

## INSPECTION REPORT

### **ST. MICHAEL'S CE (AIDED) PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Aldbourn, Marlborough

LEA area: Wiltshire

Unique reference number: 126392

Headteacher: Mrs M Edwards

Reporting inspector: RWG Thelwell  
20977

Dates of inspection: 11<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> November 2002

Inspection number: 248774

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:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	St. Michael's CE (Aided) Primary School Back Lane Aldbourn Marlborough Wiltshire
Postcode:	SN8 2BP
Telephone number:	01672 540434
Fax number:	As above
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs M Adey
Date of previous inspection:	22 <sup>nd</sup> – 25 <sup>th</sup> May 2000

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
20977	Mr RWG Thelwell Registered inspector	Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage; Mathematics; Information and communication technology; Design and technology; Physical education.	The school's results and achievements; How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
9487	Mrs F Hurd Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development; How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
22167	Miss H Carruthers Team inspector	Educational inclusion; Special educational needs; English; Science; Art and design; Music.	How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
32296	Mr W James Team inspector	Geography; History.	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

When last inspected in May 2000, St Michael's Primary was reported to be an underachieving school. At that time, 113 pupils were on roll. Now 91 attend, including ten children in reception. Pupils are drawn from a cross section of socio-economic backgrounds, and, depending on their birthdays, children enter reception in the September or January of the school year in which they become five. Nearly all children attend pre-school groups before joining the school. Informal assessment on entry shows that whilst attainment varies from year to year, on average performance is in line with that expected for this age. There are four classes with an average size of 23. Each class caters for pupils from more than one year group. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs, and those known to be eligible for free school meals, is broadly average. Two pupils have statements of special educational needs allocated under the terms of the DfES Code of Practice<sup>1</sup>; proportionally this is above average. All pupils have English as their first language. Since the last inspection there has been a high turnover of staff. Four of the five teachers currently in post, including the head and deputy headteacher, have been appointed within the last two years. The quality of acts of worship and religious education were inspected by a representative of the diocese. This report appears under a separate cover.

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

St Michael's Primary is a rapidly improving school that has many strengths and good features. It is very well led and managed. Although there are areas still in need of improvement, it is no longer an underachieving school. The headteacher, staff and governors work well as a team, and have established a positive and caring ethos that successfully supports and promotes pupils' learning. Very good relationships and good behaviour are the norm. Good, and often very good, teaching results in pupils' very good attitudes to learning. Pupils' personal development is very good. Standards for pupils now in Year 6 are above nationally expected levels in English, mathematics and science. This represents good achievement when considering pupils' average attainment on entry to the school. Efficient use is made of time, money and resources. Although the unit cost per pupil is much above average, this is now an effective school that gives sound value for money.

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

- Achieves standards for pupils currently in Year 6 that are above expected levels in English, mathematics and science, and for pupils in Year 2, above average attainment in English, mathematics, art and information and communication technology (ICT).
- The school provides good learning opportunities that are enhanced by a very good range of extracurricular activities.
- Teaching is good across the school.
- The school provides a caring community where pupils are known well and valued as individuals. It creates an orderly climate for learning.
- Very good provision is made for pupils' personal development. Relationships are very good, and pupils display very good attitudes to learning.
- Good provision for pupils with special educational needs results in them achieving well.

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<sup>1</sup> The Department for Education and Skills' Code of Practice gives practical advice to schools about their responsibilities to ensure that all pupils who have special educational needs receive the most appropriate help to further their learning and personal development. This is a statutory duty under the 1993 Education Act.

## What could be improved

- Statutory compliance with National Curriculum requirements in ICT for pupils between Years 3 and 6.
- Provision of appropriate resources to support Foundation Stage<sup>2</sup> children's structured outdoor play.
- Resources to support teaching and learning in geography and history.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Significant improvements have been made since the last inspection in May 2000. The curriculum is now broad and balanced. There has been a marked improvement in the quality of teaching. Planning for lessons is now good, and is underpinned by schemes of work for each subject. Procedures for assessment are now used well to identify what pupils know and can do, to set targets for learning, and help plan what is to be taught next. As such, teachers now provide well for pupils across all stages of learning. Underachievement has been eliminated. Effective procedures have been implemented to improve pupil behaviour, which is now good. Pupils' attitudes to learning have improved. Standards for pupils currently in Year 6 are above average in English, mathematics and science, and are above those noted at the time of the last inspection. Good improvement has been made in the provision for pupils with special educational needs. Accommodation has been improved considerably, as has the provision for ICT. The school gives better value for money. The application of pupils' ICT skills in other subjects remains an aspect for development. The school is well placed for further improvements.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores<sup>3</sup> in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			Similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	A	A	E	E
Mathematics	D	E	E	E
Science	D	E	C	D

**Key**

well above average      A

above average            B

average                    C

below average            D

well below average      E

Although end of Year 6 assessments for 2002 showed overall performance in English and mathematics to be well below average when compared with national results and those of similar schools, pupils achieved well when taking into account three-fifths of the small year group had special educational needs. In mathematics, the proportion gaining the expected level was significantly higher than that of the previous year. Results in science were noteworthy in that all pupils gained at least the expected level<sup>4</sup>. Results for pupils at the end of Year 2 were impressive in that overall performance in writing was well above the national average. It was above average in reading, and average in mathematics. Results remained the same when

<sup>2</sup> The Foundation Stage refers to children from entry up to and including age six when they complete the reception year.

<sup>3</sup> Average points scores refer to the average of pupils' scores weighted by Ofsted for each level attained in each subject.

<sup>4</sup> The national expectation is that, when assessed at the end of Year 2, pupils should achieve Level 2. The higher level is Level 3. When assessed at the end of Year 6, the expectation is that pupils achieve Level 4, with the higher level being Level 5.

compared with similar schools<sup>5</sup>. All pupils gained at least the expected levels in mathematics and science. For pupils currently in Year 6, where the size of the group and the proportion with special educational needs, is smaller than last year, attainment in English, mathematics and science is above nationally expected levels; as it is for English and mathematics in Year 2. There is every indication that standards will be maintained through to the end of the school year.

Although performance in ICT exceeds expected levels at the end of Year 2, attainment at Year 6 is below expectation. At Years 2 and 6, attainment meets expectations for pupils' ages in design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education. In art, attainment exceeds requirements at Year 2. It meets expectations by the end of Year 6.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have very good attitudes to learning. They are interested in their work and respond well to good teaching. This has a positive effect on the progress pupils make.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' good behaviour allows maximum time to be spent on teaching and learning.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils' personal development is very good. The very good relationships between pupils and amongst pupils and staff make a significant contribution to pupils' learning.
Attendance	Overall attendance is well above the national average. Pupils are punctual and keen to attend.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	Good with very good features	Good with very good features

*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 good quality of teaching across the school has a positive impact on pupils' learning. Strengths lie in thorough planning, together with effective ongoing assessment to help determine what is to be taught next, and set pupils individual targets for learning. Pupils know exactly what is expected of them because teachers explain clearly at the start of lessons. In literacy, where teaching is very good overall, teachers' enthusiasm, skilled questioning and interesting activities, are underpinned by good subject knowledge. Good teaching in mathematics is characterised by rigorous mental arithmetic sessions with pupils challenged to explain how they arrived at their answers, and tasks that successfully reinforce pupils' understanding of concepts taught. Across the school, teaching in lessons observed was never less than satisfactory.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

<sup>5</sup> Schools with more than 8 per cent and up to 20 per cent of pupils entitled to free school meals.

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Although provision in reception is good overall, children do not have appropriate resources for outdoor structured play. The curriculum for pupils between Years 1 and 6 is broad and balanced, and is enhanced by a good range of extracurricular activities. However, the full requirements of the National Curriculum for ICT are not met for pupils in Years 3 to 6.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Pupils receive good provision that is well managed. They make good progress in relation to prior attainment and to targets in their individual education plans.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Overall provision is very good. Provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good. Good provision is made for pupils' spiritual and cultural development; this includes supporting understanding and appreciation of the diversity and richness of other cultures.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Child protection, together with procedures for health and safety are good overall. Effective provision is made for assessing the academic development of children in reception, and of pupils' performance in English, mathematics and science. Good procedures are in place for the identification and monitoring of special educational needs. Information gained from all assessments is used well to inform pupils' future learning.

The school's very good partnership with parents makes a very positive contribution to pupils' learning.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher gives very good leadership and manages well. The good support she receives from the deputy headteacher, staff and governors results in the school having a positive and caring ethos that supports and promotes pupils' learning.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are closely involved in strategic and financial planning, monitoring and evaluation. However, they have not ensured all curriculum requirements for ICT are met for pupils between Years 3 to 6, or that children in reception have appropriate resources for outdoor structured play. All other responsibilities are met well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	A good range of procedures is in place to evaluate performance. Effective use is made of data from assessments to improve curriculum provision, set targets for learning, and raise standards. Appropriate procedures are in place to monitor the quality of teaching.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school makes efficient use of all resources to support learning. Governors apply the principles of 'best value' well at every stage of planning and evaluation.

Notwithstanding the high turnover of staff in recent years, the school is sufficiently staffed to meet the needs of children in reception and for pupils in Years 1 to 6, together with those who have special educational needs. Accommodation, much improved by a building programme, is now good. Resources for teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, with strengths in literacy and ICT. Improvements are required in geography and history.

## 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>• Pupils enjoy coming to school. They are taught well and make good progress.</li> <li>• The school expects pupils to work hard and achieve their best.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed; it works closely with parents, and keeps them well informed of pupils' progress.</li> <li>• The school helps pupils become mature and responsible, and behaviour is good.</li> <li>• Parents feel comfortable about approaching the school with a question or a problem.</li> </ul>	<p>No significant concerns were expressed either by parents attending the Ofsted pre-inspection meeting with the Registered Inspector, or by those who returned the parent questionnaire.</p>

Fifty-one parents returned the Ofsted pre-inspection questionnaire, and nineteen parents attended the meeting with the Registered Inspector. Inspection evidence confirms the positive views expressed by parents.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Assessment of children on entry to reception shows attainment to be broadly in line with that expected for this age. A review of work of pupils who have recently entered Year 1, shows good learning throughout the year resulted in nearly all achieving the officially recommended Early Learning Goals<sup>6</sup> for each area of learning by the end of reception. Higher attaining children reached the expected levels earlier, particularly in the areas of personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, and mathematical development. Inspection evidence indicates nearly all children now in reception are at stages expected for their age in each area of learning, and are on course to reach the appropriate levels by the age of six.

2. Since 2000, when end of Year 2 National Curriculum results were well below national averages in reading, writing and mathematics, standards have improved well. Results for 2002 showed overall performance in writing to be well above both national and similar school results. When compared with national results or those of similar schools, performance in reading was above average. Attainment in mathematics was average when compared with all schools, or similar schools based on eligibility for free school meals. In mathematics and science, all pupils achieved at least the expected levels. Overall, results are impressive when taking into account pupils' average attainment on entry to the school. However, even when assessment results are positive, care should be taken when comparing results of relatively small year groups (15 pupils) with national results, as the performance of each pupil has a significant impact on statistics.

3. Since 1998, assessment results for pupils at the end of Year 6 have varied considerably in each of the assessed subjects. However, the school's overall trend towards improvement for the last five years broadly matches the national rate of improvement. Results of 2002 assessments for pupils at the end of Year 6, showed overall standards in English and mathematics to be well below the national averages and those of similar schools. Whilst results for science, in which all pupils reached at least the expected level, were average when compared with all schools, they were below the average of similar schools. However, as noted earlier, in small year groups, the adverse performance of one pupil, who may have special educational needs, has a disproportionate effect on results. This was the case with this year group where three-fifths of Year 6 had special educational needs. As such, pupil attainment can be viewed in a positive light; not only in science, but in mathematics, where the proportion gaining the required level rose substantially over the previous year.

4. Analysis of assessments resulted in the school focusing on speaking and listening skills across all subjects, together with developing further the quality of pupils' writing, spelling, and the correct use of grammar in English. In mathematics, an emphasis was placed on mental arithmetic and problem solving, whilst in science, scientific enquiry was to be developed further, with an emphasis given to the use of subject specific language. Inspection evidence confirms these strategies for improvement have had a positive impact on standards.

5. Inspection evidence based on a review of previous and present work, together with lesson observations, shows that for pupils currently in Years 2 and 6, attainment in English and mathematics is above average. Whilst attainment in science for pupils now in Year 2 is consistent with that expected for their age, it exceeds expectations at Year 6. There is every indication that standards will be maintained through to the end of the school year. There are no

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<sup>6</sup> The 'Early Learning Goals' comprises a set of skills, knowledge and understanding that children might be expected to achieve by the end of Reception Year. There are six areas of learning: personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy, mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical development; creative development.

marked differences between the performance of boys and girls. Pupils' good achievement is the result of good teaching, together with the effective use of individual targets for English and mathematics.

6. In lessons observed, pupils in Years 1 and 2 made good progress in terms of the development of their speaking and listening skills. By Year 2, attainment in this aspect of English is above average. Pupils are confident when asking and answering questions. They respond readily to questions and give explanations using full sentences, and talk confidently about their work. Good progress is made between Years 3 and 6. By the time pupils leave the school, standards are above average. Pupils listen attentively, make thoughtful contributions to discussions, and use a breadth of vocabulary, including subject specific terms, well.

7. Good learning across the school results in standards in reading being above expectations at Years 2 and 6. Pupils in Year 2 read confidently and clearly, observing punctuation. Those in Year 6 read texts with fluency and accuracy. They have a good understanding of how punctuation determines how text is to be read. Higher attaining pupils discuss authors and favourite books, giving considered reasons for their preferences.

8. Standards in writing are above average for pupils now in Years 2 and 6. Pupils write for a range of purposes, and draft and edit their work. Pupils acquire good strategies for correct spelling, and make effective use of dictionaries to support their writing. By the end of Year 6, most pupils write in a fluent and clear style. Effective use is made of pupils' writing skills when producing work in other subjects.

9. In mathematics, pupils make good progress as they move through the school. This results in attainment for those currently in Years 2 and 6 exceeding nationally expected levels. Throughout the school, mental arithmetic is developed well through daily 'mental agility' sessions. Pupils are challenged regularly to explain the strategies they use to arrive at their answers. Numeracy skills are used to good advantage across the curriculum.

10. For pupils currently in Year 2, standards in science are average. Pupils progress well between Years 3 and 6, and this results in attainment that is above average for pupils now in Year 6. Across the school, a strong emphasis is placed on investigative science. Pupils observe, experiment, predict and use the skills of scientific enquiry well. They have a clear understanding of what makes a test 'fair'; they use an increasing range of scientific language with confidence.

11. Across Years 1 and 2 pupils make good progress in developing skills of ICT. This results in attainment exceeding nationally expected levels at the end of Year 2. However, by the end of Year 6, pupils have not covered the full requirements of the National Curriculum. As a consequence, attainment is below that expected for this age. Pupils make sound progress in design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education. There is every indication to expect that satisfactory levels of attainment shown by pupils at present in Years 2 and 6, will continue through to the end of the school year.

12. Regarding the several elements of pupils' personal development, by the end of Year 6, pupils' moral and social development is very good. Spiritual, together with cultural development, that includes an understanding of the richness and diversity of other cultures, is good. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to prior attainment and to targets in their individual education plans. In contrast to the findings of the last report, higher attaining pupils are provided with suitably challenging work and make satisfactory progress.

13. The school failed to meet the targets set by the local authority for the proportion of Year 6 pupils achieving the expected levels in English and mathematics in 2002. However, by the time pupils were assessed, the targets were no longer realistic. A turnover of pupils following the targets being set, resulted in a greater proportion of pupils with special educational needs than that originally planned for. The school is now working towards challenging targets to ensure

pupils currently in Year 6 achieve their full potential. The school has positive attitudes to raising standards, and the staff and governors work together to this end.

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

14. When they arrive at school each morning, children in reception are keen and eager to start work. They gain in confidence quickly, and work together well in pairs and small groups, talking about what they are doing. They share equipment well, and are willing to take turns. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 have very good attitudes towards their school and show a good level of enthusiasm and interest in all activities. This is a considerable improvement from the last inspection, when attitudes were only satisfactory. Pupils respond very well to teachers' high expectations, as in a design and technology lesson for a Years 1 and 2 class, when pupils responded enthusiastically to their teacher's clear guidance on making a thumb pot. Inspectors were particularly impressed with pupils' speaking and listening skills. Pupils listen attentively and concentrate well for long periods on the tasks they are given, needing very little supervision from adults. They are used to making presentations about their work in class, to addressing their peers in assembly and to expressing their thoughts and feelings in words. For example, in a Years 5 and 6 personal, social and health education session, pupils sensibly discussed autism with much interest. Pupils understand the school's rewards and sanctions system very well, and are proud if their work or efforts are rewarded. They are eager learners who expect to enjoy themselves in and out of class. Pupils with special educational needs are highly motivated and keen to learn. They are very responsive to the good quality support they receive from teachers and learning support assistants.

15. Pupils' personal development is very good. Pupils show a very good understanding of the impact of their actions on others, and respect the feelings, values and beliefs of other people. Even the youngest pupils show empathy for others, as in a personal, social and health education lesson taken by the headteacher. When she began a circle time discussion by saying, "I feel sad when people say unkind things about me," a pupil immediately said reassuringly, "Well, I like you!" Pupils listened intently to a retelling of the story *Dogger* by Shirley Hughes, and strongly sympathised with the little boy's loss of his toy. All classes were asked by the school councillors "How can we make learning fun?" Class 1 answered confidently that 'people not being silly' helped and that 'people not listening' did not.

16. Relationships throughout the school community are very good, and are transformed from the time of the last inspection, when a minority of pupils showed little respect for fellow pupils or the staff. Children know they can rely on the adults in the school community to listen to them courteously and treat their comments with respect. In class and assembly discussions pupils show a very good understanding of the impact of their actions on others. They are keen to help each other, both informally and formally. Children look after each other in the playground: it is part of the school's family ethos that older ones expect to look after younger ones and generally enjoy doing so. Pupils have taken on the many responsibilities given them enthusiastically. Every class has elected representatives on the school council. At each meeting, the councillors get pupils' views on a specific topic, such as 'what helps me learn in school?' Responses are used to guide planning and class management. Pupils know their opinions are taken seriously and that ideas they put to the council will be considered and put into practice if possible. For example, a suggestion box has been set up so that pupils do not have to wait for the next council meeting before their latest idea gets a hearing. The establishment of a Junior Health and Safety Committee has proved very successful: for instance, the committee carries out a weekly risk assessment of the site and reports back to governors. All pupils undertake responsibilities within their classrooms in rotation, and older pupils carry out wider duties within the school as a whole. Pupils are well aware of their targets in English and mathematics, and enjoy monitoring their own progress in science and ICT by ticking off achievements as they carry them out, in attainment booklets.

17. Behaviour is good overall, and sometimes very good. No unsatisfactory behaviour was observed during the inspection, in or out of class. This is a very considerable improvement from the last inspection, when behaviour was judged satisfactory overall but sometimes unsatisfactory. The current standards are particularly remarkable as the school's detailed records show that a year ago there were incidents of unsatisfactory behaviour almost every day. Behaviour in class was graded good or better in more than half of the lessons observed during the inspection. Pupils co-operate well when asked to work in pairs or small groups, listening courteously to each other's suggestions and dividing up the tasks to be done in a mutually acceptable way. They move quietly and sensibly around the school: they hold doors open and are always keen to see if they can help visitors in any way. Lunchtimes are happy well-ordered occasions. Pupils enter assembly quietly, listen attentively and join in any singing or other activities with enthusiasm. There were five fixed period exclusions in last academic year, involving three boys.

18. Attendance is very good. In 2001 – 2002 it was well above the national average. Both authorised and unauthorised absence was well below average. Virtually all pupils arrive promptly every day, and lessons start on time. The very good standards of attendance and punctuality have a positive effect on learning.

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

19. Four of the five teachers now in post have been appointed in the last two years. In this short time, they have become an effective team with a clear focus to raise standards and eliminate the pupil underachievement noted in the last inspection. Good teaching is now a feature of this school. Overall, teaching was judged to be satisfactory or better in all lessons observed. It was good or better in just over three-quarters. Over a quarter of lessons seen were very good; one session was excellent. This is a significant improvement on the last inspection when the proportion of lessons considered good or very good was considerably less, and a small number of lessons were judged unsatisfactory. During the current inspection, good teaching was observed from all teachers. All teachers and support staff work very well as a team, sharing knowledge and expertise. The quality of teaching has a positive effect on pupils' learning and the progress they make.

20. Teaching of children in reception was consistently good in lessons observed, and has improved from the satisfactory position reported on at the last inspection. Planning is very thorough and is based on the Early Learning Goals. The effective teaching enables children to gain in confidence quickly and prepares them well for National Curriculum work in Year 1. There is strong teamwork between the teacher and the learning support assistant, and both understand the needs of this age group well. The quality of teaching in Years 1 to 6 was judged to be satisfactory or better in all lessons observed. Nearly a third of those seen were very good, including one that was excellent. Teachers are secure in their knowledge and understanding of subjects to be taught. Across the school, teachers have benefited from a good range of professional development; currently, staff are receiving nationally funded training for ICT. Teachers are enthusiastic, and this contributes positively to well managed classes. On many occasions, pupils' understanding is enhanced significantly by teachers' clear explanations and their effective demonstrations. For instance, in an ICT lesson, the teacher gave pupils in Years 1 and 2 clear, step-by-step guidance on how to use the address book within a program to speed up the process of sending e-mails. During a dance lesson, the teacher joined in to give pupils in Years 3 and 4 a helpful demonstration of the steps to a new dance.

21. The previous inspection judged planning of the curriculum and delivery of lessons to be unsatisfactory. Since then, the school has reviewed planning procedures and implemented schemes of work for all subjects to support the development of pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. All stages of planning are now good. Inspection evidence confirms parents' views that teachers know pupils' individual needs well, and plan for them accordingly. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and, within each class, provide pupils with challenging tasks

that are well matched to their stages of learning. This is in contrast to the last inspection which considered that with more challenging work, many pupils could have achieved more.

22. A further improvement on the last inspection is the use made of assessment to help plan what is to be taught next. Teachers now make effective use of a good range of assessment procedures to identify what pupils know and can do, to track progress, set pupils individual targets, and help determine the content of subsequent lessons. The quality of marking, previously considered inconsistent, is now good overall. In addition to giving pupils good oral feedback during lessons, written marking gives pupils clear guidance on how to improve their work. A noteworthy feature of all lessons is the good level of ongoing support and reassurance pupils receive, and the attention that staff pay to good effort.

23. Across the school, classrooms are well organised to promote learning. Teachers were observed using a range of strategies, including individual, group and whole class teaching to good advantage. The use of questioning by teachers is very effective and has a positive impact on pupils' learning, especially speaking and listening skills. Particularly successful is the use of open questions that require pupils to consider and organise their thoughts before giving an explanation by way of response. Another feature that impacts well on learning is the encouragement of pupils to use correct vocabulary within lessons, particularly in mathematics and science. Good examples of both practices occur regularly at the start of mathematics lessons, when pupils are challenged to explain how they reached their answers; during lessons when they are required to give reasons for their responses; and at the end of lessons when pupils talk about what they have learnt.

24. In nearly all lessons, teachers explain objectives clearly at the start to ensure pupils fully understand what they are expected to achieve. Teachers regularly recap on what pupils have learnt previously. They often capture pupils' imagination by providing interesting activities to assist learning. For example, drama was used to good advantage in a science lesson for pupils in Years 5 and 6. Pupils became either water molecules or sugar granules and acted out the procedure that gave them a clear understanding of how a saturated solution is formed. A significant contribution to the effective teaching observed came from the school's team of support assistants. They work in close partnership with teachers to enhance pupils' learning. Teachers ensure all those working with them have a clear understanding of lesson objectives, together with the methods and resources to be used.

25. Teaching and learning for pupils with special educational needs, which was reported as variable in the last report, is now good. This is the case whether pupils are given support in class, or withdrawn for individual tuition. Individual education plans have been improved, and relate well to the needs of those for whom they are written. Staff use these plans well to meet specific needs. Teachers give clear instructions and use praise constructively. As a result of effective support, pupils, including those with statements of special educational needs, make good progress in relation to prior attainment and to targets in their education plans. In keeping with the school's procedures for inclusion, higher attaining pupils are provided with work well matched to their level of attainment. The over-reliance in many lessons on work sheets, noted during the last inspection, is no longer apparent.

26. Literacy is taught very well. Seven of the eight literacy lessons observed were good, including four judged very good, and one excellent. Lessons are well planned, with clear objectives, using the structure of the National Literacy Strategy to good advantage. Interesting activities are provided, and good use is made of 'end of lesson' time. Lessons are characterised by the enthusiasm of teachers and effective questioning to ensure pupils understand the content and structure of texts. Five of the six mathematics lessons observed were judged to be good, including one very good. Lessons are carefully planned, with interesting and relevant activities to reinforce pupils' understanding of concepts taught. A particularly effective element of mathematics lessons is the emphasis placed on the development of pupils' mental arithmetic skills, and on pupils having to explain how they arrived at their answers.

27. The previous inspection report highlighted a weakness in teachers' management of pupils' disruptive behaviour. The school has worked well to resolve this issue. Consistent application of the school's behaviour code, the expectation that pupils will achieve well, together with work well matched to pupils' attainment, results in good behaviour that enables maximum time to be spent on teaching and learning. Good use is made of homework to reinforce learning; the amount and challenge of work set is well matched to the age and capability of the pupils concerned.

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

28. There have been good improvements to the curriculum since the last inspection which identified weaknesses. Teachers plan well for the mixed age classes, and lessons are now inclusive for pupils at all stages of learning, particularly higher attaining pupils. This has now eliminated the underachievement and inconsistent provision for special needs pupils that was identified in the last report. Good use is now made of assessment data, particularly in English, mathematics and science to set realistic but challenging targets, which enable all pupils to make good progress and to achieve their full potential. There are now clear objectives set out for all lessons. Whole school planning for all subjects is now strong and is supplemented by commercial schemes where appropriate. A two-year planning cycle provides a framework and overview to all planning, and includes daily lessons and termly programmes of work. The curriculum is planned with good progression and now provides equal opportunities for all. Time is used effectively and no time is wasted in lessons. Both literacy and numeracy strategies are planned carefully and implemented effectively. The head, deputy and teachers provide strong leadership and vision in their subject co-ordinator roles. All subjects have policies and there is an ongoing plan for their review and update.

29. With the exception of not providing appropriate resources for the development of children's outdoor structured play, the curriculum provided for children in reception is good, and meets the recommendations of provision for the six areas of learning. There is a strong focus on developing children's use and understanding of language, numeracy, and social and personal skills. For pupils in Years 1 to 6, the curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant. It includes all subjects of the National Curriculum; and religious education which is taught according to the locally agreed syllabus. With the exception of ICT for pupils in Years 3 to 6, provision meets statutory requirements.

30. There are good links between literacy and numeracy and the other subjects of the curriculum and the literacy hour and numeracy strategy are both taught effectively. Pupils' oral and writing skills (ongoing targets for improvement) are used to good advantage across the curriculum. Pupils' work is marked consistently across the school. Suitable homework is provided and is linked to work in literacy and numeracy as well as topic projects. The school follows the local education authority's policy for personal, social and health education and has plans to develop its own. Provision is good and places appropriate emphasis on drugs awareness and sex education. Pupils are given good opportunities to talk about social and personal issues in lessons. Since the last inspection, a school council has been established and pupils relish their involvement in this, and in the responsibilities given. This provides good opportunities for pupils to develop aspects of citizenship.

31. Provision for special educational needs is now good with carefully planned support provided for pupils. Depending on their needs, pupils are given either in-class support, or are withdrawn for individual or small group tuition. Provision for pupils with statements of special educational needs is met well. Pupils' individual education plans are of good quality, specific to the needs of the pupil for whom they are written, and contain clear targets that are reviewed regularly. Pupils with special educational needs are included fully in the life of the school and their individual needs are now met well. A good feature is the 'Kids Club', which gives after school support to pupils. The school has a useful special educational needs policy that complies fully with the requirements of the revised Code of Practice for special educational needs.

32. There is good provision for extracurricular activities; this is an improvement on the satisfactory position reported at the last inspection. The school runs a wide range of clubs, including drama, art, French, choir and recorders. Tennis and football coaching and a football club cover sporting activities. Pupils take part in sporting events with other schools. A peripatetic teacher visits the school weekly to provide flute and clarinet tuition. Pupils take part in numerous visits linked to their topic work, such as a local medieval drama day, and visits to a Victorian classroom. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 go on a residential visit to Braeside in Devizes. Pupils sing at a local nursing home, take part in book weeks and festivities in the local church. The school receives a range of visitors, including authors and illustrators, a bread-maker, musicians and the local police.

33. There are very good links with the local community through the church, local businesses and the people of Aldbourne. Such links contribute significantly to the strong community atmosphere of the school as well as enriching the curriculum. Many parents and other adults help with clubs, workshops and with numerous school activities, such as hearing pupils read and helping with cooking. The community participates in the use of the information and communication technology suite and in developing the school's website. Nearby schools keep in regular contact with pupils at St Michael's through the frequent sending and receiving of e-mails. On occasions, pupils benefit from working with those from other schools, as when pupils in Class 2 enjoyed an 'electricity day' with pupils at a nearby primary school.

34. The quality of provision for pupils' personal development has improved since the last inspection and is now very good overall. Inspection evidence reflects parents' views expressed at the pre-inspection meeting with the Registered Inspector. Evidence confirms there is a clear focus on this aspect of pupils' development, that includes planned activities and opportunities for pupils to make responsible decisions.

35. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. This is an improvement since the previous inspection and reflects the emphasis applied to this area. Acts of collective worship meet statutory requirements and provide pupils with opportunities for reflection and silent prayer. Values and beliefs are explored, with pupils actively encouraged to offer suggestions and comments. Opportunities to understand and explore human feelings and emotions are highlighted during literacy sessions and these complement the overall sense of purpose within the school. Pupils develop a sense of empathy with their peers, and this contributes to the positive ethos of the school. Lesson observations show that pupils are valued and that their comments are encouraged and respected. In the best lessons, pupils experienced a sense of awe and wonder, through very good teaching, appropriately stimulating activities, and exploration of their feelings and reactions. Such was the case in a Years 5 and 6 personal, social and health education session when thoughtful debate supported pupils' learning when they viewed a range of circumstances from another person's perspective. Throughout the proceedings, the class teacher posed the questions, "How does this make you feel?" and "How do your actions affect them?"

36. The quality of provision for pupils' moral development has improved since the last inspection, and, in line with the views of parents, is now very good. The school's aims and values together with its behavioural policy provide an effective vehicle to ensure very good moral values. The school has a very positive attitude to behaviour, built on rewards, responsibility, and care for all. The headteacher and staff provide a very clear basis for behaviour with an emphasis on pupils' choices, and equality. Pupils are encouraged to take full responsibility for their actions and as a consequence have developed a very strong sense of what is right and wrong. There were many examples during the inspection when children were offered choices and made informed responsible decisions based on the clear moral code offered by the school. As a result, relationships are very good and reflect respect and fairness both between children and members of the teaching staff. This has a positive effect on pupils' learning and gives children a secure environment to explore issues and enhance understanding. In a lesson involving Years 3 and 4, pupils identified that 'people can be influenced by the body language another person

might have'. The subsequent follow up work illustrated that pupils' learning was improved by the quality of the debate of the moral issues that arose.

37. The school makes very good provision for pupils' social development. Pupils have ample opportunities to take responsibility at all levels; this represents a significant improvement since the previous inspection. There are now many opportunities provided for pupils to identify the key values on which community life is based. Circle time, the school council and golden time are just three examples where progress can be identified. A feature of many lessons was the opportunity for children to work collaboratively. As a consequence, pupils' learning was enriched as a result of purposeful opportunities for discussion. Pupils are encouraged to make decisions, to empathise with other pupils and to care for resources and each other. Pupils of all ages could independently collect, use and return small games equipment during play times. Pupils are aware of social differences and illustrate arguments with examples outside their immediate environment. There were many examples in lesson observations when pupils were asked to provide opinions using full sentences. This was a feature of the teaching especially with the younger age groups, and, as a result, pupils' responses were well thought out.

38. Assemblies provide a positive corporate experience in which pupils are encouraged to take a full and active part. The older pupils have the opportunity to answer the telephone at lunch times, developing the skills of communication and note taking, as well as conveying accurate messages. Opportunities for pupils to develop personal qualities of thoughtfulness, honesty and respect are apparent in the relationships between children of different age groups.

39. The school has improved the opportunities it provides for cultural development and this is now judged to be good. As a result of improved and planned opportunities in this area, children have a good understanding of their own culture and that of others. Pupils' appreciation of their own culture is aided by school visits to local historical sights and the local Town Hall. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to extend their knowledge of their own culture; this is clearly evident from a review of pupils' work and displays around the school. There are improved opportunities for multicultural development with cross-curricular themes utilised to support learning. In a design and technology lesson pupils designed and made thumb pots based on previous work associated with the Hindu feast of Diwali. Displays are used to identify both the similarities and differences of different cultures. Pupils found an interactive display on the theme of Diwali thought provoking and interesting. They appreciated the richness of the Indian culture. Of particular enjoyment to many pupils was the traditional Indian music available for them to listen to in the school's reception area. The school has a satisfactory range of resources for the development of pupils' multicultural understanding.

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

40. Procedures for monitoring and improving good behaviour, and for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour, are excellent. This is a marked improvement on the last inspection when procedures were good but management was inconsistent and sometimes unsatisfactory. All significant incidents of unsatisfactory behaviour such as fighting are logged, together with all actions taken. The headteacher's analysis of the log shows that such incidents have declined in number dramatically over the last year, whilst the number of pupils sent to her for rewards or praise has risen. The school's behaviour management strategies are based around making pupils aware they have a choice at each stage of proceedings: they choose to continue behaving unsatisfactorily, knowing what sanction will then apply, or they can choose to improve behaviour, and gain the opportunity for sanctions to be removed. All staff use these strategies effectively, making it clear to pupils that they must take the responsibility for their behaviour. Individual behaviour plans are drawn up for pupils who fail to respond to this system, in close consultation with parents and with the pupil concerned. The school has been well supported in its development of behaviour management strategies by the local authority's behaviour support team.

41. Lunchtime play is supervised by teaching assistants, who know the children well and provide a consistency of care and management. In addition, the school runs lunchtime and after school activities designed to provide extra support and guidance for pupils who need to improve their social skills in a more relaxed setting.

42. Procedures for monitoring and promoting pupils' personal development are very good, a major improvement from the last inspection when they were unsatisfactory. They are closely linked to the school's drive to improve standards in behaviour. Staff make it clear that children can help to make both the school and the wider community better places. The school is currently using various published schemes of work for its personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme, but intends to develop its own. Teachers make use of circle time sessions and are currently developing the use of 'emotional literacy' techniques. However, they are skilled at taking every opportunity to promote personal development. For instance, pupils have to explain the reasoning behind their answers, whatever the nature of the lesson. Displays encourage pupils to think about important issues, for instance a large display with contributions from the whole school is entitled 'How can we make our school a great place to be?' Assembly themes are always closely linked to the topics pupils are discussing in PSHE lessons, and some assemblies make an outstanding contribution to pupils' personal development. In a whole school assembly led by the headteacher a thoughtful debate around the theme of the Flanders poppy concluded with the reminder to pupils that they too have a responsibility to work for peace and think what they can give to others.

43. The school council meets fortnightly under the guidance of the deputy head: it is chaired by a pupil and another keeps the minutes. Four members of last year's council attended a headteachers' conference to describe its workings. 'Work of the Week' certificates are awarded every Friday, and the winners' photographs feature in a 'Work of the Week' album in the entrance hall. These, like the 'honeycomb cells', are awarded for acts of kindness and are displayed on the assembly hall door. They are powerful public ways of improving pupils' self-esteem and of showing the school's pride in its achievements to visitors. Annual cups reward high achievement, progress, and 'being helpful and caring'. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 can undertake independent research projects following guidelines given by the school. The school supports national and local charitable initiatives. Pupils are strongly encouraged to fundraise for charity: the school council organised a Blue Peter Bring and Buy Sale. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 complete annual questionnaires on various aspects of school life, and the school council regularly canvasses opinions on current topics.

44. A register of able children is maintained and the school makes use of the special opportunities offered such pupils by the local authority, as well as providing appropriate work in the classroom. Pupils are given appropriate teaching about sex, relationships, and drugs. Personal development is formally monitored only in the reception class, although if a pupil's behaviour gives cause for concern a detailed log will be kept by all staff and closely monitored by the head and class teacher.

45. Procedures for ensuring the health and safety of all those within the school community are very good, much improved from the last inspection when they were satisfactory. The school has a detailed health and safety policy and separate policies on important issues such as Internet access. Teachers carry out termly risk assessments of their classrooms and the governors assess the whole site, using the local authority checklist. In addition, the site is regularly checked by the fire brigade as the school has a public entertainment licence. The main building and the old school next door are both in good condition and well maintained. There are no aspects which pose obvious health and safety hazards. All electrical items and physical education equipment are checked annually by approved contractors. The school holds six fire drills a year at different times of day. The site is secure. Anyone who helps regularly in the school has been police-checked. There are four fully qualified first-aiders, and the school keeps a register of asthma sufferers. Children are always supervised by appropriate numbers of adults.

46. Procedures for child protection are satisfactory, as at the last inspection. There is currently no child protection policy, as the headteacher was to undertake her training to become a child protection liaison officer immediately after the inspection, and will draft a policy thereafter. However, the governors have approved a set of procedures following local authority guidelines, which are issued to all staff with a verbal briefing as well. The school has appropriate links with external agencies concerned with child welfare.

47. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are satisfactory, as at the last inspection. Registration fulfils statutory requirements and is carried out quickly and efficiently in all classes. In some it is used as the basis for some mental mathematics. Late arrivals have to report to the school office and sign in. Registers are regularly monitored by the administrative officer. The attendance policy outlines everybody's responsibilities, and the importance of attendance is clearly promoted in the prospectus and the newsletters. Parents have a good understanding of the procedures, and are very good at informing the school when a child is absent.

48. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are good. The progress of year groups and individuals is monitored regularly throughout children's time at the school, beginning with informal assessment in the first term. Procedures have improved since the last inspection when assessment was unsatisfactory. The school uses optional, as well as statutory end of year assessment in English, mathematics and science, and analyses results by gender and other criteria. In other subjects, assessments are carried out by measuring progress against key objectives. Pupils keep their own 'logbooks' derived from this system for science and ICT. The school has compiled portfolios of pupil work at above, average and below average levels for each age group in English and mathematics, and is developing them in other subjects.

49. The use of assessment information to guide curricular planning is good. Data analysis is used to identify areas of weakness and medium and long term plans are modified accordingly. All staff make good use of daily assessment to modify their short term plans and ensure pupils are given work at the right level of challenge. Teachers annotate their weekly plans to assess progress and plan for the future in literacy and numeracy: annotation of medium term plans is used for other subjects. All staff and governors are involved in target setting following data analysis. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress are good. Staff maintain careful records of the progress of groups and individuals in literacy and numeracy. Pupils are given individual targets for improvement in English, mathematics and sometimes for personal development as well, and they are involved in setting these and deciding when they need to be reviewed. Individuals' records are updated every term and those of each year group on an annual basis. A new marking policy has been put in place and marking is now more consistent across the school. In nearly every case, marking informs pupils of what they need to do to improve. The assessment of pupils with special needs is good; teachers are now involved in drawing up individual education plans that are then used well to support learning. This provision is an improvement on the last inspection when there was a lack of assessed information to support planning for all pupils, although those with statements were well provided for.

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

50. Parents' views of the school are extremely positive: at the last inspection they were only satisfactory. Nearly 60 per cent of parents returned the Ofsted pre-inspection questionnaires; a high proportion compared with many schools. All felt the school had high expectations of its pupils, was approachable, and helped children to become more mature; that teaching was good and that the school was well led and managed. Virtually all consider behaviour to be good, that their children enjoy school, and the school's partnership with parents is good. One written comment was that since the headteacher's arrival the school has 'gone from strength to strength', and another that behaviour has improved greatly. This point was made again at the meeting for parents held prior to the inspection. Parents of pupils with special needs were

pleased with provision, and all thought communication was very good. They were aware of their children's targets: 'There's much better challenge for pupils now'.

51. The school has very good and effective links with parents: at the last inspection they were only satisfactory. The school is extremely welcoming and encourages parents to contact it immediately with any problems. Class teachers are available at the end of the day, and the head or deputy can be seen at short notice. There are three parent consultation evenings. Parents come to assemblies when pupils display their work as well as to services held in the church. A home-school agreement has been signed by virtually all parents. Before and after school care is provided on the site by the playgroup organisers, working in co-operation with the school. Pupils all have a reading record book, and older ones a homework book as well: parents are encouraged to comment in either one. The school values parents' opinions, and sends out an annual questionnaire. The results are analysed and fed back to parents. The school consults them on important issues such as the draft version of the new behaviour policy. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept well informed of their child's progress both formally and informally.

52. Parents have a very good impact on the work of the school: this was judged satisfactory at the last inspection. The school has many regular visitors, of whom ten are parents who help with reading, the library, and special activities. The Parent-Staff Association (PSA) raises considerable funds that have been used to purchase a wide range of equipment. Events last year included an Easter egg hunt and a summer garden party. A parent's brother has held several singing workshops for the school.

53. The quality of information provided for parents is good overall, improved from satisfactory at the last inspection. The prospectus and governors' report meet statutory requirements and make good use of illustrations. The presentation of the governors' report as a newspaper works well. Regular newsletters not only explain what is to come but report on activities and celebrate pupils' achievements. The school's website is well designed and user-friendly. Parents are told every term what pupils will study, and how they can help. The school holds at least two information evenings annually: last year's topics included how attitudes and behaviour affect learning. Meetings are held for new parents, and for those with children about to take statutory assessment tests. A drugs information evening was addressed by a police representative. Pupils' targets are discussed with parents. The quality of pupils' annual reports is satisfactory overall. However, much space is taken up by curriculum information: this repeats information parents already have. Comments on pupils' personal development show teachers' good knowledge of their pupils. Reports on English, mathematics and science are fuller than those for other subjects. Little indication is given for any subject area of whether pupil attainment is below, at, or above, the average of their age group. This reflects the underdeveloped state of the school's assessment procedures last summer. Reports include comments from pupils and parents.

54. The contribution of parents to children's learning at school and at home is very good. This is a considerable improvement since the last inspection when it was judged as satisfactory. Virtually all parents come to parent consultation evenings. They give good support to other school related events. The overwhelming majority of parents help their children by providing them with appropriate facilities and support for their homework, and most homework set is completed. Parents are often asked to supply resources to support learning (including a stuffed owl and a dressmaker's dummy), or for help. Such help is nearly always forthcoming.

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

55. Between 1996 and the appointment of the current headteacher, since the last inspection, five people, albeit some in temporary capacities, held the post of headteacher. This led to a lack of stability and leadership in terms of school development. All Ofsted pre-inspection questionnaires returned indicate parents feel the school is led well. Many parents who attended

the pre-inspection meeting with the Registered Inspector, spoke positively of improvements made since the appointment of the present headteacher. Inspection evidence confirms she gives very good leadership and sets a clear direction for the school's improvement, based on her understanding of the needs of pupils. Working with teachers who are, in the main, recently appointed to the school, she has established a clear management structure, and shaped a team that has a clear focus on eliminating underachievement and raising pupil attainment. To this end, a very good range of relevant strategies has been implemented; they are endorsed fully by the inspection team.

56. The headteacher is given good support by the deputy headteacher and a hard working staff, who, along with the governing body, have a strong commitment to providing quality education. This results in the school having a clear set of aims and objectives that are now reflected in its day-to-day life. Together, staff and governors have successfully created a caring and positive ethos that reflects the schools' mission statement: '...to foster the enjoyment and excitement of life and learning in a place where children develop a sense of respect for themselves, others and the world around them. To provide within a caring and attractive environment, a broad, balanced curriculum which seeks to develop each child's spiritual and intellectual potential.'

57. Together with the governing body, the headteacher manages the school well. Day-to-day management and organisation are good. Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, and staff have specific management responsibilities that support the school well. Communication with parents, regarding all aspects of school life is regular, informative, and has a positive impact on pupils' learning. Inspection evidence confirms parents' appreciation of the quality of information provided, and shows this aspect of management is undertaken well.

58. Management of the curriculum is delegated to teachers, each of whom takes responsibility for co-ordinating subjects or aspects of school life. In response to the recommendations of the last inspection, their role has been developed. In addition to being fully involved in planning and resourcing, staff now evaluate standards in subjects for which they are responsible. The head and deputy headteacher monitor the quality of teaching across the curriculum; this is to be extended to include all subject co-ordinators. Improvements have been made since the last inspection with regard to the use of data from statutory and other assessments. Information is now used to good advantage by staff. It enables them to modify and improve curriculum provision, monitor and record pupils' knowledge and skills, and set targets for learning in order to raise standards.

59. There is regular and productive communication between headteacher and chair of governors. The governing body is supportive and committed to raising standards, including their own. As such, they undertake self-evaluation activities to determine how they too can improve performance. This is in keeping with the findings of the last inspection that stated governors were 'hard working' and 'doing a good job'. Committees, covering a range of management areas meet regularly. In addition to discussing policies and data, governors have oversight of subjects, and receive presentations from subject co-ordinators. Such activities, together with classroom visits, where they observe and work alongside pupils, provide governors with a good understanding of the school's curriculum provision, and standards achieved.

60. The school development plan is managed well, with governors and staff successfully involved. Through questionnaires, parents and pupils have opportunities to contribute towards the development plan. The document is clear and well structured. It establishes relevant priorities for school improvement which are underpinned by detailed action plans that state responsibilities and resource requirements, together with criteria that will be used to evaluate success. The provision of staff training associated with the plan's targets is managed well by the headteacher in her capacity as staff development co-ordinator.

61. The full requirements of the National Curriculum for ICT in Years 3 to 6 are not met, nor does the school provide children in reception with appropriate resources for outdoor structured

play activities. In all other respects, the governing body meets its statutory obligations well. The school meets the requirements for a daily act of collective worship. The last report stated management of provision for special educational needs was improving, and, at the time of inspection, was satisfactory overall. The school now has good procedures that comply with the revised Special Educational Needs Code of Practice<sup>7</sup> for the identification and provision for pupils with special educational needs. A clear and useful policy informs the management of special educational needs. The special needs co-ordinator carries out her duties well, and liaises effectively with teachers, support staff and outside agencies. In keeping with the very good inclusive nature of the school, procedures and practice ensure all pupils, varying from those with special educational needs to higher attaining pupils, have full access to the curriculum. The school is currently reviewing its policy for the provision of pupils identified as gifted and talented, and governors are now considering contingencies in order to comply with the requirements of the Special Education and Disability Act.

62. Notwithstanding the high turnover of staff in recent years, the school is sufficiently staffed with suitably qualified teachers for the number and age of pupils on roll. Teachers are given good assistance by well qualified support staff who are deployed well and give valuable support for pupils' learning. Staff responsible for administration and premises upkeep are efficient and contribute well to the smooth running of the school. Teamwork throughout the school is of a high standard. Good procedures, including a helpful staff handbook, are in place to support staff new to the school. Supply teachers benefit from a useful booklet, specific to their needs. Good procedures are now in place for the performance management of teachers.

63. Accommodation is good overall. Since the last inspection, teaching areas for reception, together with Years 1 and 2, have been improved significantly, and a well equipped computer suite has been set up. Further improvements are planned for the near future. Good outdoor facilities support pupils' physical and environmental science activities. With the exception of resources for geography and history, and reception children not having suitable provision for outdoor activities, learning resources are satisfactory. Provision for ICT and literacy is good.

64. As at the time of the last inspection, standards of financial planning and management, together with that of financial control, are good. The last audit of the school's financial management systems, undertaken on behalf of the local education authority in July 2002, found them to be of a high standard. The few minor recommendations for improvement have since been addressed. Governors are closely involved in budgetary matters and receive further guidance through employing the services of an 'accounting technician' from the local authority. All expenditure is carefully targeted and used appropriately. In keeping with the principles of 'best value', all spending decisions as for example, purchase and maintenance of computers and structural improvements, are evaluated for cost effectiveness.

65. Whilst the unit cost per pupil is much above average, when taking into account:

- Attainment on entry, and the positive added value in terms of attainment and personal development;
- The quality of the school and the education it now provides;
- The efficient deployment of staff and use of resources,

St Michael's Church of England Primary School gives sound value for money; a judgement which marks an improvement on that of the last report.

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

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<sup>7</sup> The Special Educational Needs Code of Practice, published by the Department of Education and Skills, became effective as from January 1<sup>st</sup> 2002. It replaced the Code of Practice published in 1994.

66. In order to develop and improve the school further, governors, headteacher and staff should now:

- **Raise** attainment in information and communication technology between Years 3 and 6 by:
  - Ensuring the requirements of the National Curriculum are met;
  - Covering all elements of the curriculum in sufficient depth;
  - Developing further pupils' opportunities to use ICT skills in mathematics and science.

*(Paragraphs: 11,29,61,93,101,122,126,127.)*

- **Provide** appropriate resources to improve the quality of Foundation Stage children's outdoor structured play.

*(Paragraphs: 29,61,63,68,74.)*

- **Improve** resources for teaching and learning in geography and history.

*(Paragraphs:63,115,120.)*

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	43
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	16

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	11	21	10	0	0	0
Percentage	2	26	49	23	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. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one two percentage points.

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	91
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	9

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	18

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	3
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	11

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.8
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2002	7	8	15

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Total	12	14	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	80 (94)	93 (100)	100 (100)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Total	12	14	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	80 (88)	93 (94)	100 (94)
	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)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2002	9	6	15

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Total	9	9	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	60 (85)	60 (38)	100 (92)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Total	12	13	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	80 (77)	87 (85)	100 (85)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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



### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	6.2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	8.2

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
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	91
Number of questionnaires returned	51

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

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	73	25	0	0	2
My child is making good progress in school.	57	37	4	2	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	33	65	2	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	33	51	8	2	6
The teaching is good.	67	33	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	49	47	0	2	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	78	22	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	76	24	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	53	45	2	0	0

The school is well led and managed.

The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.

The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.

76	24	0	0	0
69	31	0	0	0
57	27	6	2	8

## **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**

67. At present, ten children are in reception. They share a class with pupils in Year 1. Depending on their birthday, children enter school in the September or January of the school year in which they become five. Most have attended pre-school groups, including an independent playgroup housed in the school, before joining reception. Informal assessment on entry to reception shows attainment to be broadly in line with that expected for children of this age. A review of work of pupils who have recently entered Year 1, shows nearly all achieved the requirements of the officially recommended learning goals by the end of reception. However, higher attaining children gained the expected levels in personal, social and emotional development, and communication, language and literacy earlier. For children currently in reception, inspection evidence indicates they make good progress and are on course to reach the recommended levels in each area of learning by the end of reception.

68. Since the last inspection, provision for children of this age has been improved. The curriculum has been developed further and is guided and planned according to the requirements of the Early Learning Goals for children in the Foundation Stage. Better procedures and use of assessment have been developed, to give a more accurate picture of children's attainment at entry. Children's progress is good across all areas of learning. This represents an improvement on the overall satisfactory position reported on at the time of the last inspection. Links with pre-school groups and other agencies have been strengthened further. Better, more consistent planned use is made of creative play activities, such as sand. However, resources to support children's outdoor structured play are insufficient. Children have no large play equipment, ride-on wheeled toys to support their physical development or enable them to enter into imaginative play situations with their friends.

69. Indoor provision for children is good, and the teacher plans well across the six areas of learning. Children are provided with a wide range of stimulating and challenging activities. Teaching has improved and is consistently good. This enables children to gain in confidence and prepares them well for work in the National Curriculum in Year 1. The teacher and the learning support assistant work well together as a team, and have a good understanding of the needs of this age group. Children with special educational needs benefit from early identification and the expertise of the class teacher. Parents are kept well informed of progress, both informally and formally.

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

70. Children make good progress in this area of learning, and nearly all reach the expected levels by the end of reception. Children are enthusiastic about school; they settle in quickly, know the routines and make good progress. They show much interest in their work and can work independently, in pairs and small groups. They get on happily with their work when they are

not working directly with the teacher or learning support assistant. For example, children made shapes with playdough to match cards with different numbers as an independent activity; they showed good levels of concentration. Children change quickly and with minimum fuss for physical education lessons, and show initiative when getting out and putting away different activities in their classroom. They concentrate well in literacy and numeracy lessons and are keen to talk about what they know and to contribute to discussions. Staff have high expectations of children's behaviour and manage them well. Children are encouraged to care for others and for their pets. They are given opportunities under good supervision to help care for the class pet rat. This is well managed by the class teacher and good links are made to other areas of learning. For instance, in numeracy, children count the number of pieces of apple left out to eat and then work out how many have been eaten the next day. Good opportunities are provided for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Good teaching results in children's development of good attitudes to learning and to their friends in the class.

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

71. The majority of children make good progress in developing their literacy skills. In speaking, listening, reading and writing most children attain the expected levels by the time they start in Year 1. In speaking and listening and reading higher attaining children attain above the expected level. Children listen to stories and answer questions about them that are asked by the class teacher. They listened with much interest to the story of the 'Hungry Caterpillar' and delighted in being able to predict the end of a sentence. They enjoy playing word games and know many letter sounds. All children are placed at the appropriate level on a range of reading books. A time in the library is provided each week and children enjoy selecting a book to take home. Parents are encouraged to be involved in hearing their children read and to share books with them at home. Children write their names and most copy or write simple words and sentences. They take great care over the correct formation of letters. Children have good attitudes to learning in literacy. Teaching and learning are good and any opportunities to develop language and literacy skills in other areas of learning are developed well.

### **Mathematical development**

72. Children make good progress in developing their numeracy skills. The majority attain the expected level by the end of reception. Children count to 10 and some to 20 and beyond. A group of children enjoyed playing the bears' counting game together and delighted in explaining the instructions to an adult. Other children could roll a dice and match the number to the correct number of toys. Children are learning to write numbers and to record their answers. They record information in simple class graphs. No opportunity to develop children's counting skills is lost, and there are good links across all areas of learning. When the teacher takes the attendance register children count the number present in class and take away any that are not in school that day. Children have good attitudes to learning in numeracy and benefit from the good teaching.

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

73. Good progress is made in this area of learning. Children learn about the village of Aldbourne and enjoy seeing pictures of the village and a map of the area on the school's website. "We could print the map off," said one child with excitement. They make plans of their classroom and explain the route from this to other parts of the school. Children use the basic keys on the computer, and, with adult help, use the mouse to click on the correct icons to draw simple patterns and print these out. Children learn to investigate and are successful at this. They find out about living things and how to look after their pets and other animals. They know that living things, such as plants need food and water for energy and to grow. Children explain the difference between these and man made objects such as robots and toys, which are operated by batteries or electricity. Children are excited about finding things out for themselves and have good attitudes to learning. The quality of teaching and the range of activities provided are good.

## **Physical development**

74. The majority of children make good progress in their physical development and attain the expected levels by the time they start in Year 1. Children are confident at moving around different spaces. They use the space in and around the playground well at break times. In a physical education lesson in the hall, children moved in different directions in a variety of ways with great enjoyment. They responded well to instructions and performed their finished sequences to each other. Children enjoy moving to music and listening to it and being still. They stamped feet and wriggled toes when moving like a puppet. Children benefit from the enthusiasm of the teacher and respond to this well with good attitudes. The quality of teaching and learning is good. The school has already identified the need to provide appropriate resources for the further development of children's outdoor structured play.

## **Creative development**

75. Children are provided with a broad range of creative activities. Nearly all make good progress and attain the expected levels by the time they start in Year 1. Children draw and paint as part of their topic work. They use charcoal and pastels to carry out observational drawings of the class pet rat. Children make collages using autumn leaves and paint pictures of autumn trees. An improvement since the last inspection is that children's art work is less over-directed by adults. Children enjoy singing and join in with the actions enthusiastically. They recall different songs and follow simple beats well by clapping hands and clicking fingers. Children respond well to different types of recorded music; this provides good opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Children are given opportunities for imaginative play and use a range of games and toys. Children enjoy using the small indoor tent for different play activities. However, during the inspection, no themed structured play area was set up. Overall, teaching and learning for creative development are good and children have positive attitudes.

## **ENGLISH**

76. Attainment for pupils currently in Years 2 and 6 is above nationally expected levels. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in their learning and achieve well. This is a considerable improvement since the last inspection when standards were judged as average and there was underachievement, particularly in writing and to some extent in speaking and listening. At that time higher attaining pupils did not achieve as well as they could, and pupils with special educational needs made satisfactory progress. Inspection evidence confirms the school has eliminated the underachievement commented on in the last report.

77. Results of National Curriculum assessments in 2002 for seven year olds were above average in reading and writing when compared with national averages and those of similar schools. Standards for pupils currently in Year 6 are higher than results of the 2002 National Curriculum assessments for eleven year olds who have since left the school. These results were well below the national average when compared with all and similar schools. However, it should be noted that three-fifths of pupils in the year group assessed had special educational needs and the school's targets for the proportion of pupils to gain the nationally expected levels were set to reflect this. Further consideration should be given to the fact that the present Year 6 is much smaller in number (nine pupils), and the proportion of pupils with special educational needs is considerably less. In order to raise further pupils' attainment in English, the school decided to:

- Maintain a focus on the development of speaking and listening, with an emphasis on the correct terminology and the use of full sentences;
- Continue to improve the quality of pupils' writing, targeting especially spelling and grammar.

78. Since the last inspection, despite the high turnover of staff, as well as improvements in standards, there have been improvements in the expectations of teachers and in pupils' attitudes to learning. Lesson planning is much tighter with a better focus on meeting the needs of pupils at all stages of learning, and now provides challenge for all, including higher attainers. Lessons are now inclusive for all pupils. Assessment data is better used to set appropriate targets and to plan effective lessons. The library has been made more attractive, is used more consistently, and the number and range of books has been increased.

79. Standards in speaking and listening are above average. This is an improvement on the average standards and underachievement commented on in the last inspection report. Through the school's focus on the development of speaking and listening skills, pupils are given good opportunities to respond to questions and explain what they know and how they arrived at their answers. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 talked about the ingredients required for making bird cake; and in Years 3 and 4, pupils explained the rules for playing Snap with confidence. In Years 5 and 6, pupils made rapid progress and described the main features of a non-chronological report with clarity. They gave a good range of examples of types of report this covered, such as film reviews.

80. As at the last inspection, standards in reading across the school are above average. Pupils now make better use of the library. All classes have a weekly library time and during the inspection some older pupils were observed using the library independently. However, this use could be extended further. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have a good knowledge of their favourite books and know about the roles of authors and illustrators. Years 3 and 4 pupils find books from the library, often by specific authors. By Years 5 and 6, many pupils use the Internet for research. Across the school, pupils read a wide range of books, which provide an appropriate challenge. Often, older pupils have been inspired in their choices by the school's book weeks. Pupils, of all ages have a good understanding of the terms associated with reading, such as contents, index and glossary. Higher attaining pupils across the school read fluently, accurately and with expression. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported with their reading and are making good progress at levels appropriate to their abilities.

81. A further improvement since the last inspection is that pupils are now given good opportunities to redraft and improve their writing. Pupils' finished work is to an above average standard, being both imaginative and of a good quality and quantity. There is now no underachievement in writing and sufficient time is given to finishing it. Pupils enjoy writing and are confident writers. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 wrote instructions for making an imaginary recipe having already devised the 'horrible' ingredients. Higher attaining pupils in Year 2 have progressed to using speech marks. By Years 5 and 6, pupils' writing is thoughtful with a good use of descriptive language. Pupils write for a wide range of purposes, which includes stories, dialogues, poems, letters, reports, and accounts. The standard of spelling for pupils now in Year 2 and Year 6 is satisfactory. Pupils make effective use of dictionaries to support writing.

82. Links with other subjects of the curriculum are strong. Information and communication technology is used well to word process pupils' finished work. This was not so at the last inspection. For religious education pupils write prayers, and in history, accounts about life in the past, such as what it would be like to live as a child in Victorian times. Links with assemblies provide good opportunities for extending pupils' speaking and listening skills as pupils read out prayers and other accounts and stories. Pupils carefully write up the results of their scientific experiments. Writing related to other subjects was identified as a weakness at the last inspection. The situation has been improved considerably, as standards in this respect are now good.

83. The quality of English teaching is very good overall. Pupils now make good, and often very good, gains in their learning. This is an improvement on the satisfactory teaching and learning reported at the last inspection. Lessons are well planned, with clear learning objectives, to follow the structure of the literacy hour and to teach the use of grammar and punctuation. Teachers stress the use of grammar and punctuation but successfully encourage pupils to develop their

imaginations as well in written work. In an excellent lesson the teacher enabled pupils to produce some highly imaginative recipes, whilst at the same time using the opportunity to confirm pupils' understanding about the use of adjectives. A strong emphasis is placed on developing pupils' speaking and listening skills and extending vocabulary. Teachers encourage pupils to write meaningfully and to read their work out with expression and this provides good opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, particularly in some assemblies. Here pupils, particularly older ones, read with good expression and understanding, which enhances the occasion considerably. Pupils are highly motivated by their teachers and have good and often very good attitudes to learning, which is an improvement on the satisfactory position reported on before.

84. The leadership of the co-ordinator is very good with a clear direction for continued improvement. Much has been achieved in a relatively short space of time to raise standards and broaden provision since the last inspection. High expectations from all staff, the governor for literacy, and other governors, are the norm and this is having a very good impact on raising standards further and improving provision. Suitable monitoring of teaching takes place. Resources are enhanced by book weeks, when pupils and adults dress up as different characters from favourite books; and links with a publisher, for whom pupils write book reviews. The co-ordinator runs a drama club, and members of the community continue to help with reading and running the library, which further enriches provision. Assessment is used well to analyse data to set school and individual targets for pupils and to aid planning. The marking of pupils' work is consistent and includes useful comments. Homework is suitably linked to literacy lessons.

## **MATHEMATICS**

85. The last inspection reported that although standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 were in line with national expectations, an insufficient rigour and drive for higher standards resulted in many pupils underachieving. Furthermore, an over-reliance on work sheets had an adverse effect on pupils' learning. To improve the quality of teaching and learning, the school focused on improving planning in order to:

- Ensure all pupils were given work well matched to their stages of learning;
- Improve the assessment of what pupils know and can do, and use this information to help plan what is to be taught next.

86. Although high teacher turnover between the previous inspection and the statutory end of year assessments for 2002 impeded continuity, all pupils assessed at the end of Year 2 reached the expected level. Of these, a third gained the higher level. When compared with similar schools, results were average. However, results of a relatively small year group (15 pupils) cannot be relied on fully to give a secure picture of the school's performance, as the adverse performance of one pupil, who may have special educational needs, can have a marked effect on statistics. Assessment of pupils at the end of Year 6 showed overall attainment to be well below average when compared with either national results, or those of similar schools. However, the proportion of pupils gaining the expected level or above, showed a marked improvement on the previous year. This was a notable achievement when taking into account three-fifths of pupils assessed had special educational needs. The school's drive to raise standards, based on a review of assessment data, led to:

- A continued emphasis on mental arithmetic;
- A greater focus on problem solving;
- Sharing pupils' numeracy targets with parents;
- Further staff training related to various aspects of mathematics, and of nationally funded initiatives.

87. Inspection evidence confirms pupils now in Years 2 and 6 learn well and perform at levels above national expectations. This is an improvement on the last inspection. There is every indication that current standards will be maintained to the end of the school year. No significant difference is noted regarding the performance of boys and girls. The difference in attainment between the present Year 6 and that of last year's eleven year olds is attributable not only to the school's effective strategies to raise standards, but in the context of a much smaller year group (nine pupils) with a considerably smaller proportion of special educational needs. As a result of good support, pupils with special needs make good progress in relation to their prior attainment. Scrutiny of pupils' work, together with a review of planning, shows provision meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. Through providing many opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively, the subject makes a significant contribution to their moral and social development.

88. Across the school, the emphasis on mental arithmetic has resulted in pupils achieving well. Nearly all pupils are eager to respond to the tasks set them, and explain how they arrive at answers. Teachers constantly challenge pupils' understanding, as when a Year 2 pupil was asked, "How did you work that out?" and when a pupil in Year 6 gave a brief reply to how he calculated the perimeter of an octagon, he was reminded, "Give me a full answer. You know I will always come back to ask you, Why?" In return, pupils are given appropriate praise for effort. For example, when a Year 1 pupil correctly explained how he had worked out a money problem, he was told, "That's fantastic. Well done!"

89. Pupils in Year 2 have a clear understanding of place value of numbers to 100. Pupils are competent with addition and subtraction, and, apply what they have learnt to problems involving money. They collect a range of information from their classmates, use this data to produce graphs that they interpret through questions and answers. Pupils understand multiplication is repeated addition, and use 2, 3, 5, and 10 multiplication tables to work out number and money tasks. Pupils work with simple fractions; halves and quarters, calculating fractions of shapes and number. Most read the time on analogue clocks to tell the hour, half past, and a quarter past and to the hour. Pupils have a secure understanding of reflective symmetry, and use mathematical vocabulary to describe and classify two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes.

90. Pupils currently in Year 6 carry out mental calculations at speed. They choose appropriate number operations, together with suitable methods of calculations to solve problems. Pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of the relationship between fractions, percentages and decimals. They understand negative numbers, and undertake an appropriate range of calculations involving them. Review of work confirms activities relating to probability and data handling gives pupils a clear understanding of the terms average, mode and mean, and of the 'impossible – certain' probability continuum. Work on display indicates pupils work to a high level on co-ordinates and translation of shapes around the four quadrants of the x and y axes. Pupils know and construct a range of angles and triangles with accuracy. They have a good understanding of how to calculate area and perimeter of simple shapes. In an observed lesson, pupils devised several formulae, including  $P=2(l+b)$  to calculate the perimeter of a rectangle. They quickly identified a simple strategy to use in the calculation of perimeters of a regular polygon.

91. The quality of teaching and learning is good. An enjoyment of mathematical learning is created by teachers' enthusiasm. They make learning fun. Having received intensive staff training in numeracy, teachers have a secure understanding and knowledge of the subject. Lessons are well planned with a range of interesting activities, with pupils' different stages of learning well provided for in questioning, practical and written elements. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and performance, and, as a result, pupils are attentive and well behaved. Lessons build well on what pupils have learnt earlier, and explanations are clear and well paced; as when pupils in Years 3 and 4 were given guidance on how to use partitioning and arrays to solve multiplication problems. Teachers' very good relationships with pupils, sensitive

correction of mistakes, together with praise and ongoing reassurance, results in pupils gaining in confidence and responding without fear of failure.

92. The subject is well managed. Appropriate documentation is in place to support teachers' planning. Standards are now monitored on a regular basis, and the mathematics co-ordinator monitors the quality of teaching. Pupils are assessed at the end of each unit of study to evaluate what they know and can do, to track progress and provide individual targets for learning. Data from end of year assessments is reviewed in order to monitor and modify curriculum provision.

93. There is appropriate application of pupils' numeracy skills across the curriculum. Although pupils use computers for basic numeracy activities, the overall application of ICT to aid learning, particularly between Years 3 and 6, is too limited. In most instances, rather than apply their developing skills of ICT, pupils record procedures and outcomes, and draw tables and graphs by hand. The school has already acknowledged within its improvement plan that this is an area for development.

## **SCIENCE**

94. The previous inspection found standards in science at ages seven and eleven to be in line with national expectations. However, this result was not considered good enough as most pupils could have done better. Insufficient time was allocated to teaching science, and weaknesses in lesson planning resulted in pupils not being given tasks suitably matched to their levels of attainment. Learning was not good enough and pupils produced too little work. In order to eradicate pupils' underachievement, and raise standards further, the school focused on:

- Improving the quality of lesson planning, to ensure pupils were given tasks that were suitably challenging;
- Developing scientific enquiry, with an emphasis on the use of subject specific language.

95. Results of statutory assessments for 2002 in science, showed that whilst overall performance at the end of Year 2 exceeded national expectations and averages, that for Year 6 was average. In both year groups, all pupils reached the nationally expected levels. Whilst the proportion gaining the higher level at the end of Year 2 was well above the norm, that gaining the higher level at Year 6 was well below average. However, pupils at Year 6 achieved well when taking into account the high proportion with special educational needs. In order to make further gains in pupils' attainment, the school decided to maintain its focus on investigative science, and to develop further the use of assessment as a tool to support teaching and learning.

96. Inspection evidence confirms that, as previously reported, attainment for pupils currently in Year 2 meets national expectations. Of these, around one third are at a higher stage of learning. Standards for the small group of pupils now in Year 6 are above those expected nationally for pupils of this age, and, as such, this represents an improvement on the findings of the last inspection. Scrutiny of pupils' work, together with a review of teachers' planning, confirms that in contrast to the findings of the last inspection, an appropriate amount of time is now allocated to teaching science. Provision meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. Pupils make satisfactory gains in their skills, knowledge and understanding as they move through Years 1 and 2. They make good progress from Years 3 to 6. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support and make good progress in relation to prior attainment. No significant differences were noted between the progress of boys and girls.

97. In keeping with the school's strategies for raising levels of attainment, nearly all science teaching is now carried out through a practical, hands-on, investigative approach. It is undertaken well. Pupils observe, experiment, predict and use the skills of scientific enquiry effectively. They observe well, record their findings, and confidently offer informed and reasoned explanations, as for example, when a pupil in Year 1 gave a thoughtful reply to: "Tell me about

this plant. Is it living? Why do you think it's living?" Similarly, pupils in Years 5 and 6 gave very good explanations as to what constitutes a saturated solution.

98. Observations and handling of Fleck, the pet rat, give pupils in Year 1 a sound understanding of the features of living things. By Year 2, pupils understand that different species of animals are found in different localities and habitats. They know and name the main parts of the human body, and of plants. Pupils develop a clear understanding of their senses and their importance to us in everyday life. They work confidently with a range of materials that they classify according to a range of criteria. Pupils demonstrate a sound understanding of living and non-living things, of natural and man-made objects, and of items attracted by magnets and those that are not. Pupils understand the use of electricity. Having participated in an 'electricity day' with pupils at a nearby school, pupils constructed a lighthouse that incorporated a simple circuit that turns the light on and off. A review of pupils' work indicates pupils have a good understanding of what makes a test 'fair'. For example, when investigating which materials were most appropriate for making an umbrella, pupils devised a number of ways to ensure their enquiry was undertaken in a fair manner.

99. Inspection evidence shows pupils now in Year 6 have a good understanding of the major body systems and main organs. Pupils understand the importance of the skeleton and how muscles work to help our movement. They appreciate the importance of a varied and balanced diet, and of exercise for keeping healthy. Pupils have a clear understanding of what plants require for healthy growth. A range of investigations gives pupils a good knowledge of solids, liquids and gases, and of reversible and irreversible changes of state. As part of their topic about water, pupils in Years 5 and 6 showed a good understanding of the water cycle; explained clearly from the viewpoint of a water droplet. Pupils have a secure understanding of filtration, evaporation and condensation, together with solutions and suspensions.

100. Pupils' attitudes to science are good. Pupils show much interest and enthusiasm, discuss their work sensibly, sustain concentration and become thoroughly involved in what they are doing. Pupils collaborate well during investigations, and handle equipment with care. In lessons observed, teaching was judged to be good overall. Teachers' knowledge of the subject is good. Staff plan a sequence of activities with clear learning objectives that challenge all pupils well. A positive feature is the effective use of open ended questions to elicit responses and prompt further enquiry. Specific scientific vocabulary is introduced and used well. For instance, in their investigation into which materials are best used for keeping light out, pupils in Years 3 and 4 made correct use of the terms transparent, translucent and opaque.

101. Day-to-day assessment is now used well in helping to plan what is to be taught next, and, at the end of each topic staff make clear assessments of what pupils know and can do. Similarly, end of year assessments at Years 2 and 6 are analysed to monitor and modify curriculum provision and help track pupil progress. Science often acts as a stimulus for other areas of the curriculum, including observational drawing and writing skills. It plays an important part in helping develop pupils' skills of speaking, listening and questioning. Although there is evidence of pupils using ICT to support learning, as when pupils in Years 3 and 4 access the Internet to gain information on 'The earth, sun and moon', it is insufficient. Pupils do not make enough use of computer skills to report, record or illustrate findings of investigations.

102. The subject is well managed. A clear and helpful policy, together with a scheme of work supports teachers in their planning. The quality of teaching and learning is monitored regularly. The school's capacity for science to develop further under the current co-ordinator is good.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

103. Inspection evidence confirms pupils make good progress in art in Years 1 and 2. This results in attainment at age seven exceeding nationally expected levels for art and design. This is an improvement on the findings of the last report. Between Years 3 and 6, learning is

satisfactory. Attainment at the end of Year 6 is in line with national expectations; a finding consistent with the previous report. There are particular strengths in painting and picture making for younger pupils and in observational drawing for those older. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and are included fully in all lessons.

104. A number of improvements relating to the subject are noted since the last inspection. Displays of pupils' work now around the school are bright and attractive, and show good links to other subjects, such as design and technology and history. There are now good links to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Links to famous artists, different styles of art and other cultures are now strong. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 made delicate drawings after the style of Alberto Giacometti. Pupils are now encouraged to produce imaginative work and this they do well. Pupils in Year 1 and 2 had created highly imaginative and good quality pictures based on their drawings of the nearby church of St Michael.

105. Sketchbooks are used well by pupils in Years 5 and 6 to draw and design. However, although the work is dated and progress over time is evident, there are often long gaps between the times that sketchbooks are used. Information and communication technology is used by pupils of all ages to create patterns and designs. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 were observed using a program to create wrapping paper for a particular purpose.

106. Teaching in the lessons observed was good overall. Pupils are highly motivated by the effective teaching and have very good attitudes to their work. Pupils make good gains in their learning. This is an improvement on the satisfactory situation found at the last inspection. In a very good lesson involving Years 1 and 2, the teacher combined work about the artist Vincent Van Gogh with colour mixing by pupils. The pupils' work resulted in highly imaginative and individual pictures, in which they mixed many different shades of mostly cool colours. Teachers encourage pupils to be responsible and equipment is shared sensibly, and tidied away quickly after lessons.

107. The subject is managed well with pupils benefiting from the expertise of the co-ordinator. This makes a positive impact on raising standards. Procedures for assessment are satisfactory overall. Resources are satisfactory and used sensibly by pupils. An art club further enhances provision.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

108. Attainment for pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 in design and technology is in line with national expectations. Whilst this is a less positive judgement to that of the last inspection, it should be viewed in the context of small year groups and the emphasis given to other subjects, particularly literacy and numeracy. However, pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good overall progress in learning. The school has maintained the strong curriculum reported on at the last inspection. Pupils are provided with a broad and interesting range of design activities with a strong emphasis placed on evaluation and improvement of design.

109. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 designed and made small clay dishes for Diwali. They discussed the task with enthusiasm before making a thumb pot as a base for their dishes to hold nightlights, and considered appropriate ways to decorate them. In Years 3 and 4, pupils designed and constructed photo frames and wrote evaluations on the success of their projects. By Years 5 and 6, pupils have progressed well and undertake complex work, as for example, when they design and make a pair of slippers. As they move through the school, pupils have satisfactory opportunities to use a range of materials, and to consider the best way to make joins. Good links are made with other subjects, such as history and art and design. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 had made 'rag rugs' linked to their topic work on the Victorians, and pupils use their art sketchbooks to record their designs in.

110. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers display good subject knowledge and are enthusiastic about design and technology. Pupils respond well to the interesting activities which teachers plan and have good attitudes to their work. The subject is managed well and promoted throughout the school by good quality displays, and contributes well to the development of pupils' moral, social and cultural development.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

111. Standards in geography have been maintained since the last inspection and are again judged to be satisfactory at the end of Years 2 and 6. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. Teachers' planning is now supported by a scheme of work that incorporates most recent guidance relating to the National Curriculum. The time allocation for teaching geography is appropriate, and all statutory elements are met. Evidence from displays illustrates the subject's cross-curricular nature. During the inspection only one lesson was observable. Further evidence was obtained from a review of pupils' work, discussions with pupils and staff, together with a review of planning.

112. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have used the Internet to develop their understanding of key vocabulary with regard to location when studying the travels of Barnaby Bear. In Years 3 and 4, pupils' study of the factors influencing settlements gave them a sound understanding of the importance of location, the provision of shelter, and the need for water. Further work involved them making decisions on where to form a settlement applying their previous knowledge. At the time of inspection, pupils in Years 5 and 6 were undertaking an integrated ICT project producing multimedia presentations to support their work on 'Water'. This integrated approach is a feature of geography in Years 3 to 6. Work on display indicated pupils in Years 3 and 4 to have a clear understanding of how to interpret keys on maps, and how to use them to add additional information to maps they draw.

113. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good, and there is a genuine interest in the subject amongst pupils. Displays provide evidence of the breadth and balance of the curriculum for geography with topics dealt with in appropriate depth. Local visits and use of the school grounds provide rich experiences for pupils to develop their skills. Younger pupils in particular can describe features of their immediate school environment and that of the local village. Pupils' learning in geography makes a sound contribution to their literacy skills. In Years 5 and 6 pupils explore the responsibilities of energy companies to provide clean water. Pupils extract the correct information and form an appropriate argument to support their findings.

114. Evidence provided by the lesson observation together with work sampling, indicates teaching to be at least satisfactory. In the lesson observed the class teacher made the learning objective clear and pupils recorded this in their books. Evidence from work sampling showed that this was the case for all written work. The teacher then returned to the learning objective in the plenary session to assess the pupils' understanding in the context of the lesson. Lessons are well planned and teachers have a secure knowledge of the subject. Work is consistently marked with satisfactory feedback. Work samples illustrated appropriate challenge to cater for the breadth of attainment within each class.

115. The current subject policy is under review, and procedures for assessment and monitoring have been identified as areas for further development. Teachers provide appropriate feedback through written comments with plans to incorporate more formal assessments at the end of a topic. Monitoring is informal but records of evidence both written and photographic are retained after visits and workshops. Teachers make appropriate use of available resources, including artefacts and reference material on loan from the library service. However, the current provision of resources for geography is inadequate. There is insufficient reference material and a lack of suitable maps. Many of the school's resources are dated and sometimes inappropriate. The school is aware of the situation and has highlighted it as an area for development.

## **HISTORY**

116. Since the last inspection, the satisfactory nature of history has been maintained throughout the school. All pupils, including those with special educational needs make sound progress. Attainment at the end of Years 2 and 6 is consistent with nationally expected levels. Planning has improved since the previous inspection, with detailed topics ensuring full coverage of the statutory requirements for history based on a thorough scheme of work. Time allocated to the teaching of history is now appropriate as a result of a detailed curriculum audit. During the inspection no full history lessons could be observed. However, work was sampled from all year groups and discussions were held with pupils. Current topics include Guy Fawkes and the Fire of London in Years 1 and 2, Ancient Egyptians in Years 3 and 4, and Victorian England for Years 5 and 6.

117. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 show an appropriate understanding of chronology, and recount the story of the Gunpowder Plot clearly. They identify the fact that it happened a long time ago when things were very different. Drama is used as an effective tool with younger pupils to support learning when discussing the difference between London today and London in days gone by. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have a sound understanding of local history. They readily access the Internet to gain historical information, and identify a number of sites in the village relating to the Victorian period. In Years 3 and 4, pupils use research skills to gather information about the River Nile and its importance to the ancient civilisation of Egypt. A review of work shows pupils able to identify important ancient Egyptian artefacts and their significance. There is evidence of the good use of drama to explore the process of mummification, and pupils accurately recount the process with enthusiasm.

118. Pupils have positive attitudes to history. Evidence gained from a number of good quality displays around the school confirms they collaborate well in their work. The subject makes a positive contribution to pupils' moral, social and cultural development. Planning confirms lesson objectives are identified and shared with pupils, and work provided is suitably well matched to pupils' levels of attainment. Work reviewed was appropriately presented and consistently marked. This body of evidence indicates teaching to be satisfactory.

119. The curriculum is effectively planned on a two year cycle that ensures the continuity of progress and skills. The history policy is currently under review and more effective monitoring of the history curriculum is a future target for improvement. Assessment has been developed in line with the whole school assessment policy, with comments made in pupils' books as feedback. Assessment is on an informal basis, recording pupils' performance against performance indicators within the National Curriculum.

120. Resources for history are inadequate. Nevertheless, teachers make appropriate use of the resources available. Topic resource boxes are available for curriculum support from the local authority loan service. These are used to good advantage to advance learning and enhance the displays around the school. More up to date reference materials are required to develop further pupils' knowledge and understanding. The staff have identified materials that relate to the appropriate topics, and this reflects their desire to increase adequate provision. The school is aware of the current situation and the co-ordinator has highlighted this as an area for improvement within the subject action plan.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

121. The previous inspection reported attainment for seven and eleven year olds in information and communication technology (ICT), to be below nationally expected levels. Since then, the school has improved significantly its provision for the subject, and staff have recently begun nationally funded training for ICT.

122. Observations from lessons and of pupils at work, together with a review of work, confirm that pupils in Years 1 and 2, including those with special educational needs, learn well. Attainment for pupils currently in Year 2 exceeds nationally expected levels. However, although the planned curriculum now complies with requirements of the National Curriculum, pupils at present in Year 6 have not covered all elements of the curriculum. This results in gaps in pupils' experiences, skills and understanding. Although in work covered, pupils in Year 6 work at levels consistent with those expected for their age, overall attainment is below expected levels.

123. Across the school, pupils experience keyboard and mouse operated systems. Pupils operate tape recorders to listen to pre-recorded stories and music, and to record items themselves. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a good understanding of the importance of switches, buttons and keys in operating and controlling functions of basic household items. Older pupils fully appreciate the importance of computer technology, and our increasing reliance on it for many aspects of everyday life.

124. In classrooms, and in the recently established ICT suite, computers are in operation for much of the day, providing pupils with opportunities to develop their skills in ICT. Pupils in Year 1 use interactive programs, allowing them to enjoy stories and use the 'click and drag' procedure to move and draw items on screen. A review of pupils' work shows that by the end of Year 2, pupils write sentences direct to screen, change size, style and colour of font, and save and print work. By Year 6, pupils successfully manipulate and change size and position of items on screen. They produce texts that incorporate photographs imported from approved Internet sites, from a digital camera, or scanned in from conventional pictures. In a lesson observed, pupils in Years 5 and 6 worked confidently with text boxes to enhance the introductory page of their multimedia presentation on 'Acid Rain'.

125. Across the school, pupils' understanding and use of electronic interchange of information is good. Each morning, pupils in Year 2 excitedly 'log on' to see whether the class has received any replies to e-mails they have sent. All pupils have a clear understanding and ability to access the Internet to gain information in support of their studies. For example, in Years 1 and 2, pupils gained much information on owls. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 evaluated the several sites they had used to support their work on 'The earth, sun and moon'. In so doing, they considered the ease with which the site could be navigated, and how informative they found it. For members of Years 5 and 6, the use of such information interchange is almost a daily occurrence. Under the watchful eye of a talented support assistant, pupils across the school are given clear direction as to how they can add items of interest to the pages of the school's impressive website.

126. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have good opportunities to investigate control technology. They use programmable toys to enter directions for them to follow. Such activities reinforce understanding of direction, angles and distance, as well as developing skills associated with writing sequenced commands for the toy to follow. Inspection evidence shows that by the end of Year 6, pupils have too limited opportunities to operate logo style programs. They have yet to use computer technology to program and control items such as gates and lights, or structures they have made in design and technology lessons. Pupils do not use sensors to monitor, record and display data from scientific investigations. They have yet to carry out 'modelling' activities in which they learn how changing one variable can have an impact on overall performance or outcome.

127. Pupils make appropriate use of computers for basic numeracy activities. However, in Years 3 to 6, evidence of ICT to support data handling or spreadsheet activities is too limited. In mathematics and science, pupils' developing computer skills have yet to be used sufficiently to support learning. In both subjects, pupils write accounts and findings of investigations, and draw graphs and tables of results by hand.

128. Pupils clearly enjoy ICT activities, and are eager to make use of their developing skills. When using computers, they behave very well and work sensibly, either by themselves or in pairs, and treat resources with care. Teaching in lessons observed was good. Teachers gave

well paced, clear, step-by-step demonstrations on how to use new programs. Praise was used well to encourage pupils, and class organisation and management was good.

129. The subject is well managed. A thorough policy, together with a scheme of work supports teachers' planning. The school is now developing further its procedures to record the skills pupils have covered, together with their levels of competence. The school is well placed to make further gains in ICT.

## **MUSIC**

130. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, attainment in music is in line with nationally expected levels. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Overall, pupils make good progress in learning. They learn new songs quickly and soon improve on the quality of their performance, such as when learning a new hymn to sing in assembly. Pupils who have special educational needs play their full part in all lessons and make good progress.

131. Since the last inspection, pupils' attitudes to learning have improved and are now good. Links to providing opportunities to foster pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are now strong. The school now benefits from having a pianist on the staff. Music is used well to set the tone or mood for the occasion. For example, quiet, reflective passages are played to settle pupils as they enter the hall and prepare for worship. In contrast, a tune with a bouncy rhythm was used to encourage pupils in Years 3 and 4 to change quickly for their physical education lesson.

132. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 sing tunefully. They clap simple rhythms and repeat musical patterns correctly. Pupils progress well in their understanding of musical terms. In Years 5 and 6 pupils sing with clear diction and good expression. They maintain a correct rhythm and tap out the beat. When singing, pupils appreciate the importance of listening to those around them. Pupils understand how dynamics are altered according to the needs of the mood or words of a song.

133. The quality of teaching is good overall. Teachers make lessons interesting and challenge pupils well. Lessons move at a brisk pace, have good variety, and are inclusive for pupils of all abilities. Pupils are given opportunities to appreciate different types of music, to compose and perform to others. Pupils respond well to lessons and are enthusiastic about learning. They are very keen and highly motivated by the effective teaching. Pupils are full of good ideas, being keen to contribute what they know, such as in Years 5 and 6 when pupils discussed the modern equivalents of the street cries from long ago.

134. Good leadership of the subject gives a clear direction for continued improvement. Music is an important part of school life with pupils having the opportunity to sing in the choir, to take part in concerts and productions and to perform in St Michael's church and in the community. Pupils perform at the annual leavers' service and some learn to play the recorder. A peripatetic music teacher visits the school weekly to give a small number of pupils flute and clarinet tuition. The school is considering ways of expanding this further for other instruments. Musicians visit the school and workshops are arranged. The school is active in promoting the rich diversity of music and in expanding the cultural awareness of pupils. Pupils are encouraged to listen to a wide range of music, from well known composers, music from India and other countries, including recently Aboriginal music from Australia. Links to other subjects, such as literacy and history, are developed well. Procedures for assessing pupils' progress are satisfactory.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

135. Evidence from lessons observed, together with discussions with teachers, confirms physical education has maintained its position since the last inspection, in that pupils make satisfactory progress as they move through the school. At the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils' performance is consistent with national expectations. Pupils with special educational needs play a full part in all activities and make good progress. All pupils understand the importance of warming up at the start of lessons and cooling down at the end. They recognise the need for exercise to maintain healthy bodies. A review of planning confirms provision meets the requirements of the National Curriculum.

136. In a movement and dance lesson, pupils in Years 3 and 4 showed good levels of agility and co-operation, together with an awareness and use of space as they learnt and performed a new dance, the 'Electric Slide', an American line dance. Pupils successfully carried out a range of steps and turns, all performed in good rhythm to the accompanying music. They showed considerable poise and balance.

137. In an outdoor games lesson, pupils in Years 5 and 6 worked hard to develop their hockey skills of passing and receiving. Good attention was paid to the correct positioning of hands on hockey sticks. Pupils concentrated well as they received, controlled and passed the ball to their partner. Their growing ability was reinforced well in small games situations. Younger pupils were observed improving their technique of side foot passing and dribbling a football. Appropriate emphasis was placed on using the instep of the foot, and on maintaining control of speed and direction to improve the accuracy of the pass. In both lessons observed, pupils responded well to the good demonstrations given by teachers.

138. The school makes suitable provision for swimming. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 have swimming sessions each year at a pool in Marlborough. It is reported that by the end of Year 6, nearly all are able to swim the required 25 metres. Appropriate arrangements are made for pupils' outdoor adventurous activities. A variety of field trips, together with an annual residential visit to an outdoor activity centre for pupils in Years 5 and 6, provide orienteering, climbing and a range of team building activities.

139. Pupils have positive attitudes to physical education. They enjoy physical activities and co-operate well individually, in pairs and groups. Pupils listen carefully to instructions, concentrate well, respond quickly and work sensibly. They take pride in demonstrating for the rest of the class, and appreciate the efforts of others. In lessons observed, pupils sensibly evaluated the performance of others, stating aspects they considered successful, and where improvements could be made.

140. Teaching was judged to be satisfactory overall. Lessons are clearly planned and show a clear development of skills and activities. A common strength is the importance placed on drawing attention to good or praiseworthy efforts. In all lessons observed, teachers had suitably high expectations of performance and behaviour. They gave clear demonstrations and explanations. Where appropriate, adults work directly with pupils to support learning. Further support for pupils' acquisition of skills comes from them working with sports coaches, as for example, for tennis and football. Appropriate documentation supports teachers' planning for the development of pupils' skills across each element of the curriculum. The subject contributes well to pupils' social and moral development through pupils working in groups and teams, and by complying with the various rules and requirements of the games and activities in which they participate.