

# INSPECTION REPORT

## THE PRINCE OF WALES SCHOOL

Dorchester

LEA area: Dorset

Unique reference number: 113747

Headteacher: Mr P Farrington

Lead inspector: Mrs A Johns

Dates of inspection: 5<sup>th</sup> - 7<sup>th</sup> November 2003

Inspection number: 258155

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school:	First school
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	177
School address:	Maiden Castle Road Dorchester Dorset
Postcode:	DT1 2HH
Telephone number:	(01305) 257 120
Fax number:	(01305) 257 121
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs S White
Date of previous inspection:	1 <sup>st</sup> June 1998

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

The school is situated on the edge of Dorchester in an attractive modern building and an adjacent school building, which was originally a separate special school. There are slightly more boys than girls. It is smaller than most schools and includes a fully integrated unit for 20 physically disabled pupils, mainly with cerebral palsy. Pupils attend the unit from the whole of Dorset, although the majority are from the local area. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is well above average; in addition to pupils with cerebral palsy, there are pupils with specific learning difficulties, severe learning difficulties, speech and communication problems, visual impairment, physical disability and autism. The school intake is very varied and pupils attend from a wide range of backgrounds, including Traveller children. There are a significant number of more able pupils. About four per cent of pupils are from minority ethnic families. All pupils speak English as their first language. The percentage of pupils leaving or joining the school other than at the usual time is lower than average.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
18579	Mrs A Johns	Lead inspector	Information and communication technology Religious education History Geography
8986	Mr P Andrew	Lay inspector	
31862	Mrs J Coop	Team inspector	English Art and design Design and technology
20444	Mr D Hughes	Team inspector	Special educational needs Science Physical education
11976	Mrs H Toynbee	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage Mathematics Music

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This is a very effective school with some excellent features**, including the way in which all individuals are fully valued and included in the rich and exciting school curriculum. The excellent leadership of the headteacher and the highly committed team of staff and governors ensure that all pupils achieve very well. The very good teaching ensures that pupils make very good progress in their learning and many achieve above average standards. There is a high level of care and support for all pupils. The school provides very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The school has an excellent ethos where pupils' talents are nurtured and encouraged; all individuals feel valued and included. Consequently, standards are above average in reading, mathematics and science, and well above expectations in information and communication technology and music by Year 4.
- Children have a happy, secure and stimulating start to their school life.
- The very good teaching ensures that all pupils are challenged and they achieve very well.
- The inclusion of pupils from the special educational needs unit is excellent, with very good overall provision for special educational needs.
- The links with other schools are excellent and enhance the learning very well.
- The headteacher and senior leaders provide very effective leadership, which is underpinned by very successful management systems and supported by a very good governing body.
- The quality of pupils' writing is inconsistent.
- The marking of pupils' work does not always help the pupils to understand what they need to do to improve.

The school has made good improvement since the last inspection when it was judged to be a very good school with many strengths. The staff constantly seek to provide the best teaching possible and this has ensured an upward trend in pupils' performance and achievement. The school has tackled the issues from the previous inspection very well.

### 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	B	B
writing	D	C	C	D
mathematics	C	C	B	B

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average. Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals.*

Standards achieved in the national tests for Year 2 improved in reading and mathematics. In reading, writing, mathematics and science, the percentage of pupils achieving the higher levels was well above average. Thirteen per cent of pupils had a statement of special educational need.

**Pupils throughout the school achieve very well.** There is a very wide range of ability in each year group, including a significant percentage of more able pupils and a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. The trend in improvement over the past five years is above the national average. In the Nursery children achieve very well in relation to their prior attainment. In Reception, children achieve very well, with many achieving beyond the expected goals by the end of the Reception Year. By Year 2, pupils reach above average standards in mathematics, science and reading. In the Year 2 current standards in writing are below average, although pupils achieve well in

relation to their prior attainment. Standards achieved in information and communication technology (ICT) are above the levels expected by the end of Year 2. In Year 4, standards **are in line** with expectations in writing, above expectations in reading, mathematics and science, and well above expectations in ICT. Pupils have many opportunities to use ICT and they are skilled and confident. In other subjects, pupils achieve well throughout the school. In music, they achieve well above expectations in Year 2 and Year 4. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well in relation to their prior attainment because of the very effective support which they receive.

**The pupils' personal development is very good. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.** The pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and very much enjoy coming to school. Their behaviour in lessons and around school is very good. The school has successful procedures to deal with any challenging behaviour and these work well. Attendance is well above average.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided by the school is very good. The teaching is highly effective** throughout the school, with some excellent teaching, which has a very positive impact on pupils' learning. The way in which the school involves all pupils equally is exemplary and means that each pupil achieves their potential. Staff know the pupils very well and provide a high level of pastoral care and support. Pupils make very good progress and many exceed the standards expected. The quality of marking varies; there is not enough marking that helps pupils to understand what they need to do to improve. The curriculum is very good; it is exciting and very well enhanced by a range of stimulating activities and visits. Excellent links with local schools promote very effective continuity of learning. The very good partnership with parents, with clear and regular communication, means that pupils' learning is supported very effectively at home. Educational support programmes for pupils on the roll of the special educational needs unit are very good and support pupils' learning very well.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are very good overall.** The headteacher provides excellent leadership for all the provision, which supports and motivates pupils and staff. There is a corporate and reflective approach to leadership at all levels with a very clear focus on improvement. Management procedures are very good with effective procedures for checking and evaluating the work of the school. The school constantly evaluates its practice. The work of the governing body is very good. The governors have a very thorough understanding of how well the school is doing.

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

Parents strongly support the school and are particularly pleased with the quality of teaching and the care provided for their children. Pupils enjoy school and feel happy and safe.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

The most important things the school should do to improve are:

- Raise standards in writing. The school has already identified this as an area for improvement.
- Improve the quality and consistency of the marking of pupils' work.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

**Achievement is very good throughout the school.** Many pupils achieve above average standards.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in reading, mathematics and science are above average in Year 2 and above expectations in Year 4. They are well above expectations in ICT and music by Year 4.
- In the Nursery and Reception, children achieve very well because of the exemplary teaching. Many children are in line to achieve beyond the goals expected by the end of the Reception Year.
- In writing, standards vary; in Year 2, they are currently slightly below expectations, although pupils' achievement is good in relation to their prior attainment.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well in relation to their prior attainment.
- The very good teaching, with high expectations, very effective planning and classroom organisation, ensures that all pupils achieve their full potential.

#### Commentary

##### Key Stage 1

##### *Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2003<sup>1</sup>*

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.6 (15.8)	15.9 (15.8)
writing	15.0 (14.2)	14.8 (14.4)
mathematics	16.8 (16.4)	16.4 (16.5)

*There were 32 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

1. Attainment on entry to the school is wide-ranging and differs with the cohort for each year. Overall, it is broadly in line for the age group. Attainment at the end of the Reception Year generally exceeds the expected goals in communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; personal, social and emotional development; knowledge and understanding of the world; creative development and physical development.
2. There is variation in the standards achieved by each cohort. In 2002, the Year 2 cohort included 22 per cent of pupils with a statement of special educational needs; in 2003, it was 13 per cent of pupils. This is well above the national average of 1.5 per cent. No pupils at the school are disapplied from the test. Over time there is a trend of improvement which is above the national trend in reading and mathematics, and similar to the national trend in writing.
3. In the national tests in 2003 for Year 2, based on average points, standards were above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics, and showed improvement in each subject, with a well above average percentage of pupils achieving the higher levels. In Year 2, national assessment, in science, results were above average, with 50 per cent of pupils achieving higher levels. Data from the Year 4 progress tests indicates a similar picture. In

<sup>1</sup> All levels of the National Curriculum are awarded a points score. The average score for all pupils taking the test is used to grade schools in each year. The expected average points score at the age of seven is 15.5. Tables are adjusted to reflect the national average score before grading. The grades are shown in the summary.

reading, many pupils have already achieved the expected level for Year 6, and in mathematics, over 50 per cent have achieved or almost achieved the level usually expected in Year 6.

4. During the inspection, there was no evidence to indicate that there was any difference between the standards achieved by boys and girls. The school keeps a careful track on past pupils and their achievement in Year 6 at their next school. The data shows a high percentage of pupils achieving the expected levels and above.
5. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well. The high level of support they receive ensures that the standard of work they produce is commensurate with their abilities.

***The following tables compare attainment now with that at the time of the previous inspection and include comments on the reason for any change in addition to comments on achievement.***

***Attainment at the end of the Reception Year***

	<b>Attainment in the 1998 inspection</b>	<b>Current inspection judgements</b>	<b>Children's achievement in relation to prior attainment</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Personal, social and emotional development	Exceeded expectations.	Above expectations by the end of Reception.	Achievement is very good.	There is a strong promotion of independence.
Communication, language and literacy	Exceeded expectations.	Standards are above expectations by the end of Reception.	Achievement is very good.	The strong emphasis on language development by all staff helps children to communicate effectively.
Mathematical development	Exceeded expectations.	Skills are above expectations at the end of Reception Year.	Children achieve very well in relation to others of a similar age.	There are very good practical opportunities to develop mathematical skills.
Knowledge and understanding of the world	Exceeded expectations.	Children develop a range of knowledge through the interesting and exciting activities.	Children achieve very well in relation to others of a similar age.	Visits to the local area enrich this area of learning.
Creative development	Exceeded expectations.	Children sing well for their age. Above expectations by the end of Reception.	Children achieve very well in music. No art activities were observed.	Good use is made of the outdoors to support learning.
Physical development	Exceeded expectations.	Standards exceed those expected by the end of Reception.	Pupils achieve very well in relation to their capabilities.	Excellent teaching promotes very high quality learning.

**Attainment at the age of seven**

	<b>Attainment in the 1998 inspection</b>	<b>Current inspection judgements</b>	<b>Children's achievement in relation to prior attainment</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Reading	Good.	Above average.	Pupils achieve very well.	Pupils enjoy reading because there is a very good range of books and activities.
Writing	Above average.	Below average.	Pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainment.	The school has identified writing as an area for improvement and is introducing strategies to support this.
Mathematics	Above average.	Standards are above average.	All pupils achieve well.	Pupils are very well taught in groups of smaller than class size and consequently work is matched well to their individual needs.
Science	Above average.	Above average.	All pupils achieve well because of the good teaching.	There is a balanced curriculum, ensuring that all aspects are covered.
ICT	Good.	Above average.	Pupils achieve very well because of the wide range of opportunities to develop their ICT skills.	ICT is a strength of the school. Pupils and teachers use it confidently to support learning in different subjects.
Religious education	In line.	No judgement on standards as only one lesson was seen in Year 1.	From the range of work seen and discussion with pupils, achievement is judged to be good.	Provision for religious education has improved and is good.

## Attainment at the age of nine

	Attainment in the 1998 inspection	Current inspection judgements	Children's achievement in relation to prior attainment	Comments
English	Above.	Standards are above expectations in reading. They are in line in writing.	Pupils' achievement is good.	The wide and interesting range of books helps pupils to develop an enjoyment of reading.
Mathematics	Above.	Standards are above expectations.	Pupils enjoy mathematics and achieve well.	The thorough planning supports the learning well.
Science	Well above.	Standards are above expectations.	Pupils achieve well because they have a good range of hands-on experiences.	
ICT	Good.	Pupils achieve standards which are well above those expected by Year 4.	Pupils achieve very well because there are frequent well-planned opportunities to develop their skills.	Teachers set a good example by using ICT confidently.
Religious education	In line.	Standards are above those expected.	A range of activities, including role-play, supports good achievement.	Pupils are interested in different religions and recognise similarities in them.

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

**Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities are very good** and a very strong feature of the school. Pupils' attitudes to school, their relationships with each other and adults, and their behaviour in class and around the school are all very good. **The provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.** Attendance is very good.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are keen to attend school and are punctual.
- Pupils' attitudes are very positive and this makes a significant contribution to their achievement.
- Behaviour is very good and this is supported by the ethos of the school.
- The pupils have a very good insight into social, moral and spiritual values.
- The pupils are fully aware of their own culture and that of others.

### Commentary

6. The attitudes and behaviour of the pupils are very good; the very good behaviour noted in the previous report has been maintained. Throughout the school, in the lessons, in the playground and at lunch, behaviour is very good. There are some pupils in the school with challenging behaviour but there are very good strategies to help them. They have high expectations of behaviour, which are reinforced by the excellent school ethos. The school is free from all forms of harassment; discussions with pupils confirmed this finding. As one pupil remarked, 'We like this school and just know inside that it is a good school.' Pupils have a positive attitude to school and participate in a wide range of activities; for example, in the nine clubs and in the sports teams. They are all willing to accept responsibility, from the pupils in the Reception class collecting and returning the register, to the pupils in Year 4 who

have wide-ranging responsibilities throughout the school. There have been no exclusions from the school and no racist incidents. The school has a detailed race equality action plan, which it monitors frequently.

**Ethnic background of pupils**

**Exclusions in the last school year**

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	169	0	0
White – any other White background	3	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	3	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British-any other Asian background	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	1	0	0
Traveller	1	0	0

*The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

7. Pupils with special educational needs have the same values and attitudes as other pupils, and make a very positive contribution to the life of the school. Pupils with physical disabilities help others to understand that everyone makes a contribution to the general good.
8. Relationships across the school are very good between pupils, and between the pupils and all the adults in the community. This results in pupils feeling happy and secure in school and creates a climate in which learning and achievement are fostered and developed. In Reception, children are on target to achieve above the standards expected in personal, social and emotional development by the end of the Reception Year. Pupils play well together and ensure that the pupils in wheelchairs are fully included.
9. The provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. In the previous inspection, provision for spiritual development was good; it was very good for moral and social development and there was no specific judgement for cultural development. There is strong spiritual provision in the school. The pupils have respect for each other and this helps them develop self-esteem. They are encouraged to develop an appreciation of the mystery and beauty of life. They explore values and beliefs and the way these impact on people's lives.
10. Pupils' moral development is very good. The adults provide very good role models, consistently providing guidance on behaviour and relationships so that pupils understand the difference between right and wrong. They are encouraged to think through the consequences of their actions and their effect on others.
11. Social development is very good. The pupils work well together in the lessons. They show respect for the school environment and are willing to accept responsibility. There is a school council with two elected representatives for each class. The meeting attended during the inspection demonstrated that the members had a clear understanding of their role and discussed in a mature manner their ideas and suggestions for changes and improvements in the school. The meetings contribute to an understanding of the duties and responsibilities of citizenship.
12. The pupils have a very good grasp of their own culture and an understanding of the diverse cultures in the country. There are many examples in the school of the influences and mores of other cultures. The school has planned units of work related to the wide range of minority

ethnic cultures found in Britain today, and uses them successfully with pupils in Years 3 and 4.

## Attendance

13. Attendance has improved and it is well above the national average; this has a positive impact on standards. Pupils are punctual and registration is carried out efficiently. The school's procedures for ensuring attendance are effective and supported by the parents. There was no unauthorised absence in the last school year.

### Example of outstanding practice

**The inclusion of physically disabled pupils with statements of special educational need in mainstream classes was an inspection focus. This example indicates why it was judged to be excellent.**

The inclusion of physically disabled pupils in all aspects of school life, for example, in swimming, develops respect among all pupils for differences and helps to define their spirituality. They develop an understanding of how the human spirit can overcome physical restraints. In the summer term, a boy in the Reception class with severe cerebral palsy had the idea of raising money to buy additional climbing equipment by organising sponsored swimming and rolling races, in addition to lying still for as long as possible. He spoke to the whole school at assembly, wrote letters with support from office staff and, with some adult help, organised the whole event, raising £1,134. This is an example of the generosity of support and the commitment from all the school community.

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

Authorised absence	
School data	3.9%
National data	5.4%

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0%
National data	0.4%

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

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

**The quality of education is very good.** The quality of teaching and learning in the school is very good, with a rich and exciting curriculum which meets the needs of all pupils. The care, support and guidance provided for pupils are very good. The links with other schools are excellent. Links with parents and the community are very good. The provision and use of extended services in the special educational needs base are very good.

### Teaching and learning

**The overall quality of teaching and learning is very good.** This ensures that all pupils make very good progress through the school. In the Nursery and Reception, children learn effectively through an interesting range of practical activities. Pupils with special educational needs are taught and supported very well so that they make very good progress. The assessment of work is good overall, and information is used to plan work at a suitable level for each individual. The school constantly strives to ensure that all individuals are included and fully valued.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good and excellent teaching results in high levels of achievement.
- The way in which the teaching meets the needs of all pupils is excellent.
- There is very effective class management and organisation, which means that staff, time and resources are used very well.
- In Year 1, teachers ensure that there is an appropriate mix of formal and more informal sessions, which maintains the pupils' interest and involvement.

- Teaching assistants are used very well and provided very good support for pupils.
- There is a strong team of teachers and teaching assistants, who are confident, enthusiastic and constantly seeking to provide the best quality of education for their pupils. Teachers enjoy being in the school and have good opportunities to develop their skills.
- The quality of the marking of pupils' work is inconsistent and it does not always help pupils to understand how they can improve their work.
- The teaching of writing sometimes lacks the sparkle which other lessons have.

## Commentary

### **Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 41 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
3 (7%)	16 (39%)	19 (47%)	3 (7%)	0 (0%)	0 (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.*

14. The school has maintained the very good quality of teaching identified at the time of the last inspection. Teachers constantly review and reflect upon their practice in order to maintain a high level. The leadership in the school ensures that there is regular monitoring of teaching and learning, with informative feedback. Teachers are also encouraged to undertake research projects to help promote good practice and develop new ideas. New initiatives are very well planned and evaluated; for example, 'Let's Explore' sessions in Year 1, which provide very good opportunities for purposeful play and independent learning.
15. Lesson planning is very thorough and well organised. Teachers ensure that the pupils are clear about what they are learning and most lessons have a useful plenary session to reinforce the learning. Teachers have high expectations of what the pupils can achieve and also of their behaviour. Time and resources are used to very good effect. Teaching assistants are fully aware of what the pupils need to do and are involved in planning and feedback; consequently, they are very effective. There is a strong, lively, enthusiastic staff team; everyone enjoys their job. Pupils recognise this and feel valued and secure. Parents also appreciate the very good teaching and the positive impact that it has on their children's achievement. Most lessons are lively and capture the pupils' interest well so that they want to learn and to succeed. All these aspects have a positive impact on their learning.
16. Teachers work together very well. In mathematics, the pupils are split into groups with different teachers. There is very close liaison, which ensures that the needs of all pupils are met. The skills of individual teachers are used to the full across different age groups; for example, in teaching ICT and physical education. This works in a smooth and effective way. There are two Year 1 classes in one large base. The organisation of this unit is excellent. Teachers ensure that all pupils are aware of the procedures, and pupils work and play in a calm, purposeful way. In the Nursery, Reception and Year 1, purposeful play is used very well to support the learning, for example, in the station and on the train.
17. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good. Teachers plan individual and group lessons well and the very effective learning support staff ensure a high level of achievement. There are a wide range of support activities and groups, and these, together with individual programmes of work, promote very good levels of achievement.
18. The assessment of work has improved since the last inspection and is good overall. Teachers keep a close track on what pupils are doing and what they need to do to improve. There are clear recording systems, which are used well to help guarantee the progression of skills across the school. Targets are set for all pupils in English and mathematics, which help them to improve their work. The assessment of work in non-core subjects is less well developed but included as an area for development in co-ordinators' action plans. The

assessment of pupils with special educational needs is very good. Assessment and record keeping in the Nursery and Reception are excellent and help staff to keep a very thorough track of what the children can do.

19. Teachers know the pupils very well, and all pupils are included in the teaching. Planning is explicit, support is very effective and the lessons and activities are pitched accurately at the range of pupils. More able pupils are challenged well and achieve above average standards. Parents are used very well to support the teaching and learning. Teachers ensure that they understand what is happening and are fully involved. Parents are delighted with the quality of teaching in the school.
20. There are some good examples of the marking of pupils' work, but it is not consistent throughout the school. There are not enough comments which help the pupils to really understand what they need to do to improve. The school's agreed policy for marking is due for review, in order to provide consistency and improve the quality of marking. Some teaching of writing lacks the sparkle which other lessons have, and a few lessons go on too long. Pupils sometimes spend too long sitting on the carpet and so their interest begins to wane. Some parents had concerns about the amount of homework, but the inspection team found it to be similar to that in most schools for children of this age.

## **The curriculum**

**The curriculum is very good and prepares pupils well for the middle schools.** The very good range of extra-curricular activities enhances their learning very well. The accommodation and resources meet the needs of the pupils very effectively.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very good curriculum organisation and enrichment.
- Very good levels of staffing, resources and accommodation.
- A highly inclusive school ensuring that all groups of pupils are valued and have total access to the curriculum.
- Very good special educational needs provision.

## **Commentary**

21. The school provides a very worthwhile curriculum which very effectively meets the needs of all pupils. The school has successfully adapted the National Curriculum to meet its particular needs. Careful links are made between subjects, and good planning ensures that pupils have time to study topics in detail. The use of themes also ensures that learning is interconnected, which increases pupils' knowledge and interest. The topic on India, for example, has very effectively linked work in religious education, art, geography and mathematics. Children in the Nursery and Reception also have a very interesting range of learning opportunities planned. This ensures that they get off to a flying start to their education and delight in learning. In addition, the school has introduced an exciting and innovative approach to the Year 1 curriculum. Through the daily 'Let's Explore' sessions, pupils plan and initiate activities for themselves. This is a powerful way to make the transition from the practical Reception curriculum to the more formal National Curriculum.
22. In addition to these very good features, a very wide range of visits, visitors and additional activities are provided for pupils. From a wildlife club, drama, art, sport, sewing, cookery and French, to name but a few, pupils also use the local area and the school's innovative Iron Age 'Round Houses' to supplement their learning. They all enjoy these greatly and they also very effectively develop their social skills. Pupils' thoughts about the quality of the learning opportunities were summed up by one pupil in Year 4 with the simple word "brilliant".

23. The school is highly inclusive and ensures that all pupils, including Traveller pupils, pupils with special educational needs, those from minority ethnic backgrounds and those with special educational needs, are fully included. Provision for meeting pupils' special needs is very good. Pupils with special needs are not disenfranchised from the full curriculum offered to all pupils in the school, and great pains are taken to ensure that they do not miss out if they have to be extracted from lessons for short periods. Advice from specialist staff is put to good use. Teachers' planning and individual education plans are precise and used well by the excellent learning support staff to enhance and monitor individual learning needs. These are regularly reviewed on a frequent basis to ensure progress.
24. These high quality learning opportunities could not be delivered without the dedication of the very good number of dedicated and knowledgeable staff, expert leadership, relevant and interesting resources and very good accommodation. With spacious working areas and a well-kept and exciting outside area, the school provides a stimulating learning environment.

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

**The care, guidance and support for the pupils are very good.** They create a safe and secure environment in which learning is enhanced. The staff know the pupils very well and have trusting relationships with them. Pupils' ideas are listened to and reflected in the school improvement plan.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school takes very good care of the pupils and ensures their physical wellbeing.
- Pupils' views are sought and valued.
- The pupils have very good, trusting relationships with the adults.
- Induction into the Nursery and Reception is very good.

### **Commentary**

25. The school has maintained the very good provision noted in the previous report. Child protection procedures are fully in place and there is a designated member of staff. Training is carried out regularly for all school staff. They work closely together and there is a close relationship with outside agencies. The code of practice for special educational needs is fully in place and the school is fully meeting its responsibilities under the Disability Discrimination Act. Specialist help is sought and used; for example, the behaviour support teacher who has worked with pupils from Year 1 through to Year 4.
26. All the routine health and safety checks have been carried out to the agreed schedule. Thirteen pupils from across the school were asked about the procedures for evacuation in case of a fire and all answered correctly and understood the reasoning behind the regulations.
27. The school's monitoring of personal development in order to provide support and guidance is good. All school reports have a paragraph on personal development, and for pupils with independent education plans development guidance is formalised. However, for other pupils, the monitoring is more informal. This works well as the staff know the pupils very well.
28. Pupils' views about the school are taken into account and incorporated into the school improvement plan. The views and ideas from the School Council are responded to after each meeting; this year the governors are allocating a budget of £350 to the council. Year 4 pupils are surveyed before they move to the middle school; whole-school surveys are carried out, with governors organising focus groups for the younger pupils. This is a school that listens to everyone and makes time to talk to the pupils. This helps them to feel confident and secure, and their achievement is therefore very good.

29. The induction arrangements for the Reception pupils are very good, and there is a close relationship with the Nursery and pre-school group on the school site. At the start of each day, there is an 'Early Bird' 15 minutes before school starts, so that the parents can bring the pupils into the classroom, help them settle, talk to the staff, and keep in touch with their children's progress. This promotes very good learning in a secure and stimulating environment.
30. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported, both within the classrooms and throughout the school, which has a very positive impact on their achievement. They form very good relationships with both staff and their fellow pupils.

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

**The partnership with the local community and with other schools is very good. The partnership with other schools is excellent.** This has a very positive impact on the achievements of the pupils.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The excellent links with partnership schools ensure that pupils' learning continues seamlessly.
- The parents have a very positive view of the school and of the wide-ranging education which their children receive.
- The school's partnership with the parents, and their involvement with the school, enhance pupils' achievement.

### **Commentary**

31. The links with parents and the community were judged in the previous report to be a strength of the school. The school has maintained these very good links.
32. The links with the parents are very good, which is confirmed by the meeting with parents, by answers to the parents' questionnaire and in discussion with parents during the inspection. The school regularly canvasses their views. There is a successful and hard-working Prince of Wales School Association that raises funds to support learning in the school. Parents are able to meet the staff for informal discussion on any day. This close relationship has a very positive impact on the pupils' development and progress.
33. There are informative school newsletters. Meetings are held in the autumn and spring terms to discuss progress and targets; attendance is approximately 90 per cent. In the summer term after the annual reports, parents are invited to view their children's work in the school. The annual report to parents gives a clear indication of progress in English, numeracy and science, and areas for improvement are noted.
34. The school encourages parents to help in school and several were seen during the inspection. In a swimming lesson, three parents were in the water helping the pupils.
35. The school has excellent relationships with all the schools in the area through the network for learning. There is a pyramid of 13 first schools, three middle schools, one upper school and a special school. These close relationships ensure that the pupils, when transferring to the middle schools, are able to continue their learning with little if any disruption. This is a great help in maintaining their progress and learning. The educational links with the schools in the pyramid provide additional resources and support for each of the schools, to the benefit of the pupils.
36. The school has very good links with the local community and makes very good use of these to broaden the pupils' education and experiences. There are strong links with local pre-school groups. Two groups are housed in the special unit building and there is very close

liaison. Activities such as 'Riding for the Disabled' take place in the school grounds and provide great enjoyment, as well as developing confidence and physical skills.

37. Parents are involved in the review of special educational needs and are well informed of their children's progress. The school works well with other schools and authorities to ensure proper and adequate provision for pupils during their stay at the school and in the future. There are very successful links with the services and support programmes provided for pupils with special educational needs, which promote very good learning.

### **Example of outstanding practice**

**The school has excellent links with other local schools, which have a very positive impact on pupils' learning.**

The excellent links with local schools enable pupils to continue their education in a very highly effective way. Staff from different schools keep a very close track on their pupils' progress, and question and challenge each other when necessary. The staff, including teaching assistants, visit each other's schools and benefit from each other's best practice. Training and support often result from any areas of concern. Last year, the schools worked together to ensure more continuity in mathematics teaching. A framework of methods and expectations was agreed throughout the schools, which has already had a very positive impact on pupils' achievement.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The leadership and management are very good.** Leadership, overall, is very good, with excellent leadership from the headteacher and very good support from the senior leadership team. Very effective management systems are in place and management is very good. The governance of the school is very effective; governors are very well informed and play a strong role in guiding the school. These all make a significant contribution to raising achievement.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher ensures that the school is ambitious and that there is a high level of achievement, with several excellent features.
- The headteacher, staff and governors are totally committed to including all individuals in the life of the school.
- There is a clear, informative system of self-evaluation, which has a positive impact on standards.
- There is careful monitoring of the school budget, with care to ensure best value.
- The governors have a secure understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and are fully involved in supporting and challenging it.

### **Commentary**

38. The highly effective leadership identified at the time of the previous inspection has been maintained. The excellent leadership of the headteacher ensures that the school provides a very good education for all its pupils. In the supportive yet challenging environment, staff are encouraged to develop their skills by exploring and adapting best practice to suit the needs of the school. Initiative is strongly encouraged. Standards are above average and all pupils achieve their best. There is a very clear vision for the school, which is shared by all. There is a high level of open and frank debate, resulting in an enthusiastic and keen staff team. The results of any monitoring or evaluation are used well to improve practice. There is a recently formed senior leadership team that meets regularly to discuss and act upon the most important issues.
39. The staff and governors ensure that there is an excellent level of inclusion for all pupils. They thrive in the positive and supportive environment, where each pupil's individual talents are nurtured. All pupils benefit from working and playing with pupils with different abilities and from a range of backgrounds, and this is a strength of the school.

40. Management is very good. Some subject leaders are relatively new to their roles and they are developing their expertise. There is very effective organisation supported by very effective procedures. Staff are very clear about their roles and there is very effective delegation of responsibilities. Induction procedures work very well, and students and teachers, including a teacher on the Graduate Teacher Programme, are very well supported. There are successful procedures for tracking pupils' progress and monitoring their achievement. These have a significant impact on the quality of education because information from them is used very well to support learning. The co-ordinator for special educational needs manages the provision very well. He ensures that individual needs are accurately identified and met through both the school and the special unit. He ensures the provision of appropriate programmes of work, facilitates specialist intervention and oversees statutory responsibilities, which has a positive impact on pupils' achievement.
41. The governing body is fully involved in the formulation of policies and also questions and challenges the school. The partnership is very harmonious, resulting in continuous development. People want to be governors of this school; they know it is a good place to be. Various committees are in place, which all play a strong part in governing the school. Performance management is up and running and effectively managed. At the time of the previous inspection, it was felt that there was not enough attention to monitoring the effectiveness of decision making. This has now improved; for example, the governors have monitored the impact and value for money of recent staff training on 'building up pupils' self-esteem and morale'.
42. Parents and pupils have very high regard for the leadership and management in the school. They have full confidence in it and value the clear sense of corporate vision.
43. The school day runs smoothly and efficiently because of the very effective finance and office staff. Budgets are appropriately set with a careful allocation of funds linked to the school improvement plan. They are monitored regularly.

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

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	611,523	Balance from previous year	16,734
Total expenditure	582,618	Balance carried forward to the next	28,905
Expenditure per pupil	3,641*		

\* This figure is higher than average because of the high expenditure on support staff.

**OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES - THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE WORK OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS UNIT**

**The provision for the education of pupils with special educational needs within the unit is very good.** They are fully integrated into The Prince of Wales School. It provides a range of activities, teaching and therapy that meets the special and individual needs of pupils.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Excellent provision for the full integration of special needs pupils into the life and curriculum of the school.
- Very good use of outside agencies.
- Clear assessment and recording of pupils' individual needs and progress.
- Very good teaching supported by excellent, well trained and knowledgeable teaching assistants.

## Commentary

44. The Special Education Unit is an integral part of the school. It caters for vulnerable physically disabled pupils aged two to nine. The pupils come from a wide area of Dorset and most have come to the school via the attached assessment Nursery for pre-school children. The unit provides individually-designed programmes of work incorporating individual aims and sets of specific targets through the individual education plan (IEPs). These plans incorporate schemes and systems from other professionals, such as physiotherapists, speech and occupational therapists, designed to aid learning and access to learning. Pupils are fully integrated into the rest of the school and follow the National Curriculum in 'mainstream' classes and groups. The school takes great care to ensure that they are not disenfranchised from full participation in school life and the curriculum; for example, by ensuring that when they are removed from classes for specific therapy this does not occur during times or lessons that cannot be repeated or accessed later.
45. Pupils spend most of their time in school being taught alongside their peers in integrated classes and groups. The excellent leadership means that the integration of pupils is excellent because of very effective communication between staff, a high level of pastoral care and high expectations of achievement. Pupils are supported by highly trained and skilled support staff, who ensure that they access the full range of activities available. When pupils need special support or help, these are provided within the class as an integral part of lessons. A good example was when two boys were receiving specialist physiotherapy to improve their muscle tone and suppleness. This was done during the class physical education lesson so that the boys could participate and "move over the bench in a way of your own choosing," along with the rest of the class. As a consequence, the teaching of pupils with special educational needs is consistently very good and they make very good progress. The support assistants work closely with the special needs co-ordinator (SENCO), teachers and therapists; their excellent work is invaluable to the educational and physical development and progression of the pupils. The school provides training for support staff that enhances their knowledge and provides for very good support for pupils.
46. Careful records of pupils' attainments and achievements are kept and used to inform future learning. The school and unit fully comply with legislation regarding statements of special educational need and the monitoring and review of such statements.
47. Pupils in the unit respond enthusiastically to the various activities they undertake and integrate well with their peers, both socially and in formal lessons. They work hard to acquire new skills, sit quietly, listen well to instructions and work harmoniously with each other and with staff. Parents enthusiastically praise the work of the unit and give very good support.
48. The school is well equipped to meet the complex needs of a wide variety of physically disabled children, with a very good range of learning resources, including a hydrotherapy pool and equipment designed to meet individual pupils' needs. The school has only limited storage space for such specialist equipment, which is often stored in corridors or entrance halls. There are further limitations in the design and operation of doors, and in the space within toilets to allow for adequate assistance.
49. The special needs unit is an asset to the school and a valuable resource for the community. It offers high standards of education to children with physical difficulties.

## **THE ASSESSMENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS**

**The assessment of pupils with special educational needs within the school is very good.**

The school complies with current legal requirements and uses assessment data very well to provide enhanced learning opportunities for pupils.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very good, prescriptive planning of individual curricula.
- Very good assessment procedures, supporting very good achievement.

### **Commentary**

50. The assessment of pupils with special educational needs, both in the special unit and within the school, is very good. The school provides for pupils with a variety of special needs, not necessarily associated with physical difficulty, who are identified in the register of special educational need. The special needs of such pupils include perceptual impairment, those who are partially sighted, learning difficulties, autism, attention disorders and speech disorders.
51. Those children with statements of special educational need have clear targets within such statements and associated individual education plans (IEPs), and additionally work towards individual targets or aims to meet these needs. Other pupils on the register of special need in the school are supported by school action and school action plus, which further provide for IEPs and individual aims. These learning plans and programmes are regularly reviewed and adapted in the light of ongoing individual assessment. This careful monitoring and recording ensure that pupils display high levels of individual achievement. The school recognises that similar conditions do not always have the same effects; for example, that cerebral palsy does not inevitably cause intellectual impairment. This awareness ensures highly individual programmes of work and subsequently very good recording of progress. The assessment of the work and progress of pupils with special needs is the same as that for all pupils in the school in relation to the National Curriculum, since they are fully included in all class activities.

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

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

**The overall quality of provision in the Foundation Stage is very good.**

#### **Nursery**

52. The Nursery is a specialist provision for children with physical problems. There are four children in the Nursery assessment unit, but only one attends full-time. Work in the Nursery was sampled and two lessons were observed. All children have statements of special educational need because of physical disabilities. The Nursery teacher liaises very closely with parents and specialists from outside agencies in order to give the children the best possible support. Teaching is very good and often excellent, and covers all areas of learning. Planning is very clear, thorough and well matched to the needs of the individuals. All areas of learning are covered. Within an attractive environment, both the teacher and teaching assistant give children a high level of sensitive and stimulating support. Because of this, they make great gains in their learning and achieve very well in relation to their capabilities. There are wonderful relationships between the staff and children, who delight and blossom in their environment and try very hard to succeed.

#### **Reception**

53. Initially, children enter Reception on a part-time basis at the start of the academic year in which they are five. Attainment on entry is very wide-ranging, but as expected overall. The children make very good progress in their learning and, overall, exceed the goals they are expected to reach by the end of Reception. The school has maintained the very good standards identified at the time of the last inspection. Good induction procedures ensure a confident and happy entry into school life. The very good start children make to their education is a significant strength of the school. Teaching is very good and, on occasion, excellent. Teaching assistants play a highly effective part in this.
54. Very careful planning ensures that each area of the curriculum is fully covered in a way that captures the interest of the children. There is a good mix of teacher-directed and independent learning situations and many good resources, which stimulate children's learning.
55. The inclusion of all children is of great importance. On many occasions, it is so seamless as to make it difficult to identify those children with special educational needs. The children learn in an extremely friendly, caring and supportive environment. They are aware of, and respond quickly to, classroom routines and instructions. They persevere at different activities, trying hard to do as well as possible, and show great enjoyment in what they are doing.
56. In the Nursery and Reception, excellent assessment procedures are in place. These allow the teachers to track how well individual children are achieving and what needs to be done to take them onto the next step in their learning. There is strong liaison between the Nursery and Reception teachers, which creates a smooth transition from one area to another. The three co-ordinators all have a very thorough understanding of the needs of young children. Their joint role results in very good leadership and management, which promote very good achievement.

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

**Provision for personal, social and emotional development is very good.** This helps children of all abilities gain confidence, choose activities which they carry out independently of the teacher, behave well and show joy in learning. Overall, they achieve beyond the goals expected by the end of the Reception Year.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching and learning are very good.
- There are high expectations of behaviour and attitudes to work.
- Independence is strongly promoted; children have the opportunity to select their own activities.

### **Commentary**

57. The children are happy and settled and, through a very good combination of teacher-directed and child-selected activities, gain confidence and the ability to concentrate. The well-resourced classroom allows children a wide range of good experiences from which to make a choice. Most work independently, but co-operation with others is still at an early stage of development. The children follow instructions well and quickly respond to the teacher when she calls them to attention. They are careful with equipment and help to tidy it away. They behave well in assemblies and confidently play an appropriate part in them. Most can undress and dress themselves, although a few still find this difficult.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

**The provision for communication, language and literacy is very good.** Many children exceed the goals expected for their age by the end of the Reception Year.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching and learning are very good in this area of learning.
- A very strong emphasis on language development by all staff helps children to communicate effectively.
- Children are encouraged to listen carefully to what they are told by adults in the classroom and to the contributions of other children.
- There is good promotion of the basic skills of writing and reading, and of enjoyment of books.

### **Commentary**

58. Very good teaching ensures that a wide range of stimulating activities encourages children to develop their speaking skills. All staff work very effectively and tirelessly to encourage children to use these skills in both the classroom and the outside area. Children listen well to their teacher and in assembly. They much enjoy being told stories or being read to from books. Parallel to the use of “emergent” writing, children are taught to form their letters correctly and to understand the sounds that these make. Many children are already forming recognisable letters, and some use simple words, in their written work. They take pleasure in handling books, hold them the correct way up and turn the pages carefully.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

**The provision for mathematical development is very good.**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching and learning are very good.
- Interesting activities where number, shape and measuring are introduced in a fun way.
- Planning which takes account of different stages in development.
- Good use of both the indoor and outdoor environment contributes to effective learning.

### **Commentary**

59. From planning documentation, it is clear that there are very good opportunities for children to achieve well in all aspects of mathematical development. They do this through reciting number rhymes and singing number songs, such as “Five Little Speckled Frogs”, by counting everyday objects into groups and matching cutlery, cups and saucers. They have a good mathematical vocabulary for their age, including “smaller than” and “more than”. They identify patterns in wrapping paper, and rhymes such as “Hickory Dickory Dock” help to reinforce their learning. They develop their number skills in the outside area, and by playing in the sandpit they learn about capacity. The average and more able children have a good understanding of number and shape, and achieve beyond the expectations for their age by the end of Reception.

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

**Provision for knowledge and understanding of the world is very good.** Teaching is very good and children achieve very well in relation to others of a similar age.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very good provision in all aspects of this area of learning.
- Very good teaching and learning.
- Good use is made of the outside areas and places further afield to encourage children to learn from direct observation and experiences.

### **Commentary**

60. Most children enter Reception with a satisfactory level of general knowledge. They build on this successfully because of the very interesting range of activities provided and achieve standards beyond the goals expected by the end of Reception. Very good attention is given to aspects of observation and investigation. Children learn their colours through singing the “Rainbow” song. They pretend to be scientists, using their hands, ears and eyes to look carefully at a bag of assorted coloured pieces, and sort these using different criteria. With the very effective help of a teaching assistant, pupils produce firework pictures on the computer. They competently use the mouse to choose different effects and background colour and, with great excitement, are helped to print these off. They join together construction pieces to make recognisable objects. Visits to such places as the local supermarket and a sea-life centre enrich this area of the curriculum.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

**The provision for physical education is very good** and pupils achieve very well in relation to their different capabilities.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Excellent teaching and very good learning in movement lessons in the hall.
- Very good opportunities for children to develop the skill of using equipment, such as scissors and pencils.

### Commentary

61. Excellent teaching promotes very good physical skills and most pupils achieve beyond the goals expected at the end of Reception. Pupils develop these skills during lessons in the hall and also outside. Pupils move with very good control, can stop and start quickly when asked, and move in different directions. The use of the outdoor area is well planned and enhances the learning that takes place indoors. Many classroom activities improve pupils' facility with simple equipment. During one lesson, a group of children confidently made binoculars and spyglasses, using cardboard rolls, glue, scissors and coloured translucent paper. One child was overjoyed with her results, asking everyone to look through her binoculars and see everything coloured purple. Children achieve well above the standards expected by the end of the Reception Year.

### Example of outstanding practice

**Children in Reception achieved very high standards in physical development because of excellent teaching.**

The very lively, energetic children enjoyed moving around the hall in different ways, making good use of space. The teacher built on their previous work to encourage them to interpret the noises and movements made by fireworks, such as sparklers and rockets. She provided very exciting music, such as Handel's music for the Royal Fireworks, to stimulate them to even greater effort. The teaching assistants and teacher joined in with the children, inspiring them to even greater heights of creativity and imagination. This challenging experience ended in a particularly impressive finale with pupils sequencing their firework movements.

## CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

**Provision for creative development is very good.**

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are very good.
- Children learn very effectively to sing and play instruments.
- There is good promotion of role-play.

### Commentary

62. The children in Reception make a very good start in their lessons, have a wide repertoire of songs and achieve above average standards in singing. In music lessons, they behave extremely well and resist the temptation to play their instruments before instructed to do so. They copy simple rhythms and have an understanding of why some pieces of music are quiet and some are loud. They play an extensive range of untuned instruments to produce different effects, much enjoying the results. Art activities were not observed during the inspection. In a role-play session in the outside area, the children enjoyed acting out "Mary,

Mary, quite contrary". The outdoor play was very well supported by a teaching assistant, who asked the children lots of questions and really made them think. Children exceed the goals expected by the end of the Reception Year.

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

### **ENGLISH**

**Provision in English is good.**

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

- Standards in reading are above average and pupils achieve very well.
- Standards in writing vary each year and are not high enough.
- Pupils' handwriting is untidy and older pupils do not use a joined style.
- Pupils' spelling is improving.
- Support for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- Teaching is good, but marking does not always give pupils a clear idea of how they can improve.
- There is a good system for tracking pupils' progress, but they do not always fully understand their writing targets.
- The school provides a good and interesting curriculum.

#### **Commentary**

63. Standards in reading are above average at the end of Years 2 and 4. Pupils thoroughly enjoy reading because there is a very good range of books and staff plan a wide range of interesting activities. Together with very good support from all staff and regular opportunities to read to an adult, these features ensure that all groups of pupils make very good progress and achieve very well in relation to their individual capabilities.
64. Standards in writing vary each year but are not as high as those reported in the previous inspection. Observed standards are below average at the end of Year 2. However, this represents good achievement and progress because pupils started school in Year 1 attaining standards in writing that were well below average. In addition, in this year group, there are a significant number of pupils with language difficulties and complex learning needs. The school has ensured that these pupils receive very good specialist support and as a result they are achieving as well as their class mates in lessons.
65. Standards in writing at the end of Year 4 are in line with expectations, and pupils have made satisfactory progress from the standards they attained in the Year 2 national tests. Although in some year groups data indicates that girls do not achieve as well as boys, no evidence was found to support this during the inspection. However, some girls say that they do not enjoy writing. One girl, who stated "It's too difficult to try to think of different words," sums up this attitude. Teachers ensure that all pupils are included in lessons and receive the same level of encouragement and help.
66. The school is alert to the lower writing standards and is striving hard to improve them. Strategies such as a recently introduced teaching approach that links spelling to patterns of letter sounds are interesting pupils. Younger pupils in particular enjoy exploring spelling patterns and are more confident to try to spell unfamiliar words. As a result, the quality of spelling is slowly improving. However, older pupils still struggle with spelling, have gaps in their learning and make many mistakes. The new approach has not been in place long enough to have had a significant effect on overall standards. Consequently, many pupils are not confident spellers. This is one factor that prevents standards from being higher and is slowing the rate of progress. In addition, standards could be higher if pupils sustained their ideas when writing at length and used a joined-up style when writing. More able pupils in all

year groups make interesting starts to their writing, but are often unable to build on this. Handwriting is sometimes untidy and work is not always well presented. This makes it difficult for pupils to read their own work in order to correct mistakes and is another factor impacting on standards.

67. The quality of teaching is good overall. Teaching assistants and special educational needs support teachers are used very effectively to teach pupils with significant learning needs. They are supportive without being over directing; as a result, these pupils are valued members of the class and fully included in all activities. Additional small group work is well matched to pupils' level of ability. Resources are used well to motivate and support those pupils who need a more practical teaching approach to stimulate learning. However, whilst most classes benefit from many additional staff, more able and average attaining pupils tend on occasions to rely too much on support and lack the confidence to write independently. This is another factor affecting overall standards. Teachers have good class management skills and because of this relationships are very secure. Consequently, pupils try hard to please them and listen carefully.
68. Teachers' marking is not fully effective or consistent. Too often, work is marked as very good when basic mistakes, such as missed capital letters or incorrect punctuation, are very obvious. In addition, these mistakes are also not picked up in other subjects. Marking very rarely refers pupils to their individual targets or is evaluative and supportive of learning. Consequently, pupils receive mixed messages about the quality of their work and this is a missed opportunity to develop learning and improve writing standards. Whilst teachers have adapted the Literacy Strategy well and try to make lessons interesting, in general they do not use a wide variety of teaching approaches to make learning fun and motivating for pupils, which is important when many say that they do not enjoy writing.
69. The school has a detailed system for monitoring and checking pupils' learning and progress. This provides the school with a wide range of information to help planning. In this way, it is alert to the lower writing standards and weaker spelling, and is already addressing these issues. Targets are set for both individuals and groups, but many pupils could not readily recall them and thus are unable to identify what they need to do to improve their writing.
70. The recently appointed subject leader has made a promising start to developing the subject further. The curriculum is good and the Literacy Strategy has been adapted well to meet the needs of the school. Initiatives such as drama and visiting actors enrich the subject well and are ensuring that pupils are interested and gaining the confidence to express themselves in a range of situations.
71. Parents provide good support for reading at home. Some expressed concern that reading records were not checked regularly and pupils not heard reading often enough. Records are checked on a regular basis and pupils have regular opportunities to read either in a group or during lessons. Consequently, standards of reading are above average.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

72. Pupils develop their speaking and listening skills well in other subjects. Information and communication technology is used very successfully as a vehicle to encourage pupils to develop their writing skills. They have opportunities to write in a range of different styles in other subjects, but these are not consistently developed. There are missed opportunities to use other subjects as a vehicle to inspire pupils to see writing as an interesting activity.

## **MATHEMATICS**

**Provision in mathematics is very good throughout the school.**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are above average and good progress is made in both Year 2 and Year 4, with very good achievement.
- There is good teaching and lesson planning across the school, with very good resources.
- Effective subject management has maintained above average standards over recent years.
- The joint teaching in Years 2, 3 and 4, which allows pupils to be taught in ability groups.
- Less able pupils, particularly those with special educational needs, are very well supported by teaching assistants.
- Excellent inclusion of all pupils with special educational needs.
- Very good assessment procedures are in place, although marking is inconsistent.

### **Commentary**

73. All pupils achieve well and standards have remained consistently above average since the previous report. The provision of the dual-teaching facility in Years 2, 3 and 4 is an asset to the subject. It allows pupils to be taught in smaller than class-size groups and for work to be tailored to the wide range of ability in the school. It is proving successful in raising the achievement of all pupils.
74. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Even within ability groups, teachers plan carefully to ensure that work is pitched at the right level for individual pupils. Due to this organisation, work is challenging for more able pupils and appropriate for those who find mathematical ideas more difficult. This ensures that all pupils make good progress. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well, due to the very effective support they receive from teaching assistants, which allows their full inclusion in all lessons.
75. Good teaching is characterised by the fast pace of clearly explained instructions and high expectations of work. Teachers use good strategies to stimulate pupils' interest. The use of interactive whiteboards is particularly useful in focusing attention and allows the teacher and pupils to give clear demonstrations of their ideas to the rest of the class. Worksheets are well matched to individual needs, and teaching assistants give very effective support whenever needed. There is a very good range of resources and their well-planned use contributes to the high interest and enjoyment of pupils in the subject.
76. Through effective monitoring of teaching and planning, the co-ordinator has an overall view of what is happening in the rest of the school and can give support where it is needed. Very good assessment systems are in place. These are used to track the progress of groups of pupils and to identify areas of the curriculum where there are difficulties. The progress made by individual pupils is tracked and future targets are set. However, these targets are insufficiently brought to the pupils' attention. The marking of work is inconsistent and, generally, does not make pupils aware of how they can make improvements.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

77. Opportunities to use mathematical skills, knowledge and understanding are provided to some extent in other areas of the curriculum, including data collection in science, map work in geography and time lines in history. One particularly effective piece of printing, produced by Year 3 pupils during a Caribbean Art Week, forms the basis for such questions as "What fraction of the palm trees is Yellow?" Information technology is under-used in the display of data, but good use is made of computerised aids, such as whiteboards, a bank of laptops and a wide range of mathematical programs.

## **SCIENCE**

**Provision in science is good.**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are above average in Year 2 and above expectations in Year 4.
- There are clear schemes of work well linked to the National Curriculum, which help to ensure progression in pupils' skills.
- Pupils' achievements are good.
- There is a lack of a sufficiently refined system of recording to identify what individual pupils know, can do, and understand.

### **Commentary**

78. Standards in Year 2 are above average. This level of attainment is maintained to the end of Year 4. Throughout the school, there are many pupils working at above average levels. Good standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. There are no discernible differences between the performance of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported to ensure that they have full access to the work. The scheme of work provides a balanced, structured curriculum covering all aspects or attainment targets of the National Curriculum. Pupils enjoy the "hands on" experiences of their lessons and achieve well.
79. The quality of teaching and learning in the two lessons seen in Years 1 and 2 during the inspection was at least good and other inspection evidence indicates that this standard is maintained up to Year 4. Teachers plan their lessons well and ensure that all pupils are included in all aspects of the work. Planning of the curriculum and of individual lessons includes clear objectives that provide a focus for lessons. This results in pupils showing keen interest and enthusiasm for the subject. Teachers ensure that the work is sufficiently challenging, which helps to ensure all pupils achieve well. In Year 2, pupils made simple electrical circuits and translated them to symbolic diagrams. The work was matched well to allow for a range of abilities, and pupils also changed activities on a rotational basis.
80. The co-ordinator leads the subject well and provides clear direction. She monitors teaching and learning well. Information and communication technology is used well in the subject. Assessment and recording procedures need further refinement to ensure that teachers know what individual pupils know, can do and understand.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

**Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is very good.**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is excellent inclusion of all pupils.
- Pupils achieve well above expectations by Year 4.
- Teachers have developed a good level of confidence and make frequent and good use of ICT to enhance pupils' learning.
- Resources are very good and used to full effect.
- Very good management effectively supports the teaching and learning.
- ICT skills are used very well across the curriculum.
- Assessment and record keeping are underdeveloped.

## Commentary

81. The school has improved the good standards found at the time of the last inspection; standards are well above expectations by Year 4. Pupils work very confidently and with much enthusiasm. They use ICT to present information in different forms, for example, when researching information to do with global warming. They accurately explain what they are doing. They share and exchange ideas confidently. They interpret their findings with accuracy. A group of pupils made a very successful 'DVD' about the Caribbean Week in the summer. They filmed, produced and edited this and ended up with a vibrant record of the occasion. From discussion with Year 2 pupils and examples of work on display, standards are judged to be above average by the end of Year 2. There is no significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls.
82. The school has invested in a range of equipment, including several new laptop computers and interactive whiteboards. These are used to full effect in many lessons throughout the school. Pupils and staff are confident in using them to reinforce learning and to make lessons as interesting as possible. Tasks are explained clearly and ensure that pupils are engaged in the task, whether they are working independently or in pairs. This enables them all to develop their skills confidently, in addition to thoroughly enjoying their learning.
83. There is excellent inclusion of all pupils. Very effective planning ensures that all pupils use ICT very well. Pupils with special educational needs use 'clicker boards' to aid them with their work. This is sometimes under the guidance of expert help from support staff and sometimes independent. The use of ICT in this situation has a very positive impact on pupils' achievement, which is very good.
84. Very good management ensures that teachers continue to develop confidence and expertise. The subject leader has a very good awareness of what is required to maintain an improvement in standards. The useful action plan identifies assessment as an area requiring further improvement in order to provide a clearer picture of pupils' achievement as they move through the school.

## Information and communication technology across the curriculum

85. There is very good use of ICT across the curriculum. Staff and pupils use ICT quite naturally as a way of supporting and enhancing the learning. It is widely used in science, English and mathematics, and for research purposes.

## HUMANITIES

### Religious education

**Provision in religious education is good.** Only one lesson was observed in Year 1, so no judgement is made on standards.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Excellent teaching in Year 1 leads to very high achievement.
- A range of interesting work is supported by stimulating activities; for example, role-play, visits, visitors to school and a range of resources.
- Good management ensures that teachers are confident, and pupils enjoy the subject and learn effectively.
- It makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual development.
- Pupils learn to respect different religions.

## Commentary

86. In an excellent lesson, the pupils made great gains in their understanding of the christening ceremony. Very good planning with an interesting range of resources captured the pupils' imagination. The whole lesson was conducted with reverence and the atmosphere was one of respect and awe. Pupils acted out the occasion, and small touches, like having water contained in shells and a hat for the 'mother of the baby' to wear, added to the meaning. The highly successful way in which all pupils are included was very evident in the lesson. All pupils joined in enthusiastically.
87. Well-planned visits, for example, to the local church, help to bring extra meaning and life to the lessons. There is a very good range of resources. Staff set a good example for the pupils through the way in which resources are respected; for example, the Koran and Torah are stored higher than other books. Visitors to school help to bring alive the similarities between religions which are studied. Pupils learn to respect other people's views and religions; this was evident from discussion with them.
88. The pupils' knowledge has improved since the last inspection, when most religious education was judged to have moral or social focus rather than being specifically religious. The interesting range of evidence, in addition to a discussion with pupils, indicates that this is at least satisfactory and there has been good improvement in provision since the last inspection.

## History and Geography

**Provision in history and geography is good.** No lessons were observed, but the subject was sampled.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The local environment provides a rich source for teaching and learning in both subjects and is used well.
- The subject is taught through topics, which fosters the pupils' interest.

## Commentary

89. The school makes very good use of the local environment of Maiden Castle. History is brought to life in topics on the Celts and Romans. Every year, pupils add to the Iron Age roundhouses built in the school grounds. They also learn about skills from that era by visiting an Ancient Technology Centre. They learn about the local area; for example, the youngest pupils visit the seaside. Pupils also study a contrasting country such as India. Map skills are developed well and are supported well by activities such as orienteering. There are good opportunities for pupils to develop enquiry and other skills, such as examining artefacts and using evidence.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

### Art and design and Design and technology

**Provision in art and design is very good.** The subject was inspected in depth, as the school is rightly proud of its achievements. Design and technology was sampled. One lesson was observed, discussions with pupils were held and work was analysed.

**Provision in design and technology is good.** Standards are above average. Pupils enjoy the subject and have access to a wide range of interesting learning opportunities.

## **Art and design**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are above average and pupils achieve very well.
- Teaching is good.
- The school provides a very good range of interesting learning opportunities.

### **Commentary**

90. Standards in art and design are above average; pupils produce very detailed drawings of a very high standard. Pupils thoroughly enjoy art and always try hard to ensure that their finished work is the very best they can attain. As a result, it is evident that they achieve very well in relation to their individual capabilities. Pupils with more complex learning needs delight in the learning opportunities provided. Because these pupils are supported by dedicated teaching assistants and have specialist equipment to aid their work, they also achieve very well.
91. From the time that they start in the school, pupils are encouraged to develop their own individual style. They learn to mix their own colours and become increasingly skilful at using different shades in their work. Older pupils can depict perspective with maturity in their street scenes, because this skill was very carefully taught. Already, pupils in Year 3 have produced detailed water colours of the local park that show a good level of ability to use shade and tone to bring paintings to life. Work is delicate and detailed. Pupils exercise great care in all of their work and are rightly very proud of their achievements.
92. The quality of teaching is good and lessons are carefully planned to ensure that all groups of pupils have relevant support and guidance without stifling their individual creativity. The very wide range of learning opportunities, very good use of the local area, visiting specialists and regular art weeks make a significant contribution to pupils' enjoyment and progress. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the Caribbean Week and delight in the many new skills they learned. In this way, art is used very effectively to support their spiritual and cultural development. It is also used very beneficially to develop the confidence and self-esteem of pupils who have significant learning difficulties.
93. The recently appointed co-ordinator has made a promising start to maintaining the very good provision that was found in the previous inspection. The school is rightly proud of its achievements and is working hard to attain a Silver Arts Mark award.

## **Music**

### **Provision in music is very good throughout the school.**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are well above average.
  - Music is woven into many aspects of the curriculum.
  - All pupils much enjoy their music lessons, as well as opportunities to further extend their musical experiences.
  - Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and fully included in all lessons.
  - There is a wide range of quality instruments, many of a multicultural nature.
94. As at the last inspection, pupils achieve very well and standards are well above average. Teaching and learning are very good in all areas of this subject. In assemblies, pupils sing sweetly with great confidence. Even the youngest are able to sustain a "round" when singing with the whole school. A wide range of well-known pieces of music is introduced at both the

beginning and end of assemblies, during “reflection” times and as a stimulation to dance and movement. Pupils speak knowledgeably about different types of music; for example, jazz, as well as more classical pieces by well-known composers. They show great enjoyment of the subject.

95. Pupils are encouraged to express their feelings and thoughts about different pieces of music. For example, when listening to “A Night on a Bare Mountain”, Year 2 pupils think about waves crashing on rocks or a shark catching its prey. They use untuned instruments, such as an ocean drum, to work both individually and collaboratively in a very imaginative and creative way, and confidently perform their results to each other. Through highly trusting and supportive relationships with teaching assistants, pupils with special educational needs achieve well in relation to their different abilities and play a full part in all lessons.
96. Very good behaviour enables lessons to develop at a challenging and well-ordered pace. The leadership and management of music are very good. The co-ordinator ensures that all pupils experience a rich music curriculum and that, through very careful planning, teaching is well supported throughout the school. The subject contributes very strongly to pupils’ spiritual, social and cultural development and is greatly enhanced by contributions made by visitors to the school; for example, during the Caribbean Week. A very good scheme helps to ensure continuity through the school.

## **Physical education**

**Provision for physical education is good.** A broad curriculum is taught well throughout the school and all pupils participate in the full range of activities on offer.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very good inclusion of all pupils.
- The subject is linked well to other areas of study.
- Visiting coaches are used effectively to provide tuition.
- There are good resources and facilities for the subject.

### **Commentary**

97. Achievement throughout the school is good. Good teaching ensures that there is progressive development of pupils' physical skills. Pupils participate well in a variety of physical activities, including swimming and horse riding. They develop skills in team and individual games, as well as learning basic skills, such as 'dribbling' in hockey. Standards remain, as at the last inspection, above national expectations.
98. All pupils, including those with physical disabilities, are included in all activities, including swimming at the nearby sports centre. This represents an improvement since the last inspection. Teaching is consistently good, with teachers planning lessons with precise aims and objectives, and using other areas of the curriculum, such as poetry and music, to inspire and promote physical activity and development.
99. The schemes of work and planned lessons are enhanced by an extensive range of extra-curricular activities, including outdoor pursuits, such as kayaking, orienteering and participation in inter-school games and competitions. The co-ordinator manages the subject well, using the facilities of the area and outside accredited coaches to enhance and improve children’s learning.

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

**Provision in personal, social and health education is very good.**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The curriculum is very varied and interesting.
- Pupils are valued and respected.

### **Commentary**

100. The school places a very strong emphasis on creating a school community where pupils can develop in confidence and self-esteem. It works very hard to ensure that they develop a belief in their own individual abilities, and they are all respected and valued members of the school. The school has introduced a very wide range of innovative teaching approaches, which the pupils themselves greatly value. One of these, called 'Young Stars', uses weekly mission statements to develop pupils' self-belief. They learn to value each other and have time each day to sit quietly and reflect on their mission, which is currently to 'pass on a smile'. Regular visitors, and time to sit and discuss personal issues and share thoughts, together with specialist weeks, make a significant contribution to learning. As a result, pupils have a very clear awareness of others' feelings, and of how to make the right decisions and keep safe in a wide variety of situations. Personal diaries, regular opportunities to take responsibility and membership of the school council show pupils how democracy works and ensure that the school is helping them all to develop into thoughtful young citizens.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
How inclusive the school is	1
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	2
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>3</b>
Pupils' achievement	2
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	2
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	2
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	1
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

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