, 28, 89, 90, 95, 96 and 131)*

Help pupils to gain a better understanding of how they can improve their work, by:

- being more rigorous in the way they mark pupils' work and ensuring that pupils learn from their mistakes;
- pointing out ways in which pupils can improve the quality of their work, particularly their writing;
- providing opportunities for pupils to go back over work which has been marked and to review comments made by their teachers;
- ensuring that all staff follow the school's policy for marking\*.

*(Paragraphs 30, 55, 90, 96, 109, 125 and 149)*

- ❑ Improve the quality of the accommodation provided for children in the Reception classes and pupils in Year 5\*\*. (*Paragraph 79*)
- ❑ Improve the way the school uses new technology as a tool for learning, by:
  - ensuring that teachers have access to reliable equipment with an appropriate range of software;
  - providing adequate technical support to maintain and upgrade the school's equipment;
  - devolving more responsibility to all subject coordinators for identifying appropriate uses of new technology to complement existing schemes of work;
  - ensuring that all staff make adequate and appropriate use of new technology;
  - providing further training for staff as and when necessary.

*(Paragraphs 10, 23, 26, 29, 63, 68, 80, 96, 103, 106, 110, 111, 125, 126-134 and 137)*

\* These issues have already been identified as priorities in the school's development plan.

\*\* The school has recently heard that it is to receive a grant for the construction of four new classrooms, which should solve this particular issue. Discussions have just started with the school architect in order to draw up plans for the new building.

82. Other issues which should be considered by the school for inclusion in the action plan:

- Ensure curriculum coordinators play a more active role in monitoring the quality of teaching and standards of pupils' work within their subject areas;  
*(Paragraphs 72, 110, 115, 119, 125 and 134)*
- Improve resources for physical development for children in the Reception classes.  
*(Paragraphs 80 and 87)*

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed

91

Number of formal discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

44

[In addition to this figure, there were many informal discussions with staff, other adults and pupils]

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	27	40	23	0	0	0
Percentage	1	30	44	25	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.

### 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)	–	410
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	–	13

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	–	6
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	–	60

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	16
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	13

### Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.6
National comparative data	5.5

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.4

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
	2002	28	31	59

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	24	27	27
	Girls	29	31	31
	Total	53	58	58
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (89)	98 (91)	98 (95)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	24	27	27
	Girls	30	30	31
	Total	54	57	58
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92 (89)	97 (97)	98 (97)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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
	2002	35	31	66

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	25	29	32
	Girls	26	26	29
	Total	51	55	61
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	77 (79)	83 (64)	92 (86)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	24	29	30
	Girls	27	25	28
	Total	51	54	58
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	77 (83)	82 (86)	88 (86)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British - Indian
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

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

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
354	0	0
2	0	0
7	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
5	0	0

*The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, 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)	15.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	28.4
Average class size	30.4

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	15
Total aggregate hours worked per week	265

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2001/02
	£
Total income	743,309
Total expenditure	741,643
Expenditure per pupil	1,704
Balance brought forward from previous year	35,700
Balance carried forward to next year	37,366

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2.1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2.2
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0

Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	398
Number of questionnaires returned	260
Percentage of questionnaires returned	65

Percentage of responses in each category<sup>6</sup>

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school	57	41	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school	50	45	4	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good	45	50	2	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home	35	48	10	3	3
The teaching is good	52	43	4	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on	36	45	15	2	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem	59	36	3	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best	59	37	2	1	1
The school works closely with parents	42	45	9	1	3
The school is well led and managed	58	40	2	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible	50	47	2	1	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons	32	46	11	2	10

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<sup>6</sup> Because of rounding, percentages may not add up to 100.

## **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**

#### **Personal, social and emotional development**

83. Many children enter the Reception with well-developed personal and social skills. Teachers and nursery nurses work very hard and well to develop these skills further and, by the end of their year in the Reception, all children, including those with special educational needs, have progressed beyond the expected standards in this area of learning. Children enjoy coming to school, they are interested in activities, confident to try new experiences, and they concentrate well so that they complete one activity before moving to another. They form friendships with each other and have very good relationships with adults. There is clear understanding of how to behave in class and at playtimes, and behaviour is very good. Children undress and dress themselves with very little help from adults. Children become aware of differences in culture and beliefs as they learn to celebrate festivals from a number of faiths and know well-known bible stories.

#### **Communication, language and literacy**

84. Standards in communication, language and literacy have been maintained well since the last inspection. By the end of the Reception year, nearly all children communicate fluently and use an increasingly wide vocabulary well. The teaching is good, and teachers have very high expectations that children will listen attentively so that they are quickly involved in activities and learn well. Children start to share their ideas in discussion time and are confident to talk to adults. When they have a few spare minutes, children love pretending to be teacher and re-enact taking the register and teaching new sounds. Children enjoy books in school and take them home regularly to share with parents. Early reading skills start to develop, and children are keen to practise the sounds they know. The more able children recognise a few words. Children enjoy both copying sentences and doing their own emergent writing, which appears to be scribble but which they understand. Nearly all children write their names confidently during the autumn term. By the end of the Reception, nearly all children attain the expected standards in this area of learning and many exceed them.

#### **Mathematical development**

85. Children enter the Reception with mathematical knowledge that is average for their age. The teaching is good, and the teachers use interesting activities that help children understand new concepts easily and enable them to maintain their confidence well. They quickly recognise simple shapes because they belong to groups called triangles, squares, rectangles and circles, and they find it fairly easy to recognise more complicated shapes such as hexagons. Learning is fun and stimulating. For example, children enjoy counting groups of toys, moving them between two groups and then inventing ways to record on paper what they have done. By the end of the Reception year, most children attain the expected standards and many exceed them.

#### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

86. Standards in this aspect of children's work have remained high since the last inspection. Children have average knowledge of the world around them when they start school, and good teaching introduces them to a wide range of experiences, which fascinate them and extend their thinking well. For example, during a series of lessons on light, children became aware of shadows when they made shadow puppets and now understand why each shadow is attached to its object. They start to have an idea of differences between 'old' and 'new', and between 'now' and 'then'. Through exploring the school and its grounds, they become aware of places, and listening to visitors to the class, such as the school secretary, give them understanding of people's jobs. Children thoroughly enjoy working with computers and

become increasingly adept in the use of the mouse to make adjustments to pictures. After a year in the Reception, nearly all children attain the expected standards, and many have knowledge and understanding at a higher than expected level.

### **Physical development**

87. The quality of teaching in this area of learning is good. Children have good opportunities to develop physical skills that are similar to those described in the last report. Activities are carefully provided to promote cutting and sticking skills. Children use brushes of varying thickness, scissors, pencils, chalks and fingers appropriately in their work and, by the end of the year, attainment in these aspects is at the expected levels. Many children have good control of their bodies and attain at expected levels well before the end of Reception. They move confidently within a large space, balance imaginatively both on the floor and on apparatus, and are careful not to bump into each other. The outside area is satisfactory in size, but dank, and the school lacks sufficient resources for this aspect of children's physical development. When the weather permits, children play with balls, hoops and a few wheeled toys. Playtime takes place with the older children on the infant playground.

### **Creative development**

88. As at the time of the last report, children in the Reception experience many different ways of expressing themselves. The quality of teaching is good and, by the end of the Reception, most children achieve the expected levels in creative development and confidently use a wide variety of paints, coloured sticks, papers and malleable materials such as dough. Children enjoy joining in singing and, after listening intently to different sounds made by untuned instruments, identify correctly if they are long, short, loud or soft. They play the instruments with care and concentration and know all their names. They build models and develop their imaginations well as they act out different situations.

## **ENGLISH**

89. Since the last inspection, standards in both key stages have risen at a similar rate to those nationally, remaining, in most years, close to the national average at Key Stage 1 and just above the national average at Key Stage 2. Results in the 2002 tests were, therefore, typical for the school, with pupils in Key Stage 1 achieving average standards, whilst standards in Key Stage 2 were above average overall, with a higher than expected number of pupils achieving Level 5. The inspection findings reveal a slightly changing picture, the reasons for which are clear. The two coordinators have identified a need to improve standards in writing, particularly for boys, who were not doing as well as girls in tests, and showed good leadership by devising a clear action plan to address this. Firstly, they ensured that colleagues planned a wider range of interesting activities to stimulate their classes' interest in writing. Secondly, they have enlisted valuable help from parents to update the range and interest level of books in the library and have encouraged pupils to discuss and write about the books they are reading. This has been successful, particularly in Key Stage 1, where inspection evidence indicates that pupils are securely on track to achieve higher than the expected levels in the key areas of speaking and listening, reading and writing.
90. The impact has also been mainly positive in Key Stage 2, where standards in speaking, listening and reading are above national expectations by the end of the key stage. The strategy for improving writing has not been as successful because of inconsistencies in teachers' use of day-to-day marking, their planning of work for pupils of different abilities and their expectations of pupils' writing standards and presentation. Pupils achieve standards similar to those seen in other schools, but these could be better, considering the good strategies that are in place. When all aspects of English are considered together, pupils throughout the school are making good progress, because the overall quality of the teaching is good. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support from teaching assistants and they also make good progress.

91. All adults, including teachers and assistants, non-teaching staff and parents make a positive contribution to the development of speaking and listening skills. In Years 1 and 2, pupils are encouraged to talk to and listen to adults as soon as they come into school in the morning. This very positive approach not only ensures good progress in speaking and listening, but also underpins the very good relationships, which develop as pupils grow older. For example, during registration each pupil is invited to contribute a piece of news or information whilst others listen politely. Similarly, teachers ask pupils to talk about recent experiences, fresh in their minds, such as the book they have just finished, or their visit to Dorchester Museum, to stimulate discussion and writing activities. By the end of Key Stage 1, the vast majority of pupils confidently ask questions of their own and answer in complete, clear sentences. Some more able pupils are very articulate, reflecting standards well above average for their age. One pupil talking about story writing, for example, suggested, 'You can always use grown-up, interesting words that stand out.' Only very few pupils hesitate to join in discussions at this stage.
92. In Years 3 and 4, pupils are entirely used to 'hot-seating'<sup>7</sup> and group discussion, which successfully develop their speaking and listening skills, both in English and other lessons across the curriculum. By the end of Key Stage 2, most are entirely confident about reporting clearly back to their class, for example, about the science investigation they are involved in. They listen discerningly to what others are saying and ask questions or suggest improvements. Only a small minority are hesitant and limit contributions to short phrases or single word answers. Pupils throughout the school enjoy these opportunities and, almost without exception, cooperate well and behave responsibly.
93. Standards in reading are above average at the end of both key stages. In Year 1, pupils receive very useful adult support and quickly become confident at deciphering unfamiliar words using letter sounds and picture cues. By the end of the key stage, most are familiar with the terms 'author' and 'illustrator' and know the difference between 'fiction' and 'non-fiction'. Many more able pupils read aloud with expression, reflecting standards well above average for their age, and even the weaker readers need little support as they get older. This is because they gain confidence through the good help they receive from teaching assistants just before school starts each day, or during lessons from staff, parents and other volunteer helpers.
94. From Year 3 onwards, the pupils continue to enjoy books and take pleasure in reading, because they are encouraged to talk and write about what they read and have a good range of interesting material to choose from. By the end of Key Stage 2, the least able pupils read independently, although often from less challenging books, whilst many more confident classmates develop mature attitudes to literature and discuss the differences in writing styles, for example, between J K Rowling and Jacqueline Wilson, with some authority. Pupils have regular opportunities to use the school library to find information independently, and their research skills are good.
95. Standards in writing are above average in Key Stage 1 and average by the end of Key Stage 2. In Years 1 and 2, teachers and assistants develop writing skills in a carefully structured way. Pupils in Year 1 quickly gain confidence in spacing words and keeping their writing at a uniform size. By the end of the key stage, the vast majority write clear, consecutive sentences using capital letters and full stops, and many are beginning to use more adventurous words such as 'next' and 'finally' to link sentences together with words. A minority still need help from adults to build sentences, which is below the level expected for their age. In Key Stage 2, pupils successfully develop skills in writing for an increasingly wide range of purposes and audiences. By the end of the key stage, the majority structure their work using paragraphs and clear punctuation. They write persuasively, for example, when writing letters of complaint about the proposed new road through Radipole, or imaginatively through stories and poems,

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<sup>7</sup> 'Hot-seating' is a technique used by teachers to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills. One pupil is chosen to sit in the 'hot seat' and answer a series of questions on a specific topic asked by other pupils in the class.

where more able pupils introduce tension and atmosphere into their work. However, throughout Key Stage 2, there are inconsistencies in the quality of written work. Progress, though satisfactory overall, could be better. Written work is sometimes presented well, particularly in science lessons, or occasionally for pieces which are going on display. Nevertheless, pupils are not consistently expected to take care and pride in their finished pieces of work. Consequently, they sometimes switch from printed to joined writing styles and do not take sufficient care to check spellings, punctuation or that their work is well presented and easy to read. Lesson observations showed that they have a good knowledge of the strategies they need for writing, but do not always put these into practice when asked to work independently.

96. The quality of teaching throughout the school is good overall. In the lessons seen in Key Stage 1, it was consistently good or better. In Key Stage 2, there was also good and very good teaching and there were no unsatisfactory lessons. The best feature of teaching in Key Stage 1 is the teachers' accurate planning of work for pupils of different abilities within their class. They set clear writing targets and make good use of the marking code to identify what pupils need to do to improve. They then use this information to plan work at a suitable level for individuals and groups. They provide appropriate support where it is needed, and this ensures that all pupils make good progress. These systems are not, however, as well developed in Key Stage 2. Most teachers in this part of the school set appropriate targets and mark work conscientiously, often with encouraging comments. However, they do not use this day-to-day assessment, either to guide pupils towards their agreed targets or to plan future work for them. Consequently, groups of pupils are sometimes given work which is either too hard or too easy for them, which leads to occasional restlessness or loss of concentration. Additionally, teachers' expectations of the quality of work which their pupils should produce in order to meet their targets varies from day to day and from subject to subject and are too low, overall. This slows the rate of achievement and accounts for pupils' inconsistent attitudes to presentation and the quality of completed work. A significant strength of teaching in both key stages, on the other hand, is the teachers' good overall interpretation and use of the National Literacy Strategy, which is the main reason for pupils' good overall progress, particularly in reading and in speaking and listening. Some teachers make appropriate use of computers to enable pupils to publish their work, but the word processor is not used as much or as effectively as it could be to produce and then edit drafts of their writing.
97. Two subject leaders, one for each key stage, have worked hard and successfully together to achieve the good improvement since the last inspection. They make very good use of test data to set targets for improvement in the subject, and this has led them to place greater emphasis on the development of writing, a strategy which is in the early stages of development.

## **MATHEMATICS**

98. Standards at the end of both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 are above the national average. Pupils are making good progress. In the national tests in 2002, the school's results were well above average when compared with all schools, as they were when compared with similar schools. Current standards do not reflect a fall in provision or performance, but rather reflect the variations that often occur between different groups of pupils. At the time of the school's previous inspection, standards were also reported to have been above the national average. However, since that time, the trend in the school's performance has been upwards. This fact, together with developments that have taken place, for example, in teaching and assessment, show that overall improvement has been good.
99. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils successfully carry out a range of practical and problem-solving activities, and, although a small number of pupils find it difficult, many confidently try to discover their own ways to find solutions. Pupils have a clear understanding of addition and subtraction. Most know the multiplication facts relating to 2, 5 and 10, and can undertake a range of multiplication and division exercises accordingly. They have a clear understanding of place value to three figures, and they recognise odd and even numbers. They successfully identify halves and quarters, and higher-attainers can find a fraction of a whole number. Pupils

confidently carry out addition and subtraction of money, in the context of shopping bills. Most pupils correctly identify two and three-dimensional shapes and they have a good understanding of time on the hour and half-hour. In measuring activities, pupils use non-standard units of measure confidently, and most readily use standard measures also. Pupils successfully collect data, such as on their favourite chocolates, and they represent their findings carefully in bar graphs.

100. By the end of Key Stage 2, many pupils have successfully developed their own strategies for solving problems. They readily identify the information they need, and they draw their own conclusions from their work. A small number of pupils continue to find this aspect of work difficult, however. Pupils confidently undertake work in addition and subtraction, as well as in a range of multiplication and division forms. They have a clear knowledge of place value to seven figures, and most pupils are confident in saying the times-tables, and in quickly recalling individual multiplication and division facts to 10x10. Pupils use decimals, to two and three places, confidently in addition and subtraction, as well as in the context of measurement and money. Most pupils have a clear understanding of fractions, and they readily identify equivalent fractions and reduce a fraction to its lowest terms. Pupils use and interpret coordinates in the first quadrant, and higher-attaining pupils are beginning to produce work involving all four quadrants. Many pupils identify and calculate perimeters and areas of regular and compound shapes, using an appropriate formula when required. However, a small number of pupils find this exercise difficult when using a formula. Many readily compare two simple distributions, confidently identifying, for example, the range and median. Most pupils understand the concept of probability, and many confidently use the appropriate terminology to describe their observations.
101. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Very good practice was also observed during the inspection. This is an overall improvement since the previous report. Lessons are carefully planned, based on the pattern of the framework for the National Numeracy Strategy. In particular, teachers make most careful allowance for the provision of practical and problem-solving activities, and care is also taken to ensure that pupils usually receive work that is suited to their particular needs. All teachers make good use of mental activities at the beginning of lessons. They are also aware of the need to continue to extend pupils' mathematical vocabulary and are careful to address this issue during lessons. Teachers have good subject knowledge, provide clear instruction and give much well-directed support throughout. Lessons are brisk in pace, expectations are generally high and much help and support is provided, with the result that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good gains in their overall mathematical ability.
102. Where teaching is very good, and where, for example, subject knowledge is particularly secure, a variety of stimulating methods is used to instruct the pupils who are challenged in their work and are helped to make very good progress. Pupils clearly enjoy their work, and the mental activities in particular. They settle to their written and practical tasks with interest and enthusiasm, they work well with other pupils when required, they know what they are expected to do, and they make considerable efforts to accomplish their tasks. Pupils are always well behaved, and often very well behaved, and this enables them to concentrate well and make suitable progress. Teachers regularly hold plenary<sup>8</sup> sessions, but on occasions these are too short to adequately check pupils' understanding or celebrate the work they have done. Whilst some pupils are less careful, most take care with the appearance of their work. Teachers mark pupils' work promptly, but, although some teachers provide regular comments of advice or praise, others do not carry out the practice consistently.
103. The school uses the National Numeracy Strategy as its scheme of work, with the staff making appropriate additions where they believe they are needed. Teachers use the scheme well to produce good-quality planning. The strategy itself has been implemented effectively, and high standards are now being achieved. The subject coordinators are enthusiastic and

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<sup>8</sup> The plenary is the final part of the lesson when teachers and pupils reflect on how successfully the learning objectives have been met.

knowledgeable, as well as being very good practitioners, and their leadership of the subject has improved since the previous inspection. They carefully monitor work being undertaken in the school, and regularly support their colleagues in their classrooms. They have played an important role in helping the school to achieve its current high standards. Assessment procedures have improved since the time of the last inspection, and are now very good. They are being used most effectively to identify pupils' current attainment, the progress they have made and to provide work that is suited to their particular needs. Further, suitable use is also made of this information to plot the progress that individual pupils make as they move through the school, and to provide them with targets for improving their work. Many pupils find mathematics an exciting subject, and the excitement generated, for example when identifying solutions to problems, helps develop pupils' spiritual awareness. Mathematics is used appropriately in other subjects, such as science and design and technology, but limited use is currently made of information and communication technology to develop pupils' mathematical skills.

## SCIENCE

104. Standards of attainment in science at the end of both key stages are good and this is a similar position to that at the time of the previous inspection. Although there has been a considerable fluctuation of standards year by year since the last inspection, the national test results at the end of Key Stage 2 are now much better than at that time and are above the national average. The standards attained by pupils currently in Years 2 and 6 are above the expected standards for their age. The previous report highlighted the lack of assessment procedures in science. This weakness has been eradicated, and comprehensive assessment procedures, including careful data analysis, are now playing a key role in the improvement of standards in science in both key stages. For example, a thorough analysis of the 2001 test results highlighted the need for pupils to become more confident in their understanding of scientific language, and this information has been used well. As a direct result of this analysis, each year group has been given a list of scientific vocabulary to master, and this has led to a significant increase in the number of pupils achieving higher grades in the 2002 national tests. The very good emphasis placed upon assessment and data analysis has had a positive impact on standards. It ensures that there is a clear overview of attainment throughout the school and enables teachers to track pupils' progress effectively. As a result, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress.
105. Pupils' scientific skills are being developed systematically throughout the school. Pupils use their predicting skills confidently, and the provision for experimental and investigative science is a particularly strong feature of the curriculum. Pupils in Year 1, for instance, were very creative in their use of a range of everyday materials to develop lids that could rock, whilst pupils in Year 2 were identifying materials that would be suitable for 'Mr Silly's' house. In a class in Year 6, pupils were able to suggest different methods of separating solids from a mixture and were confident in their use of terms such as evaporation, decanting and filtering.
106. Observations of work produced during this current school year indicate that pupils undertake a range of appropriate scientific activities covering all the required elements of the science curriculum. The implementation of a regular 'Science Week' is a particularly strong feature of the science curriculum, as it enables all pupils to focus on a wider range of scientific activities than those covered in the normal curriculum. Pupils in Years 3 and 4, for example, had used a range of materials to design, make and evaluate the performance of boats, planes and kites. Science is often linked to other curricular areas, such as design and technology, and this was very evident in Year 1 where pupils had used cylinders to design, make and decorate their own rats before racing them on a series of 'rat-runs'. Opportunities to record data in various ways, such as tables, graphs and charts, enable pupils to make good use of their numeracy skills. However, the use of information and communication technology to support pupils' learning in science is under-developed.
107. Pupils clearly enjoy science lessons, and their attitudes and behaviour are good. They talk confidently about their work and have a good understanding. Pupils in Year 2, for example, could talk about 'forces' that 'push' and 'pull' and were aware that gravity 'pulls you down',

whilst in Year 6 pupils' knowledge about the life cycle of a flowering plant was good and they used terms such as 'photosynthesis' confidently and explained the process satisfactorily. All pupils were aware of the importance of ensuring that any test or investigation should be fair.

108. The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school with some very good features. During the week of the inspection, teachers and pupils in Year 3 were preparing for their 'Healthy Eating Day.' This led to very effective teaching and learning with strong links with other subjects, such as physical education, personal and social education and literacy. Pupils gained a very good knowledge of health-related matters, such as the importance of appropriate diet and exercise and they could talk confidently about the different food groups. They cooperated effectively to produce invitations, menus and place names for their final meal, and this proved a good opportunity for pupils to apply their literacy skills. It was a most rewarding experience for everyone who participated and was a good illustration of how learning can be enjoyable.
109. The teachers' planning has improved since the last inspection, and a variety of activities are planned, emphasising the need for pupils to learn through practical experience. The teachers make good use of display to enhance learning, such as that seen on plants in a classroom in Year 5, which was both informative and very attractively presented. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and make good progress overall in science lessons. In the very best lessons, teachers use questioning very well to probe and enhance pupils' understanding and set activities that provide appropriate challenge. For example, in a lesson in Year 6, when pupils were investigating evaporation and condensation, the teacher encouraged pupils to use precise scientific language to explain what they saw and why this was happening. One very good feature of teaching is the use made of subject expertise, where the teacher with particular expertise in science teaches both classes in Year 6. This is having a positive impact on standards of attainment and helps to ensure that the progress that pupils make in science accelerates as they reach the top end of the school. One less effective feature of teaching is the standard of day-to-day assessment. The school does have a marking policy, but this is not followed consistently. The purpose of individual work is not always made clear, and marking rarely contains comments that would indicate to pupils what they need to do to achieve further success.
110. The coordinator gives strong leadership to the subject and has done much to raise the profile of science throughout the school. The school has now adopted the government-recommended scheme of work, and the coordinator has carried out detailed analysis of pupils' performance in science and has implemented measures to improve standards of attainment. There is good use of assessment in science; regular assessment tasks are undertaken and the results of annual tests are analysed. The coordinator shows good leadership through leading by example, encouraging staff to ensure that the pupils learn through practical activities. Resources for the subject are satisfactory and well utilised, and there is a good standard of display throughout the school. The coordinator is aware of the need to ensure future development by monitoring the quality of teaching and planning and by increasing the use of information and communication technology to support pupils' learning in science.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

111. At the time of the last inspection, standards were judged to be average at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. Despite national pressures to devote more time to literacy and numeracy, attainment has risen in Key Stage 1 and, by the end of Year 2, pupils now attain beyond nationally expected levels. Attainment at the end of Year 6 remains satisfactory. Throughout the school, pupils work in a wide variety of media and use sketchbooks effectively to record and develop their ideas. There is very little evidence to show that pupils use computers to do research or as a means to develop their artistic skills.
112. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have developed their skills of observation well, are starting to record accurately what they see and to develop a feeling for line and design. They have worked in a variety of two- and three-dimensional media, and standards are above national

expectations. Pupils in Key Stage 1 work well and make good progress. In Year 2, pupils learn to observe objects closely and to draw what they see. During the inspection, for example, pupils were studying work by William Morris. They applied skills they had learned earlier in the term when they had looked at autumn leaves, drawn their shapes and mixed paints to reproduce their colours. Pupils created decorated initials and produced a collage of good quality all in the style of William Morris and which showed his flowing lines and use of limited colours, but were also imaginative and highly individual. Pupils in Year 1 have used clay in three and two dimensions. They made clay divas for Diwali and, during the inspection, they investigated the effect of using different pressing tools and shells to make patterned clay tiles. Some of the finished patterns were unusually intricate and mature. Pupils in Year 2 have developed their knowledge of pattern making and the properties of clay to create large leaf-shaped plates from clay. Pupils look at their own and others' work, define what they like about it and start to suggest improvements. Pupils with special educational needs take full part in all activities and make good progress.

113. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have continued to develop their skills satisfactorily, although pupils have limited opportunities to carry out independent research for projects. Achievement slows towards the top of the key stage because there is pressure to spend time on the three core subjects<sup>9</sup>. Pupils use their knowledge of design to draw and paint ideas for hats for different purposes, after collecting cuttings from magazines and creating collages of many different hats. The school's website shows that, last term, pupils in Year 6 studied Japanese paintings and used pencil and charcoal to create fantasy sketches with a distinctly Japanese influence. Skills develop steadily through Key Stage 2. Pupils in Year 3 develop their knowledge of pattern by studying aborigines' lifestyle and art. Pupils in Year 4 experiment with a wide range of techniques for making pattern such as marbling, and last term, after studying pictures by Picasso, they painted designs for chairs in one of his styles showing very good use of space, shape and colour. Pupils extend their knowledge of different materials to make collages illustrating episodes in books they have read, and use clay and papier-mâché in connection with history projects. For example, pupils in Year 5 last term made papier-mâché Greek pots and miniature clay models of Greek gods. This term they have used their skills of observation to draw good-quality sketches in science that illustrate their work on the anatomy of plants and flowers. Pupils in Year 6 said that they become highly aware of what they are doing, look critically at work and suggest and make improvements to work in progress. Pupils evaluate their achievements at the end of projects. Pupils with special educational needs are totally involved in all activities and achieve as well as their classmates.
114. In Key Stage 1, the quality of the teaching is good, and it has some very good features. Only one lesson was observed in Key Stage 2. It was satisfactory. The quality of work displayed in classrooms indicates that teaching is satisfactory throughout Key Stage 2, and samples of work on display on the school website suggest that, on occasions, the teaching is good. Learning is good throughout Key Stage 1 and satisfactory, with examples of some good work, in Key Stage 2. Some of the work displayed, such as the dream bags made by pupils in Year 4, did not use their skills fully, although they provided a good background for displaying related work done in literacy. Teachers in Key Stage 1 plan in clear detail and know exactly how they are going to develop their pupils' skills. Lessons proceed at a good pace, pupils are immediately interested and work hard to improve their skills. In Year 2, for example, pupils had looked at designs by William Morris, had sketched similar ones in their books, looked at each other's work and then developed their ideas further by decorating their initials ready to be made into calendars. Teachers have high expectations that their pupils will behave well, and pupils are obedient and keep focused on the activities on hand. The emphasis on studying artists' work and looking at their own work sharpens pupils' powers of observation well and raises the standard of finished pieces. Pupils, especially in Key Stage 2, use art well as a means of developing their literacy skills. In Year 3, for example pupils used appropriate words and phrases to outline the shapes of faces and fish.

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<sup>9</sup> The core subjects are English, mathematics and science.

115. The subject is led and managed well. Detailed schemes of work have been developed from a nationally recommended programme of study, and these provide a very good basis for lessons. The school ensures that all pupils have regular lessons in art. Good use is made of local exhibitions and museums so that pupils see original works of art and learn about both European and other cultures. There is no art club at present. Teachers use pupils' self assessment as a means of analysing the success of topics, but at present there is no complementary assessment by teachers of how well pupils develop skills. The coordinator sees planning and samples of pupils' work, but does not monitor teaching, a weakness which needs to be rectified in the future.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

116. As no lessons were observed during the week of the inspection, judgements are based predominantly upon discussions with pupils and the coordinator and a detailed scrutiny of pupils' work. Standards of attainment are in line with those expected nationally at the end of both key stages and pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. This is a similar position to that seen at the time of the last inspection. Throughout the school, most pupils achieve satisfactorily in relation to their prior attainment. Those with special educational needs are carefully supported to enable them to participate fully in lessons.
117. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are introduced effectively to the processes of planning, designing and making. They learn to draw and plan their ideas appropriately, over a range of topics, before they progress to making what they have designed. For example, pupils in Year 2 plan to make a jam sandwich and a milkshake. Their designs show that, having decided what ingredients they will need, they can transfer their ideas to paper in the correct sequence and then put these plans into action. They also become aware of the importance of appropriate standards of hygiene. For example, pupils in Year 2 had been introduced to protective clothing, such as gloves, hats and aprons, before attempting to make chocolate, and they could explain why these precautions had been taken. The curriculum for design and technology is often linked to other areas, such as science and literacy. Pupils in Year 2, for instance, design and make their own vehicles before making use of the properties of magnets to enable these vehicles to travel around a constructed racetrack. As part of their work in literacy, pupils become aware of the properties of simple circuits when designing an illuminated eye for their dragon. There are now more opportunities for pupils to participate in designing opportunities and to develop their designing skills than was seen at the time of the previous inspection.
118. Pupils in Key Stage 2 continue to make satisfactory progress in the designing process and in the investigation of a wide range of purposes for designing. They acquire appropriate knowledge in the use of tools and materials, and this is evident in the products they make. Pupils in Years 3 and 4, for example, had designed and made kites, boats and aeroplanes from a variety of materials and had then tested them for effectiveness and durability. One very strong feature of design and technology is the ability of pupils to evaluate their work and to make suggestions for future improvement. One pupil, for example, had written that his aeroplane might have travelled further if he had made his propeller from stronger materials, whilst another pupil observed that she would not have made a kite from paper if she had known that it was to be tested in wet weather. The implementation of a regular 'Science Week' is a particularly good opportunity for all pupils to focus on design and making activities.
119. Although the coordinator for design and technology has only been in post for a year, she has already done much to raise the profile of the subject. She has implemented a curriculum for design and technology that is based on nationally recognised guidelines but has been adapted to meet the particular needs of the school. It seeks to ensure that what pupils learn is carefully matched to their previous experiences and gives good opportunities for pupils to increase and to practise their skills over time. The coordinator monitors planning and has improved the quantity and quality of resources. She has sufficient expertise to ensure that further improvements are made in the subject and has already developed and implemented procedures for assessment to eradicate a weakness at the time of the previous inspection when pupils' attainment and progress in design and technology were not adequately

assessed. The coordinator has a clear overview of her subject and has developed an action plan that includes ideas for improving the confidence of teachers, particularly those in Key Stage 2, by arranging a training day and the monitoring of teaching throughout the school.

## **GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY**

120. Overall, standards in geography and history have improved very well since the last inspection. When judging both subjects together, pupils achieve standards above those typically found at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. This is mainly due to the very good linking of content and skills, and the planned work across other subjects throughout the school. Good, strong and enthusiastic teaching ensures pupils are also enthusiastic and interested in their work. Pupils' research skills are strong in both subjects and all year groups. The school has worked hard to negate the comments made in the last report concerning too little depth and breadth in the teaching, and the weaknesses in planning for pupils' improvement over time. They have addressed all these problems very well, and have found interesting ways, for instance, to make map work enjoyable, whilst practising the skills in a progressive manner. The interweaving of both subjects, and their linking with others, provides a good structure and a sensible approach.
121. At Key Stage 1, the teachers' planning for geography also makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development and citizenship training. Thus, pupils in Year 1 consider a wide range of factors when undertaking a study of their local area. They describe what the place is like at busy and quiet times and express opinions and suggestions for improvement. Teachers have offered many, varied opportunities to research and record findings, and pupils have used a great variety of ways to sort and document what they have found. The school is fortunate to be situated as it is by the sea, and surrounded by open land, in a river valley, with hills and fields. Teachers make very good use of these assets, and pupils demonstrate good understanding of land use, and man's intervention and interaction with the landscape. In Year 2, pupils build well on previous learning to contrast their environment and coastline with that of the Scottish island of Coll. They do this very well through the story of Katie Morag, but their teachers leave them in no doubt that Struay is the author's invention, and based on her life on Coll. The use of this fictional island, and the characters in the story, allows teachers to draw upon pupils' experiences within a simple framework. Because they are involved heavily with this story, they learn new skills easily. A very good example of this was seen in Year 2, where pupils learned to read simple grid references quickly and effectively. Teachers' planning includes the use of technical language and pupils pick it up easily and use it correctly, for example when they decide what human or physical features are to be added to their maps.
122. Teachers have improved standards in history by learning from their previous good practice in geography and forging links with literacy. Thus, their planning shows how skills will build upon previous learning and will link with geographical knowledge. Again, the school is fortunate in its proximity to museums and other interesting places to visit. Teachers make full use of these to extend pupils' learning. Prior knowledge of the coastline helps young pupils to understand the bravery of Grace Darling and, in Year 2, to contrast seaside holidays, past and present. Other units of study are linked well to national events such as Remembrance Day. However, disappointingly, work done about Florence Nightingale does not include any reference to Mary Seale, who also undertook groundbreaking work along the same lines. This would enable pupils and teachers to consider difficult, but important cultural and multicultural issues about prejudice and role models.
123. In geography, at Key Stage 2, the teaching and learning are much improved since the time of the last inspection. Here, teachers have learned from their previous good practice in history, and now build pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding well. Good links are also made with literacy and mathematics, where appropriate. When geography is not being taught directly, a very good 'passport' system is used which focuses on mapping skills. Four main areas are considered using standard map projections of the world and the British Isles. Pupils consider oceans, rivers, mountains and deserts through this system. For example, in Year 5, the main study is of the Caribbean, and strong historical links are made by considering Christopher Columbus, and using historical skills to empathise with the lives and times of his sailors. The

passport work concentrates on mountains, particularly in the United Kingdom. This work takes place when the main study has been completed. Later in the year, further work on mountains includes other parts of the world, and pupils undertake work on coordinates, and consider continents and populations, climate and land-use. By threading this passport work through the year and interlinking it with geographical and historical skills, pupils make good progress in their understanding of the world, both physical and human. In a very good lesson in Year 5, the teacher skilfully ensured pupils' instant involvement and interest by the taking the register in Spanish. Although this took some time, it helped pupils get to get into the mood of how it might feel to be a Spanish sailor aboard the 'Santa Maria'. Pupils' subsequent work was well written and demonstrated a good understanding of the conditions on board and the jobs various people undertook. On the previous day, pupils had been looking at photographs of land use and other features of the Caribbean in a geography session, and they incorporated some of this learning into their accounts in their diary. Throughout both subjects, pupils have the opportunity to research for themselves the facts and figures they need. This is a particularly strong element of the teaching, right the way through the key stage.

124. Work in Year 6 is planned in a similar way to weave the subjects and skills together. Thus, work on Ancient Egypt complements work on deserts and incorporates pupils' previous understanding about rivers and inundation. Similarly, study of contrasting habitats in science is carried out alongside issues about the environment, for example when considering implications of the local by-pass. Pupils present their work well, and teachers offer ample opportunities for them to choose how they will record what they know, or have found out. Some pupils prefer lists, others prefer diagrams or concept maps, whilst others draw pictures with thought bubbles. Teachers also use time-lines very well, in order to build pupils' skills in chronology. Pupils' abilities in this aspect develop well, from the Reception class to the end of Key Stage 2, and pupils with special educational needs make equally good progress because they are supported very well in their work. When interviewed, pupils in Year 6 demonstrated a clear understanding of how all the various periods of history they had studied fitted together. Teachers offer pupils very good opportunities to find and sort a great deal of information and evidence, and pupils said they enjoyed this very much because it was interesting.
125. The subjects are led well by two coordinators who work very closely together. They are keen and confident, and have drawn up realistic action plans, which they are implementing well. Since the time of the last inspection, they have drawn the two subjects closer together, successfully, which has aided teachers' planning and pupils' understanding. They have created a curriculum which now makes more sense to the whole school and helps pupils to build their skills progressively. Assessment is now taking place, in a low-key fashion, and pupils are more and more asked to assess their own learning. Teachers make jottings and keep simple records of what they have found about the pupils in particular circumstances. However, marking is variable and not always helpful in indicating to pupils how they might improve. Closer monitoring of the teaching and learning would help, not only in the classrooms but also in the use of books and the expectations placed on pupils. Resources are now much improved and teachers use them well. These are complemented by the many displays, visits and visitors they have in each year group. However, greater use could be made of information and communication technology in many classes as a tool for research or to help pupils with the presentation of their work.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

126. Since the last inspection, there has been satisfactory improvement in the school's provision for information and communication technology. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress and achieve standards in most aspects of the curriculum which are in line with national expectations at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. However, the picture in this subject is complex, and there is room for further improvement in the way pupils develop their skills and the use of new technology within the wider curriculum. The development of information and communication technology is, appropriately, a priority within the school's current development plan.

127. The installation of a computer suite, just over three years ago, has had a significant impact on the way the subject is taught and on the development of pupils' skills, but it has not proved a total panacea and has been the cause of much heartache and frustration, as the school has encountered technical problems from the moment of its installation. All classes now have a weekly lesson to teach information technology skills, and a few classes use the suite more frequently to enable pupils to carry out work in other subjects. Because they now have regular access to the computer suite, pupils are making satisfactory progress overall, but ongoing technical problems and the unreliability of some of the computers has had an adverse effect, dented teachers' confidence and put a brake on pupils' progress. In one lesson during the inspection, for example, a whole folder of pupils' work disappeared, so instead of developing the lesson from where pupils had left off the previous week, they had to start their work over again. In other lessons, a few pupils had to return to the classroom to attempt their work on the classroom computer under the supervision of the teaching assistant because three of the computers were not working, but this meant less support for pupils within the class. At present, many of the teachers are nervous about using the suite, in case anything goes wrong, and their attention is diverted from teaching and the main focus of the lesson. Despite these problems, all teachers comment on how much more proficient pupils are becoming with regular teaching sessions.
128. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils are working at the expected level in all aspects of the curriculum, though few have progressed beyond this. Pupils understand how new technology can enable them to exchange and share information. In Year 2, for example, pupils were producing synopses of their Christmas play to paste onto the back of a program for their parents. Few pupils, however, write at length using a computer and it takes them a long time to produce even a short amount of writing. Pupils are learning how to correct what they have typed, but have yet to develop any real understanding of how helpful computers can be when reviewing and modifying their work. Pupils are aware that computers can be used to find things out and have, for example, enjoyed using the Internet to find out about Florence Nightingale. However, they have yet to develop real proficiency in this area through regular use of CD-ROMs, data-handling programs or the Internet. Most pupils have learnt essential skills, such as logging onto the school's network, locating programs, retrieving previous work, starting a new piece of work and printing it out. Most pupils use the computer independently, but often need adult support when learning new features.
129. By the end of Year 6, pupils are working at the expected level in most aspects of the subject, but few pupils demonstrate advanced skills for their age. The pupils are most competent in the aspect of exchanging and sharing information. They use the basic functions of a word processor confidently and have a satisfactory command of different tools for setting out their text in different ways. Pupils in Year 6 are currently learning how to produce their own multimedia presentations, but they work slowly and do not always show awareness of good features of design and layout. They have a satisfactory understanding of how to find out information to help them with their work in other subjects through accessing the Internet. During the inspection, for example, pupils in Year 5 learnt how to access information on mountains on the school's own intranet, a very good feature, which has been compiled by one of the humanities coordinators. Pupils are developing an understanding of how computers can be used to control events, for example, through the use of commands and procedures to draw objects on the screen. By the time pupils reach Years 5 and 6, they are starting to produce longer pieces of work on the computer, but do not yet take full advantage of the computer's facilities which help them review, modify and evaluate their work. Their progress with more extended pieces of work is also hampered by their slow typing speed.
130. The overall quality of the teaching is satisfactory. The teachers' expertise has improved as a result of in-service training, although teachers acknowledge that more training is required before all are fully proficient in teaching all aspects of the curriculum. Teachers' confidence in teaching the subject still varies considerably. The teachers' basic lesson planning for the subject is generally good, as they provide meaningful contexts for the teaching of information technology skills. In Year 4, for example, pupils were learning to set out a journalistic report in the style of a newspaper. The main focus of the lesson was to teach pupils how to position

and size their text, but the work linked in very well with their study of journalistic writing in English and work in history on the Mary Rose. Most teachers introduce their lessons well, giving clear explanations, often involving the use of a digital projector so that pupils can see what is happening on the screen. The main part of the lesson is not always managed as effectively, as teachers do not always make clear how much they expect pupils to accomplish in a given time, with the result that pupils dictate the pace, rather than the teacher. In a number of lessons during the inspection, the amount of work accomplished within the lesson was disappointingly small, but teachers had not urged the pace or discouraged pupils from spending time on unnecessary activities. The fact that most lessons involve the whole class and necessitate pupils working in pairs is, at times, unhelpful as pupils have a tendency to distract each other or wait idly until it is their turn to take control of the keyboard. In some lessons, productive and helpful discussions took place, but teachers have yet to distinguish which is the most appropriate form of organisation for each lesson.

131. In most lessons, teachers spend the major part of the lesson helping individual pupils, which is not always the most productive way of working. An exception to this occurred in a lesson in Year 4 in which the teacher set part of the class a task and then taught the more able pupils how to create their own layout template. Although most teachers attempt to draw pupils' learning together at the end of each lesson, for example, by examining what one or two pupils have produced in the lesson, much of the evaluation is superficial. Not enough time is spent on evaluative activities, nor are pupils given enough opportunity to develop their own critical awareness or learn how to improve their work through the suggestions of others. Opportunities are missed to help pupils develop their writing skills through new technology. In a number of classes, written work produced by pupils on a computer was on display, but pupils had not edited their text properly in order to correct spellings, grammar or punctuation. Teachers thus miss good opportunities to teach pupils how to review and modify their work, and pupils fail to appreciate how easy it is to correct mistakes using a word processor.
132. Pupils' attitudes and response in their information and communication technology lessons, whilst generally satisfactory, are less positive than in many other subjects. Although they enjoy the opportunity to use the computers, they do not always apply themselves as well as they could to their tasks. In most classes, the pace of working is slow and pupils are too easily distracted by their working partner or by what others were doing. The swivelling chairs also act as a considerable distraction and a constant irritation, particularly when teachers attempt to teach the whole class when pupils are sitting on the chairs.
133. The curriculum for information and communication technology is sound. The school follows a recommended scheme of work, which ensures that all aspects of the prescribed curriculum are covered. Units of work are generally linked well to work being undertaken in other subjects so that pupils can not only see the relevance of what they are learning, but can also learn more in other subjects at the same time. Beyond the subject's scheme of work, only some of the more confident teachers are making sufficient use of information and communication technology to help pupils learn in other subjects.
134. The coordinator provides satisfactory leadership and management of the subject, but the school needs to consider how her role can be made manageable. The coordinator has ensured that staff have an appropriate scheme of work and has presided over the development and commissioning of the school's computer suite. However, because of the problems with the school's equipment and the fact that the school has been unable to secure the regular services of a technician, too much of the coordinator's time has been taken up with attempting to solve technical problems and routine maintenance, rather than leading subject development and maintaining a clear overview of what is happening throughout the school. At present, not enough time is devoted to monitoring teaching and the quality of pupils' work in order to identify how the school's provision could be improved, what additional training needs to be provided for staff and what standards pupils are achieving. Other subject coordinators have not properly taken on the responsibility for identifying how information and communication technology should be used within their subjects, which is one of the reasons why not enough use is being made of new technology outside pupils' timetabled information

and communication technology lessons. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment are rudimentary, but the coordinator is working with the local authority's advisory teacher to develop assessment procedures and models of best practice to be shared with other schools. This is a good initiative which should prove of benefit to the school and help to raise standards. The school has an appropriate policy for use of the Internet, and the procedures ensure, as far as is possible, the safety of pupils. Whilst the school is outwardly satisfactorily equipped, the current equipment is not proving reliable enough and insufficient use is being made of most computers situated in classrooms for pupils to make better than satisfactory progress. Some of the software used is not always the most appropriate, particularly when pupils are unlikely to encounter or have recourse to use this software in the future.

## **MUSIC**

135. At the time of the last inspection, standards were judged to be above average at the end of both key stages. The school has successfully maintained the standards achieved at the end of Key Stage 1 and there has been very good improvement in the standards reached by the end of Key Stage 2, which have risen to well above those achieved in most schools. This is due initially to very good leadership on the part of the two coordinators. Following the last inspection, they identified and successfully addressed a need to improve systems for assessing and improving pupils' progress. Consequently, they are aware of pupils' individual strengths and weaknesses, from an early stage, and provide support where it is needed. In this way, less able pupils and those with special educational needs are helped to become more confident, whilst those who clearly have more talent are encouraged to develop it, both in and beyond the classroom.
136. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have regular opportunities to choose from and play a variety of tuned and percussion instruments and become good at playing them. As a result, they quickly develop very mature attitudes to cooperating and performing with their classmates. By the end of Key Stage 1, they combine very successfully with others to compose and perform simple rhythmic patterns on percussion instruments, with one member of the group acting as 'conductor'. The most able pupils have begun to read formal notation at this stage, whilst a very small minority lack confidence, for example in clapping in time to a beat, and look to adults or a friend for help. The vast majority sing well-known songs and hymns enthusiastically and in tune. From Year 3 onwards, pupils' rate of achievement accelerates and is very good for pupils of all abilities. This is due to continued good teaching and assessment and to the increased opportunities for pupils to develop their skills through extra tuition or membership of the school's flourishing orchestra. By the end of Key Stage 2, there are hardly any pupils lacking the confidence and skill to perform as members of a class group or larger ensemble. The vast majority compose pieces using a range of graphic symbols and successfully 'read' their compositions when performing. By this stage, they are clearly aware of the moods and effects that they can produce by changing the pulse or rhythm of their music or by combining the sounds of several instruments at once. More able pupils at this stage are confidently reading more complex music and play instruments such as keyboard, violin, saxophone, flute or clarinet to a high standard for their age.
137. The teaching at both key stages is good overall and is often very good. In Key Stage 2, specialist teaching of many classes by one of the coordinators is particularly beneficial, and is supported by some very good teaching in Year 6. A strength of the teaching throughout the school is teachers' organisation of lessons which ensures that pupils have the maximum time possible to enjoy the hands-on experience of musical instruments and encourages them to evaluate the quality of their own and others' performance. In the very good lessons seen in Years 2 and 6, for example, it was clear that this creative approach is helping pupils to appreciate their own value and role in a performance and that of their classmates. This makes a significant contribution to their personal development. Teaching throughout the school is also successful in promoting the sheer pleasure in singing and playing, clearly reflected in the joyful rendering of 'My Name Is Joe' by pupils in Year 3, for example. Teaching is only occasionally less successful when teachers lack confidence and this leads to some inhibition and loss of cohesion in pupils' performance. Teachers make appropriate use of

computer software to develop pupils' composition skills in some classes, but little use is made of new technology to develop pupils' musical skills in most classes.

138. The coordinators provide very clear educational direction for their colleagues to the extent that the subject makes a significant contribution to the calm and positive ethos that permeates the school. For instance, music is regularly used to create mood and atmosphere in art or physical education lessons, or is often played in classrooms as pupils come in and settle down each morning. Pupils are regularly given opportunities to listen to or perform songs and tunes, for example from Native America, Ireland or the Caribbean and this makes a very good contribution to their understanding of their own and other cultures. The Key Stage 2 coordinator very successfully and efficiently manages the 60-strong school orchestra, which brings much deserved credit to the school and its pupils through regular performances for parents and at various concerts throughout Weymouth. She has also built up a good range of resources for teaching, although the impact of these is sometimes limited by the cramped conditions in which she is forced to carry out much of her specialist teaching.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

139. Standards by the end of both Key Stages 1 and 2 are in line with national expectations. However, standards in swimming are above average. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall and good progress in swimming. Overall, current standards are lower than they were reported to be at the time of the school's previous inspection. This reflects the different expectations that are now made, together with the more limited time that is available for the subject.
140. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils readily move around the hall, showing clear awareness of both space and other pupils. Pupils in Year 2 confidently develop dance movements in response to music, introducing suitable variations in speed, shape and direction into their work. In developing sequences of movements to represent being robots, pupils show appropriate coordination and imagination. They introduce suitable stillness and gesture to add emphasis to their movements, and the standard of their work is similar to that expected for pupils of this age. Pupils undertake swimming activities, and most pupils become confident in the water. By the end of Year 2, a significant number of pupils can swim at least 10 metres, using a variety of arm and leg actions. Pupils recognise some of the effects that exercise has on their bodies, and many feel confident enough to explain their understanding of pulse rates.
141. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils successfully develop their skills of throwing, catching and moving with a ball. For example, although a small number of pupils find it difficult, most pupils show some accuracy in their passing. Pupils increase their skills of attacking and defending, through participating in small-sided team games based on football, netball and tag-rugby. The oldest pupils, in particular, are beginning to understand the concept of tactics in these games. Pupils successfully perform a range of gymnastic movements, including jumping, balancing and rolling. They show satisfactory control in their movements, and they work well with a partner in developing a sequence of movements. However, whilst pupils carry out their movements correctly, few as yet introduce enough quality or poise into their work. This limits the standards being achieved. Pupils understand the need to warm up for, and recover from, exercise, and many can point out the dangers of not doing so. Pupils attend swimming lessons during the summer term. They continue to develop their confidence in the water, and by the end of Year 6, almost all pupils are able to swim 25 metres unaided, with many swimming significantly further. Pupils in both Years 4 and 6 develop their outdoor skills during an annual residential visit.
142. The overall quality of the teaching and learning is satisfactory, although two very good lessons were also observed during the inspection. Teachers produce sound planning, and they provide an appropriate range of resources to help pupils develop their various skills. Clear instruction is provided, and this allows all pupils, including those with special educational needs, to make satisfactory gains in their various skills. In the very good lessons, the instructions given by the teacher were particularly clear, careful demonstrations were given of the standards expected, and the pace was particularly brisk. Teachers' expectations were

high and pupils made very good progress. Members of staff change into appropriate clothing for lessons, and they all join in and demonstrate for pupils. They have sound subject knowledge, and they generally make suitable demands of the pupils' performance. However, they do not always ask pupils to develop enough quality and finesse in, for example, their gymnastic movements, and this affects the standards being achieved. Pupils join in, enjoy themselves and make a satisfactory, and sometimes good, physical effort. Lessons are generally conducted at a brisk pace, with pupils being kept busy throughout and being encouraged to develop their movements and skills. Occasionally, the pace slows for pupils when they queue to take their turn at activities. Teachers show good control and management skills, especially when dealing with the large classes, and most pupils are careful to give their full attention to their teacher. Teachers often use pupils to demonstrate good practice, but opportunities are usually missed for pupils to discuss and evaluate the quality of the work seen, which would help them identify the areas where they might improve their performance. Teachers provide help and support to pupils in all aspects of their work and, in particular, they emphasise the need for safety. In turn, pupils show good and often very good attitudes, work well alone and with a partner or group, and carry items of equipment carefully and safely. Activities involving counting and measuring, especially in games lessons, give support to the school's initiative in numeracy.

143. The school has an appropriate scheme of work, with all aspects of work being suitably covered. Good provision is made for swimming, with all classes being able to use the school's own pool. This provision has contributed significantly to the standards being achieved in swimming. There are satisfactory assessment procedures in place, and suitable information is recorded to identify pupils' present attainment and the progress they are making. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. The coordinator is a newly-qualified teacher, and he does not officially take over the subject until next year. However, he is keen and enthusiastic and happy to be involved at this stage. The school is providing him with much well-directed support and encouragement from more experienced members of staff, and this should enable him to carry out the role effectively.
144. The school makes very good provision for extra-curricular activities, and the school has a number of successful sports teams. These activities, together with the annual residential visits for pupils in Years 4 and 6, play a significant part in pupils' social development.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

145. Since the last inspection, standards have improved at both key stages in relation to the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. This is a marked improvement from the previous inspection when it was found that there was insufficient breadth and depth in pupils' learning and too little progress being made, and that the subject did not meet the full requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Now, at Key Stage 1, pupils' written work is typical for the age group, whilst, orally, pupils demonstrate good understanding, careful thought and a mature attitude above what might be expected. At Key Stage 2, pupils' written work and understanding are as expected. Throughout the school, pupils now make sound progress.
146. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have covered a reasonable amount of work and recorded appropriately, with simple, effective diagrams, charts and lists. Work is set out well, and is neat and clear. This is because teachers have very high expectations about the content and presentation of pupils' work, and are evaluative about whether pupils have understood or not. A very good example of this was seen in a lesson for pupils in Year 2, where the teacher asked the pupils to assess for themselves whether or not they understood Hanukkah, a celebration they were studying for the first time. The teacher made a note of those pupils who said they were not confident. This type of assessment shows up clearly in the marking of pupils' books. This is an important way that the teachers in Key Stage 1 check for pupils' understanding.
147. Teachers also use resources very well in order to aid pupils' learning. An excellent example of this was seen in a very good lesson in Year 1, where the class was preparing for their work on the Christmas story. To be sure that the pupils understood the physical conditions and

differences in time since the birth of Jesus, the teacher contrasted getting ready for the arrival of a baby in modern times and preparations in olden days. She skilfully showed, and discussed with the pupils, a modern layette and they were fascinated. As each item was unveiled, the pupils shared their experience and knowledge, whilst the teacher sensitively discussed such up-to-date ideas as having a scan and seeing a doctor, always bringing the subject back to the differences with Jesus' birth. One delightful moment occurred as the teacher told them about scraps of fabric filled with lambs wool, used as nappies. This was outside the pupils' experience and they made noises of disgust and disapproval, until she told them how the lanolin would keep the baby's skin safe and protected from moisture.

148. The teaching in Key Stage 1 is generally very good, because planning is very effective, teachers have very good subject knowledge and obviously feel comfortable with the syllabus they are teaching. This consistently very good teaching leads to good acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding by the pupils. Teachers are at great pains to make sure that learning takes place within a framework that pupils can understand. A very good example of this was seen in a lesson for pupils in Year 2, where they were about to learn about the Jewish celebration of Hanukkah. Quite difficult concepts about the festival's history were understood well because the pupils acted out the story. Interesting, thought-provoking displays also enhance learning. Pupils contrasting Jewish and Christian faiths, then and now, have access to very good displays, which do not concentrate on facts, but rather on how it feels to be Jewish. Thus, books, artefacts, pictures and labels tell pupils what they will study and find out about Hanukkah. Reference is also made to other religions that pupils will study when they are older and this sets their work in context.
149. Overall, lessons in Key Stage 2 are more factual and less about what it feels like to live a particular faith. On the whole, teachers are less comfortable with the syllabus than are their colleagues in Key Stage 1. Displays are not so helpful to the pupils, and some teachers miss opportunities to deepen religious understanding because their questioning is too shallow; they do not ask the supplementary questions such as 'why?' or 'what do you think about...?' or they answer their own questions, without giving the pupils enough time to consider. Although teachers' expectations are reasonably high for the level of content and presentation in pupils' written work, they are less evaluative, and marking is not sufficiently specific enough to help the pupils improve. By the end of Year 6, pupils have studied the main points of all the major faiths. When interviewed, pupils in Year 6 remembered many names of the special books such as the Bible and the Qur'an, and they knew they should be respectful of others' beliefs. They discussed well why they study other religions, and realised this leads to tolerance and understanding of how people live and their customs.
150. The coordinator is currently away on maternity leave, but has led the subject well, so far, and has helped to improve standards improving the curriculum, when it had become lost amongst all the other priorities in the school. She has ensured that each year's work builds carefully on pupils' previous learning, and has filled in the gaps in order for the syllabus to make sense to the pupils. Resources have been greatly improved and the school makes good use of several visitors to enhance the pupils' study in this subject.