

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **DOWNLANDS COMMUNITY SCHOOL**

Blandford Camp

LEA area: Dorset

Unique reference number: 113659

Headteacher: Mrs R Hallett

Lead inspector: Mr L Lewin

Dates of inspection: 24 – 26 May 2004

Inspection number: 264206

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

© Crown copyright 2004

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Middle deemed primary  
School category: Community  
Age range of pupils: 5 – 9 years  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll: 137

School address: Blandford Camp  
Blandford Forum  
Dorset  
Postcode: DT11 8BG

Telephone number: 01258 453348  
Fax number: 01258 455286

Appropriate authority: Governing body  
Name of chair of governors: Mr Paul Brookes

Date of previous inspection: 9/11/1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Downlands Community School is situated on the military base of Blandford Camp and, with 137 pupils on roll, is smaller than most other schools. Nearly all of the pupils live on the camp, but a few come from the nearby town of Blandford Forum and local villages. Most pupils attend the school for periods ranging from six months to three years. Due to the ongoing movements of the military personnel, very few pupils stay at the school for the entire five years it is possible to attend for, and the rate at which pupils join or leave the school, other than at the normal times of admission and transfer, is very high. Pupils are taught in five year group classes by seven full-time teachers plus the Headteacher. At 6.8 per cent, the number of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above the national average. The majority of these pupils come from Nepal and have always attended English speaking schools and do not always therefore require specialist English as an additional language support. At 22.4 per cent, the number of pupils with special educational needs is above average and, at 2.2 per cent, the number of pupils with statements of special educational needs is also above average. No pupils are currently known to be eligible for free school meals. The great majority of pupils in the school are from white ethnic heritage backgrounds, with a few pupils coming from a range of other ethnic heritage backgrounds.

The schools in the region are subject to reorganisation in the near future, with the intention of changing from the current first school, middle school, secondary school system to a primary school/secondary school system. This school is destined to become a 4 – 11 primary school in September 2005.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
22330	Mr L Lewin	Lead inspector	Science Information and communication technology History Geography Religious education Special educational needs English as an additional language
12289	Mrs S Burgess	Lay inspector	-
17456	Mrs A Smithers	Team inspector	Foundation Stage English
3314	Mr A Turner	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design Design and technology Music Physical education

The inspection contractor was:

Cambridge Education Associates  
Demeter House  
Station Road  
Cambridge  
CB1 2RS

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the inspection contractor. The procedures are set out in the leaflet '*Complaining about Ofsted Inspections*', which is available from Ofsted Publications Centre (telephone 07002 637833) or Ofsted's website ([www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

## **REPORT CONTENTS**

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS</b>	
<b>STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS</b>	<b>8</b>
Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
<b>QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>10</b>
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
<b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE</b>	
<b>SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2</b>	
<b>PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS</b>	<b>27</b>

## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **good** school. Good leadership and management and good teaching help all groups of pupils to achieve well and attain good standards in English, mathematics, science and art and design. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher provides good leadership.
- Teaching assistants are very well used to support pupils' learning.
- Pupils with special educational needs are well supported.
- Pupils' awareness of other cultures is very well promoted.
- Pupils gain a good depth of understanding in many of the history and geography projects undertaken.
- There are very good arrangements for helping pupils settle in to school.
- The school has good systems for seeking and acting on the views of its pupils.
- Procedures for checking pupils' progress are good in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT), but under-developed in all other subjects.
- Governors do not visit the school on a regular enough basis.

The school has improved at a good rate since its last inspection in 1998. All of the key issues raised at that time have been addressed so that the curriculum balance is now good, governors are now involved in strategic planning and the work of the administrative staff is carefully monitored. Standards have improved overall in English, mathematics and science, and have been maintained at a good level in art. Leadership and management, pupils' behaviour, attendance, the climate for learning and the value for money offered by the school have all improved to a good level as compared to the satisfactory rating in the last inspection.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
Reading	D	C	C	<b>E</b>
Writing	B	B	B	<b>C</b>
Mathematics	C	C	A	<b>A</b>

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average; A\* - top 5 per cent of schools nationally*

*Similar schools are those with a similar number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.*

Overall, all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs, **achieve well** across the school. Children begin the Foundation Stage showing average attainment and most of them are on course to reach at least the expected levels by the end of the Foundation Stage, with a significant number set to exceed these levels. National test results for Year 2 pupils in 2003 were average in reading, above average in writing and well above average in mathematics when compared to all other schools nationally. Results were not as good as this in reading and writing when compared to other similar schools, although, the unique nature of the school's situation in serving a military community means that this particular comparison may not be accurate. Current inspection observations reflect a similar picture to the test

results overall, with Year 2 pupils reaching above average levels in writing and mathematics, and average levels in reading. The transient nature of the school's population makes it difficult to track pupils' long-term progress. Nonetheless, the school's detailed records in English and mathematics show that most pupils make good progress each term and reach above average levels in English and mathematics by the end of Year 4. In science, pupils reach average standards by the end of Year 2 and above average standards by the end of Year 4. Pupils do well in art throughout the school. Standards in ICT and religious education are average. Pupils gain a good depth of understanding in many of the interesting history and geography projects in which they are involved. In all other subjects, there was not enough evidence gathered during the inspection to enable standards to be judged.

Provision for developing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good** overall, but promotion of pupils' cultural awareness is **very good**. The pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are **good**. Attendance is **good**.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The quality of education is **good** overall. Curricular provision is good. Pupils are guided and supported well, with good arrangements in place to seek and act on their views. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Procedures for assessment are good in English, mathematics, science and ICT, but are underdeveloped in many other subjects. Teachers prepare their lessons well and provide pupils with an interesting range of tasks. They make good links between subjects and this helps to broaden pupils' understanding. Staff use the strong relationships they have with pupils to effectively encourage and motivate individuals. Teaching assistants provide very good support for teachers and pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are well taught and supported. Sometimes, lesson objectives are not made clear enough to pupils at the beginning of teaching sessions.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The leadership and management of the school are good. The governors, many of whom are new to their positions, fulfil their roles satisfactorily and ensure that all of the statutory requirements are met. The headteacher provides good leadership for the school and receives strong support from the deputy headteacher and other members of the senior management team. Subject co-ordinators carry out their roles well. Good systems have been established for monitoring teaching and learning and the curriculum. The school's finances are well managed. The school is aware of the need to upgrade systems to enable governors to visit on a more regular basis to give them a clear overview of the quality of the school's provision.

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

Parents show a good level of satisfaction with the work of the school. Almost all those who returned the pre-inspection questionnaire said that their children like school, teaching is good and staff expect pupils to work hard. The school has rightly identified the need to upgrade its systems for formally seeking and acting upon the views of parents. The questionnaires completed by pupils and discussions with them show that they like their school and the staff.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

The most important area for improvement is:

- Using the good examples in English, mathematics, science and ICT, develop and implement systems for checking the attainment and progress of pupils in all other subjects.
- Ensure governors have regular opportunities to visit the school.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

#### **Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects**

Pupils achieve well and, by the time they leave the school, attain above average standards in English, mathematics and science. Standards have improved overall since the last inspection.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils do well in art throughout the school.
- Pupils gain a broad range of understanding through the in-depth experiences they are given in history and geography topics.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress as they move through the school.

#### **Commentary**

1. *Inspection evidence:* Children enter the school showing broadly average attainment. The current picture of their achievement in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Staff changes and the transfer of several children in and out of the Foundation Stage unit have negatively impacted on overall achievement. Nonetheless, the good staff team now established ensures that children attain the expected levels in all areas of learning, with a significant minority set to achieve above these levels. In Years 2 to 4, as a result of good teaching, pupils achieve well and, by the end of Years 2 and 4, reach above average levels in English and mathematics. In science, pupils reach average standards by the end of Year 2 and above average standards by the end of Year 4. Pupils do well in art throughout the school. Standards in ICT and religious education are average. A number of interesting projects in history and geography, for example studies of the Celts, the Roman Empire and The Gambia, give pupils in Years 3 and 4 a good in-depth knowledge and understanding. In all other subjects, there was not enough evidence gathered during the inspection to enable standards to be judged.
2. In English, pupils' writing is above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 4 and this is a direct result of the good emphasis that the school has placed on developing their skills to write in different ways in different areas of the curriculum. Pupils write interesting accounts, use a good range of vocabulary and present their work neatly and legibly. Speaking and listening and reading skills are average overall across the schools. Most pupils are articulate, listen carefully and make good use of the library. In mathematics, pupils throughout the school show good skills with calculating mentally and do well in all practical mathematics activities. By the end of Year 4, pupils carry out detailed scientific investigations and develop good confidence in testing hypotheses and drawing conclusions. Throughout the school, pupils gain experience in working with a wide range of art and design techniques and produce good quality and attractive two-dimensional and three-dimensional work.
3. *National test results:* The standards of work currently seen in reading, writing and mathematics at Year 2 are mirrored by the school's test results in 2003. This is a result of the good teaching pupils receive. The school's results are improving each year, with the trend of improvement being better than the national trend.

### Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	15.9 (15.9)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	15.3 (15.1)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	18.1 (16.7)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 25 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

4. The school is acutely aware of the fact that its test results must be viewed with a degree of caution due to the transient nature of the military population and the fact that the <sup>1</sup>similar schools comparison of its results does not easily apply in a school that caters for pupils in a military environment. Also, these factors make it difficult to track the progress of pupils as they move through the school, with many of the Year 4 pupils having attended as many as four schools. However, the school's construction of a detailed system for tracking pupils' termly progress in English and mathematics and setting appropriate targets, shows that pupils generally achieve well and make good progress from term-to-term while they are in the school.
5. All groups of pupils generally progress well and, in particular, those with special educational needs achieve well as a result of the strong support they receive from teachers and especially from the teaching assistants. These pupils are given clear and specific guidance that relates precisely to the targets set for them in their Individual Education Plans and, generally, this enables them to cover the same areas of work as their classmates. In addition, good support given to the small number of pupils who speak English as an additional language also helps them to progress well in lessons.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Attendance, punctuality and pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are good, and have improved since the last inspection. As at the time of the last inspection, overall, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils have positive attitudes to their work and to school in general.
- Provision for pupils' cultural development is very good.

### **Commentary**

6. Overall, pupils' attitudes to learning, and to school in general, are good. Most pupils responding to the questionnaire said that they like being at the school and would happily seek help from staff in the school if they had worries or concerns.
7. In general, pupils are interested in their work and try hard to complete what they have been asked to do. Pupils in Year 2, for instance, much enjoyed investigating a variety of media for art, and Year 4 pupils co-operated well with partners to record their ideas on stories from other cultures. Relationships are good and make a valuable contribution towards pupils' achievement because individuals develop confidence and feel

---

<sup>1</sup> Similar schools are those deemed to have a similar number of pupils eligible for free school meals.

encouraged. Attendance and punctuality are both good and reflect pupils' positive attitudes towards coming to school.

**Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)**

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.4	School data	0.2
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

*The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.*

8. Behaviour in most classes, in assemblies, at lunchtime and around the school, is generally good. It is particularly good where the teaching is stimulating and fully engages pupils' attention. However, a few pupils find it difficult to conform to teachers' expectations and their behaviour in lessons can adversely affect the learning of others. Most pupils get on well together and feel that other children are friendly. As there is such a high turnover of pupils due to Army postings, the school has developed a well-established 'buddy' system to help new pupils settle in quickly. While there are some disagreements between pupils from time-to-time, those interviewed were confident that midday supervisors or their teachers would help them to resolve conflicts. There were no exclusions last year.
  
9. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. Assemblies, aspects of different lessons and the extensive and interesting school grounds, are all used appropriately to help pupils gain an appreciation of the world around them. Provision for pupils' moral and social development is good. Through assemblies, <sup>2</sup>circle time and class discussions, pupils are taught to consider the effect of their actions and to respect the views of others. They are encouraged to think about the wider world by support for various charities, such as the Marie Curie Cancer Appeal, Barnardo's and LEPR. Pupils' social development is also enhanced by involvement in the school council and seeing their ideas acted upon. Provision for cultural development is very good and has improved since the time of the last inspection. Pupils' own cultural heritage is explored through the study of artists such as Van Gogh, William Morris and Andy Goldsworthy. Pupils recently organised their own Roman museum, now replaced by a gallery of their artwork. Geography, art, literacy, ICT lessons and dance all contribute very effectively to an in-depth exploration of the culture and traditions of The Gambia. Drama days bring the past to life and there is a good range of visits to different places of worship.

**QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

As at the time of the last inspection, the quality of education is good. Good teaching, curriculum and systems for guiding pupils, along with satisfactory links made with the parents, ensure that pupils have a full range of opportunities to ensure that they progress well with their learning.

**Teaching and learning**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Procedures for assessment are good in English and mathematics, but are underdeveloped in many other subjects.

---

<sup>2</sup> Times when pupils sit together in a circle with their teacher and take it in turns expressing their ideas.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Lessons are well prepared.
- Strong relationships between adults and pupils enhance learning.
- Teachers provide pupils with an interesting range of tasks.
- Teachers make good links between different subjects.
- Teaching assistants provide valuable support for teachers and pupils.
- Pupils with special educational needs are well taught and supported.
- Lesson objectives are not always made clear to pupils.

## Commentary

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 34 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (3%)	3 (9%)	15 (44%)	15 (44%)	0	0	0

*The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.*

10. Lessons are well planned so that activities move along at a good pace. For example, in the Foundation Stage, the teacher gave a well planned demonstration to show children how they could improve their sea monster pictures and, consequently, they all worked confidently and knew exactly what to do. Similarly, good planning and preparation meant that in a Year 1 mathematics lesson the teacher provided three different levels of work precisely tailored for pupils' needs, and a well organised demonstration enabled pupils to become deeply involved in their number pattern investigations. The careful planning of work to suit the needs of different groups of pupils is a feature of the good teaching throughout the school and forms the basis of the school's success in getting pupils to achieve well and reach good standards.
11. All staff form very good relationships with the pupils. The school rightly sees this as a crucial element in terms of supporting pupils who have, and will in the future, experience a number of changes of schools. All staff adopt a patient yet persistent approach with pupils, using the good rapport they have established as a means of encouraging individuals and motivating them to do their best. This approach helps individuals who have recently transferred in to the school to settle quickly, form friendships and work confidently. The use of these good relationships was noted, for example, in a Year 4 science lesson where the teacher regularly made pauses in the observation activities to ensure individuals and groups remained fully focused on the desired outcome of the task. The teacher showed a good insight into which individuals needed close monitoring and those who were capable of working in a more independent way. Also, in a very good Year 4 English lesson, good relationships meant that intensive support from the teacher and teaching assistant was easily facilitated to help individuals rise to the writing challenges introduced.
12. Teachers ensure that the content of their lessons is as interesting as possible for pupils. They present new themes in an interesting way and make good use of resources. For example, a few lessons were observed where teachers made good use of the new computer projectors to provide stimulating visual aids that captured pupils' interest and

accelerated their learning about new concepts and ideas. Teachers also often provide a good variety of activities during lessons to encourage pupils' enthusiasm and interest.

#### **Example of outstanding practice**

##### **Keeping pupils interested through giving them a challenging and varied range of activities.**

In an excellent Year 2 art and design lesson the teacher provided pupils with four different activities to improve their sketching and drawing skills, with only five minutes allowed for each activity. A skilful demonstration introduced pupils to a wide range of techniques including isolating a portion of a digital photograph of their previous collage work – then sketching and enlarging this portion. The challenging and intensive nature of the activities meant that much high quality work was produced in a relatively short space of time with pupils moving from one activity to the next.

13. Another strength of the planning in all classes is the deliberate way in which teachers seek to link different subjects so that work in one area complements that in another. Many examples of this approach were noted in the lessons seen. For example, in English lessons in Year 3 and Year 4 classes, work was linked to ICT with pupils writing in an Email format. Also, good links were made to geography work about Gambia and discussion about different arrangements within different African families led to many personal and social education strands being incorporated through detailed discussion work. Similarly, English work in Year 1 linked with the current science topic very well, with pupils developing lines of poetry about minibeasts. Linking work across the subjects in this way gives the school many good opportunities to enrich the curriculum and broaden pupils' understanding.
14. The school has a good number of teaching assistants. They are deployed very well and provide strong support for individuals and groups of pupils. Many of them are experienced and well trained and this is often apparent in the way that they apply intensive support where it is needed, but know exactly when to withdraw and allow individuals to work independently. They are well briefed by teachers and in all of the lessons seen, showed a clear understanding of areas where their support was most needed. Some of the teaching assistants are assigned to support pupils with special educational needs, but show good flexibility in their approach so that on occasions, where appropriate, they widen the scope of their support well to guide and assist other pupils near them in the classroom. The teaching assistant who is deployed to work with groups in the ICT suite teaches and guides the pupils well. She follows the teachers' lesson plans precisely, and through her own strong knowledge of the programs being used, gives pupils clear instructions that help them progress effectively with learning new computer skills.
15. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well throughout the school. Individual Education Plans are clear and provide sharply focused targets for pupils' future improvement and these targets are carefully interwoven with lesson planning so that the work provided for these individuals is precisely matched to their needs. Teaching assistants provide strong support for these pupils generally, but especially where they are assigned to support individual pupils. There are a very small number of pupils in the school with particular behavioural difficulties and they are occasionally prone towards emotional outbursts and poor behaviour. Teachers and the individual teaching assistants concerned deal very well with these situations to minimise the potential for any disturbance to the other pupils' learning and to ensure that the individual pupils concerned are effectively supported to help them through these difficult episodes.

16. Although lesson objectives are clearly detailed within teachers' planning, sometimes teachers do not make these explicit to pupils at the beginning of the sessions, which means pupils do not have a clear idea of the purpose of the work or where it is leading.
17. Good systems have been established to assess pupils' attainment and progress in English, mathematics, science and ICT. The school has rightly identified the need to carefully track pupils' short-term progress in these subjects as the transient nature of the school population makes tracking the progress of individuals from the start to the end of the school impossible, with very few pupils staying at the school for this length of time. The short-term tracking works well and good use is made of the information by teachers to help inform their planning. In science and ICT, effective systems have also been established to check pupils' attainment and progress and provide information to help inform teachers' future planning. However, in all other subjects, assessment systems have yet to be fully developed in a way that is consistent across the school.

## **The curriculum**

The curriculum is good and in line with the findings of the last inspection. A wide range of extra activities is provided. Accommodation and resources are good overall.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good efforts are made to ensure that all pupils are fully included in all activities.
- Provision for pupils who have special educational needs is good.
- Personal, social and health education and citizenship are promoted well.
- The curriculum is enriched well by the good range of interesting extra-curricular activities and projects in subjects such as geography and history.

## **Commentary**

18. The curriculum is broad and balanced and provides good opportunities for all pupils. It is well organised and ensures that all subjects of the National Curriculum, including religious education, are covered. It meets all statutory requirements and prepares pupils well for the next stage of their education or when they move to a new school.
19. Throughout the school staff work hard to ensure all groups of pupils and individuals have full opportunities to become involved in all activities. Teachers plan work well to ensure that tasks cater effectively for pupils of different attainment levels. Wherever possible the achievements of individuals are celebrated and in this way the school promotes an inclusive climate for learning in which all pupils feel valued for their efforts.
20. The special educational needs co-ordinator provides strong support for her colleagues. She maintains comprehensive and well organised records for pupils with special educational needs so that a clear view on how well each individual is progressing. Individual Education Plans are well constructed, with detailed and sharply focused targets that are reviewed on a regular basis. The teaching assistants assigned to work with individual pupils do a particularly good job and show a sensitive awareness to the needs of the pupils. The good support and encouragement given to the pupils ensures that they feel fully included in all of the activities that take place. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are also provided with good support. Although none of them are at the early stages of learning to speak English and most have only ever attended English

speaking schools, they are all carefully screened on arrival at the school through liaison with outside agencies and, where necessary, extra support is given to ensure they settle quickly and happily into school.

21. Personal, social and health education and citizenship are well promoted. The school has an effective and active school council, which has had some of its recommendations adopted. The timetabled use of circle time – when pupils sit in a circle with staff and take turns to give their views about different ideas – fully involves teachers and support staff and provides a supportive environment for issues and concerns to be discussed.
22. Opportunities for enrichment of the curriculum are good and include music, sports and other clubs. There is a well supported programme of extra-curricular activities for Years 3 and 4, with various activities including pond dipping, ICT, cooking and gardening. There is also a football club run by parents and helpers and a choir activity. Also, classes take part in school visits to local places of interest, and drama groups and charitable organisations regularly visit the school. The recent visit by an African dance troupe made a great impression on the children. The Gambia project that Year 3 and 4 pupils have been working on is an effective way of introducing them to a variety of aspects of a very different culture. In addition, this has produced some very effective art and design work. Very good activities, such as the construction of a school museum and art gallery, provide a strong boost to pupils' learning, celebrate their achievements and promote their in-depth understanding and sense of wonder and enquiry. In particular, the building of a replica ancient Celtic house in the school grounds gives pupils a good first hand learning experience that they will probably always remember.
23. The school has a large field, a playground with a range of apparatus, a school pond and a classroom dedicated as a music room with an extensive range of musical instruments. The good resources and accommodation help to enhance the quality of education with, for example, pupils having good opportunities to use the grounds for science work.

### **Care, guidance and support**

As at the time of the last inspection, the school makes good provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety. It offers them good support, advice and guidance, including well-established induction procedures. Pupils are involved well in the life of the school.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school provides a secure learning environment.
- Governors are not as yet involved in full health and safety monitoring.
- There is a good level of support and guidance.
- Induction procedures are very good
- Good account of pupils' views is taken through the newly developed school council.

### **Commentary**

24. Pupils are well looked after at the school - safely within the secure confines of Blandford Camp. Staff and governors give due consideration to matters of health and safety, but the school has rightly identified the need to widen the governors' monitoring role in this respect. Appropriate child protection arrangements are in place and staff training is up to date. If necessary, the school liaises with the Army Welfare Unit to ensure that family

support is provided. In addition, a professional counsellor regularly works with pupils who it is considered will most benefit. The staff know their pupils well and cater sensitively for their needs. Good systems are established to celebrate the achievements and personal development of pupils each week in assembly.

25. If pupils have any questions or concerns, most say they are confident that there is always someone to listen and offer support. Those interviewed spoke positively about their school. Very effective induction procedures and a well-established 'buddy' system ensure that pupils in every year group new to the school settle in quickly. Pre-school children from the on-site Cygnets nursery share a playground and several activities with the youngest children in the main school. This helps to familiarise them successfully with school staff, the environment and routines when they start in the Foundation Stage.
26. Pupils are actively involved in school life by participation in the new school council which has promoted the successful introduction of ideas such as the formation of a school choir, the provision of a new Gold Book song and playground improvements.

### **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

Overall, links with the parents, the community and other schools are **good** and have improved since the last inspection.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents are generally supportive of the school.
- The school has good systems for the transfer of pupils.
- Links with the immediate community are good.
- The school does not regularly seek parents' views.

### **Commentary**

27. Parents show a good level of satisfaction with the work of the school. Almost all those who returned the pre-inspection questionnaire said that their children like school, teaching is good and staff expect pupils to work hard. A significant minority, however, did not feel that the school seeks the views of parents and takes account of their suggestions and concerns. The school has identified rightly the need to introduce more formalised systems for seeking and acting upon parents' views, for example, by canvassing their opinions through issuing regular questionnaires about school activities and developments. The active 'Friends of Downlands Association' successfully raises funds through a variety of events. These extra funds have helped the school purchase such items as ICT equipment, stage lighting and playground items.
28. Parents receive a sufficient amount of general information by means of frequent, friendly newsletters and teachers' curriculum letters telling parents what their children will be learning in the coming term. A useful start has been made to presenting some of this information on the school's website and the school recognises that this is a good area for further development in the future. The school prospectus and governors' annual report to parents provide useful information, although information about the members of the governing body is not sufficiently detailed. Home-school contact books are generally well used to exchange information. Annual written reports contain clear descriptions of pupils'

attainment and progress, but personal comments are brief and targets for future improvement are not sufficiently explicit.

29. The frequent transfer of pupils to and from the school is handled efficiently and the school ensures a smooth transition to the next stage of pupils' education.
30. There are effective links with local middle schools, whose staff visit Year 4, and with other local schools. Also, successful links are maintained with other local schools, for example, by the school hosting sporting events such as football tournaments. There are good links with the immediate community of the base. For example, there are regular visits from the Royal Corps of Signals band and demonstrations by the motorcycle display team. In addition, members of the military community have helped renovate the school gardens, helped build the Celtic hut in the school grounds and made an attractive design in a school chalk embankment. The school is fortunate to have received much help from the base, for example, in installing the whole of the wiring for the ICT facilities and also the provision of buses and drivers for school trips, which helps considerably in enabling the school to provide excursions for pupils. The school continues to contribute to the camp paper and the Royal Corps of Signals has donated the football team's kit.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The leadership and management of the school are good and have strengthened since the previous inspection. The governors fulfil their roles satisfactorily and ensure that all of their statutory responsibilities are met.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher provides good leadership for the school.
- The deputy headteacher and senior management team members provide strong support for the headteacher.
- Subject co-ordinators carry out their roles well.
- Good systems have been established for monitoring teaching and learning and the curriculum.
- The school's finances are well managed.
- The governors do not visit the school regularly enough.

### **Commentary**

31. The headteacher leads the school well. She has established a very comprehensive 'annual cycle of school self review and target setting'. This lays out very clearly all of the main management actions to be carried out across the year. This plan shows full engagement of the staff and governors in all areas of school development and ensures that all strategic reviews, data analysis, monitoring activities and target setting are linked carefully with overall performance management. The headteacher has constructed a very clear system to involve subject co-ordinators in preparing action plans in their subjects to contribute towards the school improvement plan. This plan is comprehensive and realistic and gives a clear picture of the vision for the school's future development and has precisely targeted continuous improvement of the standards pupils achieve.
32. The deputy headteacher works well in supporting the headteacher and all other staff. She plays a key role in helping with strategic planning and supporting initiatives to monitor the quality of work across the school. In particular, she has ensured that the provision in the

Foundation Stage has been maintained at a good level over the last year, despite the changes in teaching staff during the year. She works effectively with the headteacher in setting up and maintaining assessment systems and manages special educational needs support throughout the school well. Other members of the senior management also work well in support of the deputy headteacher and headteacher. Together as a team they have a clear view of the overall quality of work across the school and monitor the progress of initiatives in the school improvement plan very carefully together so that the pace of change is maintained at a good rate.

33. Subject co-ordinators have a good knowledge and understanding of their roles. They audit their subject areas well, ensuring that all of the strengths and weaknesses are clearly identified. They prepare detailed action plans to show how all weaknesses will be addressed. Through their involvement in monitoring lessons and work samples from across the school, they gain a clear overview of the quality of teaching and standards of pupils' work.
34. The headteacher has established robust systems to ensure that lessons are regularly monitored. She fully involves teachers in this process. The system for teachers to monitor lessons in pairs is a good idea that plays a useful part in overall staff development and also broadens the view that the school has about the quality of its performance.

**Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003**

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	438,906	Balance from previous year	-7,875
Total expenditure	398,477	Balance carried forward to the next	32,554
*Expenditure per pupil	2,909		

35. The school's finances are well managed. The governors' finance sub committee meets regularly and governors have good understanding about making sure they get the best value from the budget available. For example, they take competitive quotes from companies for any major spending areas and keep themselves well informed about the school's performance in annual tests. At the present time, the school carries a slightly high budget surplus, but much of this is clearly earmarked to support extra staffing costs during the current year.
36. Some governors monitor lessons and attend school assemblies, but overall, governors do not visit the school on a regular enough basis and this weakens their ability to have a full overview of strengths and weaknesses in the quality of provision.

## **PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS**

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

The provision is **good** and reflects a similar picture to that of the last inspection. Over the course of the year, the school has suffered staff changes in the Foundation Stage that have affected the progress of the children. However, the current good team ensure that good teaching helps children to show at least satisfactory achievement overall, despite a few children having transferred in or out of the school due to their parents being posted. Children start school showing mostly average attainment. The majority are likely to reach average standards by the end of the Foundation Stage. A significant minority are on course to reach above average levels. The environment is stimulating and provides children with a relevant curriculum. Staffing ratios are high, accommodation is good and resources meet the needs of the curriculum well. Good assessment procedures are in place and children's progress is carefully recorded.

Children are organised into two reception classes, but work as one unit within the large room for the majority of the time and this is effective. Staff work very well together as a team, and support staff make a good contribution to children's learning.

### **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision for personal, social and emotional development is **good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Relationships are good and adults provide good role models.
- Children are developing their levels of personal independence well.
- Teachers' expectations of children are not always high enough or consistent about speaking in turn and listening to others in groups.

#### **Commentary**

37. Standards are as would be expected nationally and achievement is satisfactory. Children undress themselves independently and leave their clothes in a tidy pile. They put away resources they have used when asked to clear up. They follow the majority of school routines well. They self register and take responsibility for eating their snack during their morning break when they join the older pupils.
38. Teaching and learning are good. Adults are good role models and help the children to form good relationships with one another and the staff working within the unit. Class discussion times (circle times) provide the children with the opportunity to explore their feelings and ideas and children understand that during this time they take turns to respond. However, at other times, teachers are not consistent about this and so children call out and talk over one another.

### **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

Provision for communication, language and literacy is **good**.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There are good opportunities for the development of literacy skills.
- Effective systems are in place to ensure that regular written assessments are undertaken and records are kept of books children have read.

### **Commentary**

39. The majority of children reach the standards expected for their age and achievement is satisfactory. A significant minority of more able children exceed these standards while reading and speak with confidence. They decode the words of the early reading books in the school's reading scheme. They describe events that have happened well, and in order. All children make attempts at forming letters in a cursive script and write their name, although not always using the correct case or orientation.
40. Children undertake regular writing assessments in their 'Once a Month' book and enjoy drawing and writing. For example, they tell part of the story of the 'Rainbow Fish'. Careful records are kept of books children have read. This information provides staff with a good picture of individual children's abilities so that they can be supported appropriately and helped with the next stage in their development.
41. Teaching and learning are good. There is a relatively high staffing level in the Foundation Stage and the adults focus well on talking with the children about whatever they happen to be doing and providing stimulating activities to encourage them to talk.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision for mathematical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Number skills are taught systematically and well.
- Staff provide good opportunities for children to develop their mathematical skills through practical work.

### **Commentary**

42. There is good direct teaching of number concepts. Children achieve well in this area of learning and standards are average. Children enter the school with slightly underdeveloped mathematical skills and a significant minority attain standards slightly above that expected and their progress is good. Children undertake simple calculations, know a range of shapes and measure objects.
43. Teaching and learning are good. Staff frequently use number within the day to day activities, sequencing numbers, and singing number rhymes. Counting games, jigsaws and pattern making are regular features of the resources available for children to do during their work in groups. The interesting displays include information and creative work related to mathematical development. All these activities help children to understand how numbers are used.

## **KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD**

Provision for knowledge and understanding of the world is **good**.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There are a good range of activities to support this area of learning.
- Adults are good at helping children to learn indoors and outside.

### **Commentary**

44. There are a good range of activities and experiences, indoors and outside. Standards are average and children's achievement is satisfactory. Children record the date and weather daily and through this they are learning about passing time and climatic conditions. There are termly topics that provide stimulating new learning. Teaching and learning are good overall. The staff use opportunities to develop children's knowledge of the world beyond the classroom well through walks in the immediate vicinity and visits to the Oceanarium.
45. Children use the class computers and are developing appropriate skills for their age. Currently, Year 4 pupils accompany Reception children to the computer suite and this helps them to gain confidence.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision for physical development is **good**.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There has been an improvement in standards.
- There are a good range of resources available.

### **Commentary**

46. Through good teaching and learning, pupils show sound achievement and reach the expected levels in this area of learning. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The improvement has been brought about by the purchase of additional resources and more opportunities for children to enjoy this equipment. There are formal sessions in the school hall but sometimes these involve children following instructions rather than being taught physical skills. There is a good range of opportunities for children to use pencils, scissors, paintbrushes and other resources that help them to control their hand/eye co-ordination.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision for creative development is **good**.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There are good regular opportunities for children to express their ideas and thought through painting, drawing, modelling and building.

### **Commentary**

47. Teaching and learning are good. Staff offer stimulating activities that interest and motivate the children. Children have good opportunities to express their ideas through a

good range of media, sometimes supported by the adults and sometimes working independently; for example, painting rainbow fish and creating musical sounds to represent the sea. There are small world toys and role-play areas available that provide children with good opportunities to explore ideas and think creatively.

## **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2**

### **ENGLISH**

The provision for English is **good**. Standards have continued to strengthen overall since the last inspection.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards in writing are slightly above average.
- Teaching and learning are good overall with some very good teaching in Years 3 and 4.
- Assessment procedures are good, and the school records and tracks pupils' progress effectively.

#### **Commentary**

48. Overall standards of attainment are above average at the end of Year 2 and Year 4. Pupils achieve well in writing and standards are slightly above average. Pupils' reading and speaking and listening skills are as would be expected nationally for their age. There has been an improvement in the attainment of listening skills since the last inspection. Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to the rest of their peers.
49. The majority of pupils are articulate, and respond to questioning with appropriate and relevant answers. Some pupils have the confidence to speak in front of the whole school and tell others of the interesting activities that they have experienced. Good use is made of the microphone in assembly so that all the school can hear, and pupils listen to one another with interest. Within the class sessions pupils listen to each other's ideas and points of view. Older and more able pupils talk about the books they have read. A good range of reading opportunities are provided, both at home and at school. Pupils make use of the attractive library and enjoy selecting books to read at home. Reading attainment is average and achievement is satisfactory.
50. In writing, pupils have a good understanding of grammar and punctuation. They write interesting accounts and make their syntax relevant to the subject. They use a good range of vocabulary. Cursive writing is taught from the Foundation Stage and this enables pupils to make their work legible and to present their work neatly. Although there is direct teaching of spelling, this does not always show in pupils' written work, where common words are not always correct. This is because teachers do not have high enough expectations that pupils always copy or write known words accurately.
51. The quality of teaching, which ranges from satisfactory to very good, is good overall and is matched by learning. Where teaching is very good, tasks are relevant and demanding and so pupils understand the purpose of the tasks they are given and feel them to be useful. For example, they learn the language and format of writing an e-mail. The sessions are brisk, there is a good use of questioning and so pupils are fully involved in their learning. There is good structure to the work, for example, when pupils write the solution or resolution to a story. There are a good number of support staff who help

pupils very well. Where teaching is less effective, there is insufficient challenge and pace.

52. There are good assessment procedures in place through formal tests and regular assessment of day-to-day work. For example, all pupils write regularly in their 'Once a Month' book and this work is levelled against national expectations. Good reading records are kept that enable teachers to have a clear understanding of the needs of all pupils.

### **Literacy across the curriculum**

53. Good opportunities are taken in other subjects to develop speaking and listening, reading and writing skills that help to raise standards. For example, while learning about the Gambia, pupils use the text 'Grace and her Family' which is about a little girl who goes to Africa to see her father. They talk about how she would feel when she meets her father and his new family. They read the text and write, imagining they are away and they want to tell their mother all about it. They write good instructions and factual accounts in science and other curriculum areas.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision for mathematics is **good** and standards have continued to improve since the last inspection.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are good.
- Pupils achieve well because of the good teaching and learning.
- Strong subject leadership maintains standards and levels of pupils' achievement.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to work and behave very well in lessons.
- Mathematics is used well to support work in other subjects.

### **Commentary**

54. As at the time of the last inspection, standards at the end of Years 2 and 4 were above average and these have been maintained. Provision for supporting pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language is good. Pupils are well supported by teachers and additional support staff and make good progress.
55. Throughout the school, pupils show a good ability to calculate mentally. The majority of pupils in Year 1 write word numbers up to ten once given to them in numerals. They demonstrate a good understanding of number patterns and relationships in addition and subtraction. Higher attaining pupils correctly calculate the two number combinations making up 20. The majority of pupils in Year 2 correctly recognise the different attributes of shape, colour, size and thickness and state the number of changes that occur when an alternative shape is chosen. Pupils in Year 4 show a good comprehension of angle and find and discuss examples found in the school grounds. Higher attaining pupils demonstrate a high level of competence in the use of a protractor in working out angle size.
56. The quality of teaching and learning are good overall. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are well supported. Good relationships in the school enable pupils to work in a calm atmosphere. Pupils have a good attitude to work. Lessons are well paced and good use is made of warm up mental/oral sessions at the start of lessons. Teachers match work precisely to the needs of different groups of pupils so that pupils of all attainment levels are suitably challenged. Support staff work well to support the different groups and individuals. In the best lessons observed, good planning ensured that work flowed at a good pace and maintained pupils' interest. For example, in a good Year 2 lesson on shapes and their attributes, well prepared work ensured that pupils of all attainment levels remained fully involved throughout the session. Good explanation by the teacher ensured that the attention of the whole class was captured in the introduction and work flowed smoothly into an interesting range of practical activities looking at changing shapes by one attribute at a time. The well used technique of pinpointing questions to pupils of different abilities, along with supportive use of question and answer in the plenary part of lessons, allows pupils to consolidate their understanding effectively. Occasionally, the learning objective is not made sufficiently explicit at the start of sessions so that pupils do not have a clear understanding where the work is leading.

57. The subject is well led and managed. Well established systems help the school to maintain its pace of improvement in this subject. For example, planning is looked at regularly in association with lesson observations and developmental feedback is given to the teachers concerned. Also, pupils' attainment and progress are checked each term through the school's assessment system. With the transient nature of the pupil population, target setting and assessment are rightly focussed on the short term. A good system is established through which pupils produce four pieces of work for assessment work each term in a separate book. This gives a clear view on how each individual is progressing.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

58. Mathematics is used well in other subjects. For example, pupils collect data in design and technology and represent their findings in graphs. In history, effective use is made of timelines. In geography, pupils calculate the distance to Gambia. They also use their mathematical knowledge well to aid measuring and cutting in art and design. ICT is used well to support the development of mathematical thinking. For example, control programs are used to support work on angles and turning.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**. Standards are now better than reported in the last inspection.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils reach above average levels by the end of Year 4.
- Teaching is good in science throughout the school.
- Good use is made of the extensive school grounds to enhance pupils' learning.
- Teaching assistants provide good support for individuals in lessons.
- The subject is well managed.

### **Commentary**

59. Overall, pupils achieve well in science. Most reach average levels by the end of Year 2. They carry out an interesting range of work at a suitable depth. For example, they observe and carefully draw and label the parts of a flowering plant and plant seeds, and record subsequent growth patterns. By the end of Year 4, pupils reach above average levels and accrue a wide range of in-depth knowledge. For instance, they understand the stages in the life cycle of a plant and know about the structure and internal parts of a flower. They test a range of materials and group them according to their properties, draw detailed diagrams to show the moon's orbit and understand the effect of the sun on the daylight hours and seasons.
60. Pupils reach good levels as they move through the school as a result of the good teaching and learning. Teachers show confident subject knowledge and explain concepts clearly and give precise instructions and demonstrations that help pupils progress well during practical activities. For example, good use of a computer projector and computer linked microscope in Year 3 and 4 lessons helped pupils rapidly gain an insight into the structure and function of leaves on a plant. Teachers also go to much trouble to ensure work is interesting. For example, Year 1 teachers organised a 'carousel' of activities that carefully built on work done previously to grow cress seeds in

different conditions. Linking these interesting activities with a 'nature hunt' in the school grounds, meant that pupils worked in an enthusiastic way and gained a good range of knowledge and understanding.

61. The school makes good use of its facilities in the school grounds not only in lessons, but also in after school clubs where, for example, pupils have exciting experiences with pond dipping in the school pond. All of these facilities, including the flowerbeds around the building, are well maintained and, as well as making the school attractive, give pupils a good immediate view of plant growth and natural habitats.
62. In the lessons seen, teaching assistants played an important role. They were always well briefed by the teachers and provided good quality guidance and reinforcement of teaching points as pupils carried out the activities set. Often they work in a team teaching role, for example, in many of the lessons seen, they circulated the classrooms in the same way as the teachers, providing guidance and keeping pupils well focused.

63. The subject is well led and managed, with very good liaison currently established in a period of handover from one co-ordinator to another. Through lesson monitoring and scrutiny of work samples, a clear view is maintained of the quality of teaching and standards across the school, and careful ongoing assessment ensures that teachers acquire suitable information about pupils' progress to inform their planning.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in ICT is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils are given a good range of interesting activities.
- ICT is well led and managed.
- Teaching is good.
- The ICT teaching assistant works well with groups of pupils.
- Good links are made between ICT and other subjects

### **Commentary**

64. By the end of Years 2 and 4, pupils achieve well and attain levels that match those expected nationally. This reflects a similar picture to the findings of the last inspection. Pupils have good opportunities to carry out a wide range of interesting tasks that help to promote their interest and computer skills effectively. For example, Year 2 pupils researched on the Internet to find specific information about animals to help them complete a worksheet. Through good support they gained a sound understanding of appropriate search techniques. Also, in a lesson seen, Year 3 pupils prepared emails properly, learning to use the correct formats for setting information out and how to write email addresses. They showed good skills with browsing for files that they wanted to send as an email attachment. By Year 4, pupils work confidently with the computer facilities. They enjoy the interesting and challenging work they are given to use a control program to help draw a wide range of two-dimensional shapes and make good use of facilities such as the repeat function to make the sequences of instructions they write shorter.
65. The school has been resourceful in its methods of maximising the use the computer suite with a well trained teaching assistant working effectively with groups of pupils. A carefully planned rolling programme of group sessions for each class organised by the teachers means that all pupils get good opportunities to work on the computers and receive good quality intensive support from the teaching assistant. The work is planned well by teachers to complement other areas of ongoing work in the classroom. The teaching assistant works closely with the teachers and is very well briefed so that the teachers' planning is followed through fully in the sessions and the close liaison also means that teachers retain a clear understanding of the progress pupils make. Teachers prepare pupils well for their sessions in the computer suite so that work flows smoothly and no time is wasted. The teaching assistant gives good clear explanations and instructions to pupils about how to use different features of the programs involved and monitors and guides the ongoing work well so that all individuals make good progress during their time in the suite.

66. ICT is well led and managed by the co-ordinator. She maintains close liaison with and occasionally works along side teachers to support them so that a clear overview of the quality of teaching and learning is maintained. The co-ordinator has established effective methods for checking pupils' attainment and progress on a regular basis to help pinpoint where pupils' work needs improvement most. Through working closely with the ICT teaching assistant she ensures that work in the ICT suite runs smoothly.

## Information and communication technology across the curriculum

67. The school has made a good start in developing the use of ICT across the curriculum and rightly sees this as an area for further emphasis in the future. Many good strands of ICT support are already evident. For example, good use of ICT was noted in science, with the use of the computer microscope. Pupils also research for information about different topic areas on the Internet and mathematical work is well supported through the use of control programmes to design geometric shapes, for example.

## HUMANITIES

68. History and geography were not the areas of focus for this inspection. One lesson was seen in geography, one in history and samples of work were reviewed. However, this does not constitute enough evidence to make overall judgements about the quality of provision in these areas.
69. Samples of work scrutinised in both **history** and **geography** indicate that an appropriate range of topics is covered by pupils and, in some areas, work is detailed, provides good enrichment to pupils' learning and gives them a good in-depth knowledge and understanding. In Year 2, pupils compare different geographic locations such as the immediate camp area and the 'Island of Struay'. They also look at environmental issues such as how 'we can look after the earth' and this work also usefully complements their personal, social and health education studies. They learn about important events in history such as the invention of 'Stephenson's Rocket' and they get an understanding of chronology by comparing Teddy Bears now with those of long ago and similarly liking at the way people dress nowadays compared to long ago. In Years 3 and 4, pupils gain a good insight into the way people lived in different eras by detailed work they do concerning the Celts, with detailed accounts and diagrams drawn about the warriors, houses, jewellery and tribes that existed. A very good example of enrichment to pupils' learning is the fine replica example of a Celtic house built in the school grounds. Pupils study the Roman Invasion of Britain and another recent initiative to make a museum of Roman artefacts in the corridor adjacent to the Year 3 and 4 classrooms provided much good stimulation for the pupils and enrichment to their understanding. Pupils acquire appropriate understanding of locating climatic regions on a world map. The studies and research they embark on about Gambia teach them that the weather is hot due to the country's close proximity to the equator and they gain a detailed understanding of how the standard of living – the houses, clothes people wear, food they have to eat – is often far below what can be found in developed countries such as Britain. This work gives very good support for pupils' understanding of life in different cultures.

## Religious education

Provision for religious education is **good**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good.
- Pupils cover an interesting range of work.
- Good provision is made for promoting pupils' multicultural awareness.
- Good links are made with promoting pupils' personal and social education.

## Commentary

70. As noted at the time of the last inspection, pupils reach the levels expected by the locally agreed syllabus in Years 2 and 4 and overall they achieve well. They gain a sound understanding of the concepts introduced to them. For example, Year 2 pupils think about and discuss their favourite places, and link this successfully to the concept that feelings in this respect may be different for each individual. They also gain an appropriate understanding of the Bible story of creation. Year 4 pupils gain a sound understanding of different religious customs, traditions and symbolisms, for example, looking at weddings in the Christian church as well as in other faiths.
71. No lessons were seen in Years 1 and 2, but samples of pupils' work and work on display in the classrooms, indicate that work is well prepared to give pupils a good insight into different aspects of the religious education curriculum. The samples of work along with well presented wall displays and lessons taught for Year 3 and 4 pupils show teaching and learning are good. An interesting range of work is presented to pupils and written accounts ensure that literacy skills are extended and used effectively to promote the subject. Work on display is neatly presented and attractive and shows that pupils have been given good opportunities to think in depth about areas of work. For example, pupils are clearly interested by and have thought carefully while producing their cartoons depicting the story of the Good Samaritan. The work in lessons also shows pupils being given good opportunities for discussion, which promote their personal and social skills well and make them think in a sensitive way about the feelings of people around them and people in different cultures and faith systems. They gain a clear insight into cultures across the world through, for example, studying the rites of passage in Christianity compared to Islam. Their understanding is broadened further by visits made to mosques and synagogues and ministers from different churches coming to talk to them in assemblies.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

72. Too few lessons were seen in physical education, music and design and technology to allow overall judgements to be made about the quality of provision.
73. **Music** is taught by a specialist who comes in for one day a week. She takes all the classes for short lessons and for the final part of the afternoon holds a choir club for interested Year 3 and 4 pupils. The school benefits from having a classroom set aside as a music room and this contains a wide range of musical instruments including a range of African drums that children use to good effect during lessons. The music teacher liaises well with staff to support them on projects where music is associated. In the few lessons observed, pupils were very enthusiastic and participated fully in a range of good practical activities. For instance, in a lesson for Year 4 pupils, boys and girls were eager to lead singing in African call and response songs. The choir is also well attended and pupils show enthusiasm for this activity – especially as its creation was their idea. The subject has a high profile in the curriculum and the choir performs at school events.
74. It was not possible to observe any lessons in **design and technology**, but displays and examples of pupils' work indicate that pupils achieve satisfactory results. Older pupils were involved in the challenges of designing purses whilst younger pupils explored the use of levers and pulleys and simple model car designs. Pupils gain experience from

using a range of materials and techniques and develop appropriate skills through designing and making a variety of items.

75. Only one **physical education** lesson was seen, which usefully involved a carousel of activities to support the development of bat and ball skills. The school has a good range of equipment and a large playing field. Discussions with the subject leader and pupils indicates that a full range of curriculum opportunities is provided in physical education.

## **ART**

Provision for art is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Art has a high profile in the school and this is demonstrated in a wide range of high quality art displays throughout the school.
- Standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 4 are above those expected, and pupils experience a wide range of skills and techniques.
- Pupils achieve well because of the good teaching.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to work and behave very well in lessons.

### **Commentary**

76. Art has a high profile in the school and the art and craft work in classrooms and displays around the school are attractive and show the value the school places on the work of its pupils. Years 3 and 4 currently use a whole corridor as their 'art gallery' to display paintings. Displays exhibit a variety of styles, techniques and media including clay models, individual and collaborative work such as the religious collages on display in the hall. Pupils are encouraged to try out new techniques and work in a variety of media. For example, 'Spring time' pictures featured work from all year groups, some in three-dimensional format, some painted, some pastel and some using different shaped paper. The school has used an artist in residence to develop skills and this serves to further enrich pupils' learning.
77. As noted during the school's last inspection, standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 4 are above those expected. Good skills in observation were seen in both Year 2 and Year 4 lessons. In Year 2, pupils effectively use skills in charcoal, paints, pens and pastels in recreating enlargements of portions of a collage. In Years 3 and 4, pupils link their art and design work to their project on Gambia. In Year 4, pupils have accurately recreated in pastels, the batik patterning on the dresses of Ghanaian dolls. They have created some effective African masks, weaving on stick looms using a variety of chosen materials and batik type patterns on material. This work is based on observations of real artefacts and group work is encouraged and supported. Pupils' work shows that they have a growing awareness of pattern, texture, shape and size.
78. The quality of teaching and learning are good overall. The best lessons have effective introductions and are well paced, with good use made of a carousel of activities to expose children to a very wide range of skills' practice. Teachers and support staff direct and support these activities well with appropriate interventions. Pupils' attitudes to art are positive and enthusiastic. In an excellent lesson in Year 2, exploring different styles of drawing and sketching, a skilful demonstration by the class teacher of the skills to be used and well supported activities enabled the children to achieve a very high standard of work.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

79. No lessons were seen in this area and, therefore, no judgements are made about overall standards or the quality of teaching. Nonetheless, the school has an appropriate programme that is implemented satisfactorily. It adopts a well considered approach

towards promoting pupils' personal and social development. Whole class discussion times (circle times) are timetabled and used effectively to promote appropriate values. Lessons encourage pupils to share anxieties and concerns in a secure environment. The school council is an area of strength. Pupils take full part in the school council and believe it works well. A number of its suggestions, for example to improve playground facilities, for the school to start a choir club and to write a new song for the Gold Book assemblies, have been adopted, and Year 4 pupils expressed much enthusiasm about these areas and were clearly encouraged by the way in which the school has valued and acted on their ideas.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>3</b>
Pupils' achievement	3
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>3</b>
Attendance	3
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

*Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).*