

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **SILCHESTER C of E PRIMARY SCHOOL**

School Lane, Silchester,  
Reading, Berkshire  
RG7 2NJ

LEA area: Hampshire

Unique reference number: 116369

Headteacher: Stephen Kelsey

Reporting inspector: Jeff Stanfield  
18372

Dates of inspection: 26 – 29 June 2000

Inspection number: 188645

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Voluntary aided

Age range of children: 4 to 11

Gender of children: Mixed

School address: School Lane  
Silchester  
Reading  
Berkshire

Postcode: RG7 2NJ

Telephone number: 0118 9700256

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Keith Chapman

Date of previous inspection: 22 April 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Jeff Stanfield	Reporting inspector	science	What sort of school is it?
		geography	How high are standards?
			How well are children taught?
			How well is the school led and managed?
			What should the school do to improve?
Pamela Goldsack	Lay inspector	equal opportunities	How well does the school care for its children?
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Roger Kilgannon	Team inspector	mathematics	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to children?
		information technology	
		history	
		physical education	
Gaynor Davies	Team inspector	English	
		under-fives	
		English as an additional language	
Sheila Young	Team inspector	art	
		design and technology	
		music	
		special educational needs	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

This is a broadly-average size Church of England school, which provides education for girls and boys between the ages of 4 and 11. It is situated in the village of Silchester in north Hampshire. There are 221 children on roll, taught in seven mixed-ability single-aged classes. Across the classes there is a gender imbalance, which is most marked in Year 5 where there are 20 girls and 9 boys. The attainment on entry for most children is above average, and their social skills are well developed. The number of children eligible for free school meals, 3.1%, is well below the national average, as is the number identified as having special educational needs (9.5%). The percentage of children with statements of special educational needs (SEN) is slightly higher than average. There are no children from ethnic minority groups, and only four for whom English is an additional language.

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

The school has made satisfactory progress in addressing the key issues of the last inspection. The children have a positive attitude to their work and behaviour is good overall. There is a firm commitment to the care and welfare of the children, and partnerships with parents are excellent. In 1999, by the ages of 7 and 11, standards in English and mathematics are either in line with or better than the national average. When compared to similar schools, the picture is far more variable across these areas. Standards reached by the highest-attaining children are lower than would be expected. The overall quality of teaching is similar to that at the time of the last inspection. Nine out of every ten lessons seen were deemed satisfactory or better, with just over half being good or better. About one in every ten lessons seen are unsatisfactory. Early indications are that the test results for 2000 surpass targets set by the school, and that they are better than in 1999. However, the school is presently still not as effective as it could be. As at the time of the last inspection, the school presently provides satisfactory value for money.

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

- It has a very good ethos. The aims and values of the school underpin its day-to-day operation. It encourages very good attitudes towards school and learning. Relationships in the school are very positive.
- Teaching is judged to be good, or better, in just over half of the lessons observed.
- Results in English, mathematics and science when compared to the national average.
- SEN provision is very good and children with SEN make good progress.
- It ensures that the welfare of the children is given high priority, and supports their personal development well. This is supported by a well planned personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme across the school.
- Procedures for monitoring and ensuring high levels of attendance are excellent.
- Support for the spiritual development of children is good, and for moral, social and cultural development very good.
- It has an excellent partnership with the parents, and continues to develop very good links with the wider community.

### What could be improved

- The progress and achievement of the highest-attaining children within each year group.
- The attainment of boys in reading and writing.
- Ensure that the appropriate statutory requirements for information technology (IT) and design and technology (DT) are fully met.
- Whole-school strategic planning for sustained improvement and overall effectiveness.
- The quality and range of learning resources in a number of areas including the library, history, geography and DT.

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

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

There has been a significant improvement in curriculum planning, at all levels, for most subjects since the last inspection. This ensures that there is clearer continuity and progression in teaching and learning from year to year. Some developmental work is still required on preparation of guidance for teachers. Monitoring and evaluation procedures still lack rigour. In conjunction with curriculum planning, and the effective learning policy, the school has diversified the range of teaching styles since the last inspection. Some of the weaker components of teaching noted in the last report are, however, still present. There has also been an improvement in the structures and procedures for supporting the highest-attaining children. These are not fully operational presently, and thus have had insufficient impact on the attainment and progress made by these children. This group of children is still presently under-performing. With regard to the key issue of improving progress and standards in the juniors, in comparison to the previous report, standards have improved in science, PE, art and music, but fallen in listening, DT and IT.

### STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11-year-olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	A*	A*	B	C
mathematics	A	A	A	C
science	A	A	B	D

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

In relation to the requirements of the Desirable Learning Outcomes, children under five do well in all areas of learning, and particularly well in mathematics and knowledge and understanding of the world. In 1999 by the age of 7, reading standards were above the national average, and standards in writing and mathematics were broadly in line with the national average. In comparison with similar schools, reading standards were average, writing below, and mathematics well below average. Since the last inspection, the broad trend has been downwards. Girls did much better than boys in both reading and writing. Speaking skills are above the national average, although listening skills are less well developed. In science where boys do slightly better than girls, results are well above the



national average, and satisfactory when compared to similar schools. Standards in this subject have remained fairly constant. Standards in IT are well below those expected.

In 1999 by the age of 11, standards in English and science were above the national average, and in mathematics well above it. In comparison with similar schools English and mathematics results were average, and those for science below it. Standards have improved since the last inspection up until 1999, when they fell again slightly. Girls did better than boys in English, however, at the higher levels in both mathematics and science, boys did better than girls. Standards in IT are well below those expected. The standards reached by the highest-attaining children are below that expected in both key stages. The school has set targets for 2001 at 82% in English and 84% in mathematics. These are too low and not sufficiently challenging enough to be used as a stimulus for significantly raising standards.

### CHILDREN'S ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good, children have very positive attitudes towards all aspects of school life. They come to school with enthusiasm.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Overall the behaviour of children in the school is good.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships in the school are very good, both between children, and the staff and children.
Attendance	Attendance in school and procedures that are in place for monitoring it are excellent.

Children have very positive attitudes to school. This is reflected not only in the classroom, but also in the high participation rate in extra-curricular clubs, for example the very good school band. Most children enjoy taking an active role in the school community. They are willing learners and keen to do well, and are interested in their work especially when it is appropriately challenging. Behaviour across the school is good, except for a small minority of boys within Year 3. Children support the school rules and know what is expected of them. Older children show care towards the younger ones. Relationships between staff and children are very good, as they are between children. On occasion within lessons, they are not always prepared to listen fully to each other's point of view. Rates of attendance are very good and systems for checking on absence excellent.

### TEACHING AND LEARNING.

Teaching of children:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Satisfactory	Good	Satisfactory

Within the reception class, the quality of teaching ranged from very good to unsatisfactory. Overall the teaching is of a satisfactory standard. In the infant classes no unsatisfactory teaching was observed, with almost eight in every ten sessions judged to be good or very good. Some very creative and challenging teaching took place in the Year 1 class. In the juniors, nine out of every ten lessons are satisfactory or better, with four in every ten being good or very good. About one in every ten lessons in this key stage were judged

unsatisfactory. In both key stages, the teaching of English and mathematics is rarely less than satisfactory. Overall, the teaching of mathematics is seen to be better than that of English. In both subjects lessons are planned in great detail and have clear learning objectives that are shared with the children. Teachers are technically competent in teaching the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. Presently, the school does not evaluate sufficiently how activities derived from the national strategies meet the needs of individual children, or groups of children such as the highest attainers. Teaching is less secure across the school where the pace is too slow and teachers over-dominate the session. This is also the case where the use of resources is limited; non-challenging worksheets are used and where there is ineffective use of day-to-day assessment to inform planning especially to meet the needs of the highest attainers. Small-group teaching by the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) is of a very good, sometimes excellent standard, and has a major impact on the learning and rate of progress of these children.

### OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a broad curriculum. Significant improvements have been made to curriculum planning since the last inspection. The curriculum is not a balanced one, with English accounting for some 34% of curriculum time.
Provision for children with special educational needs	The provision for children with SEN is very good and ensures that these children make progress. This is a strength of the school.
Provision for children with English as an additional language	Where required, satisfactory provision is made for these children.
Provision for children's personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	This is very good overall. Provision for spiritual development is good, and for moral, social and cultural development it is very good.
How well the school cares for its children	The ethos of the school is one of care, compassion and concern. Arrangements for the well-being of the children are good, and a strength of the school.

The school has worked hard to implement the requirements of the literacy and numeracy strategies. Presently, IT and DT requirements are not met, and there are insufficient opportunities for children to practise, consolidate and apply literacy, numeracy and IT skills across the curriculum. A very good PSHE programme is planned across the school. Extra-curricular opportunities positively enrich the curriculum activities. Provision for children with SEN is very good. Partnerships between the school and parents are excellent. Parental support is much valued by the school. Links with the wider community are very good.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory overall. Pastoral leadership is good. Collective curriculum leadership and strategic management are less well developed. Linked to this, the role of the subject leader is under-developed. SEN is well managed.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors work very hard as a team and meet their responsibilities. Collectively they have a shrewd understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Presently, their role as 'critical friends' in shaping the direction of the school is still not fully developed.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has taken some steps to establish practices for monitoring and evaluating its work, in order to help to shape future strategic improvement planning. However, it is not sufficiently rigorous with regard to the systematic collection and detailed evaluation of information.
The strategic use of resources	Learning resources in a number of key curriculum areas are inadequate. The high budget under-spend of 1998-9 is being systematically reduced in line with presently agreed priorities.

There are at present a sufficient number of teachers who are suitably qualified to teach the requirements of the primary curriculum. Classroom support staff work effectively and efficiently and make a positive impact on the standards being achieved. All staff, both teaching and non-teaching, work hard, and are committed to providing the best possible opportunities for the children. Overall accommodation is good, however the library is not well developed. Inclusion within it of the school IT base, and special needs area restricts its effective use. Where applicable, the school has begun to apply the principles of best value.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That their children enjoy going to school.</li> <li>• That the teaching is good and their children make progress both academically and socially.</li> <li>• That behaviour in the school is good.</li> <li>• How approachable the school is when there is a general question to be answered, or a problem to be resolved.</li> <li>• That the school expects children to work hard and to achieve their best.</li> <li>• That the school works closely in partnership with the parents.</li> <li>• The leadership given by the headteacher and the dedication of all staff.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The setting of regular and meaningful homework.</li> <li>• Information about how their children are getting on.</li> <li>• An improvement in the range of activities outside of school.</li> </ul>

The findings of this inspection show that in most classes appropriate homework is set on a regular basis in line with the agreed homework policy. The range of activities for children

outside of school hours is good for those in the junior phase, but less diverse for infants. The school is constantly reviewing the range and effectiveness of strategies for ensuring that parents are kept fully informed with regard to how their children are getting on. In response to letters received from parents, the team agrees that SEN provision in the school is very good. Similarly, it agrees that IT provision is weak and that the needs of the highest-attaining children are not fully met. With regard to the former, several new PCs arrived at the school during the week of the inspection. Since January, one of the new teachers has reviewed the needs of this area, and has developed a sensible action plan for its development.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

##### ***Pre- Key Stage 1***

- 1 Children start school with well-defined social skills. By the age of five, most children exceed the requirements of the age-related Desirable Learning Outcomes (DLOs). They do particularly well in mathematics and knowledge and understanding of the world, and well in personal and social education, language, creative and physical development. The quality of learning and the progress they make during their time in reception are good for all but the highest-attaining children.

##### ***Key Stage 1***

- 2 Review of the school's Key Stage 1 results based on average points scores show that in comparison to all schools nationally, standards have fallen in the three years between 1997 and 1999. In 1997, results for reading were well above the national average, for writing they were above average and for mathematics they were very high. By 1999 reading had fallen to above average, and writing and mathematics were only broadly in line with the national average. In comparison to schools with similar characteristics nationally, standards were average for reading, below average for writing and well below average for mathematics. Since the last inspection the broad trend in results has been downwards.
- 3 The 1999 assessments show that the percentage of children attaining level 2 in reading was close to the national average, whilst the number of those gaining level 3 was well above it. In writing, the percentage of children obtaining both levels 2 and 3 was close to the national average. The percentage of children reaching level 2 in mathematics was above the national average, whilst the number of those reaching level 3 was below average. Girls do much better than boys in reading and writing, and although the picture is the same in mathematics, the difference is not quite as marked.
- 4 In science, teacher assessments in 1999 showed that results overall were well above the national average when compared to all schools. When compared to similar schools the percentage of children reaching level 2 and above was broadly average, and for those reaching the higher levels was above average. Here boys do slightly better than girls at the higher levels. Results have remained fairly constant over the last three years.
- 5 Early indications are that the results for 2000 are better than those of 1999, with all children reaching level 2 or above in English and mathematics.
- 6 Inspection evidence for reading in Key Stage 1 indicates that standards are above expectation. Apart from the highest attainers, children make good progress. Children use a limited range of strategies, mainly phonics and word patterns to help them read. Although many can read accurately, they have a limited understanding of the story, and often fail to read expressively. Books do not always meet the individual needs of the children, and some chosen for higher attainers lack challenge. In writing the inspection evidence shows that standards are in line with those expected. Progress is satisfactory for all but the highest-attaining writers. Most children write using different styles such as poems, stories and letters, and develop cursive

handwriting, spell simple words accurately and begin to use simple punctuation. Able writers show an awareness of audience and use more complicated sentences and vocabulary in their work.

- 7 In speaking, standards are above expectation, and children make good progress. They speak with confidence, using technical language with increasing accuracy and take part enthusiastically in class discussions and role-plays. Listening skills are less well developed than at the time of the last inspection, and progress is less than satisfactory. Children are not always prepared to listen to either the teacher or their peers.
- 8 The inspection evidence for mathematics in Key Stage 1 shows that by the age of 7 standards are above the national expectation, and all except the highest-attaining children make satisfactory progress. Children use appropriate mathematical vocabulary, show good recall of addition facts to ten and can round up and down. Many children have a sound knowledge of their tables. Higher-attaining Year 2 children can explain the use of brackets to replace multiplication signs.
- 9 Inspection evidence for science shows standards to be above expectation, and children make satisfactory progress. They undertake simple investigations and develop secure subject knowledge and understanding across the key stage. Due to a lack of opportunity, children fail to make progress and reach the standards expected in IT. Standards are presently below those expected.
- 10 In the foundation subjects, children's attainment meets the national expectation in history and geography, is above expectation in art, music and physical education (PE), but below expectation in DT.

### **Key Stage 2**

- 11 Review of the school's Key Stage 2 results, based on average points scores, shows that in comparison to all schools nationally, standards have fallen slightly between 1997 and 1999, with the exception of mathematics. In 1997, standards in English were very high and in mathematics and science, well above average. By 1999, standards had fallen to above average in English and science. In comparison to schools with similar characteristics nationally, standards in English and mathematics were average and in science were below average in 1999. Trends since the last inspection have been mainly upwards, however, in 1999, with the exception of boys' attainment in mathematics, results generally fell, most significantly in English.
- 12 The 1999 assessments show that the percentage of children reaching level 4 and above in English and mathematics, was above the national average, whilst the number reaching level 5 was well above the national average. In science, the percentages were above the national average. Trend data shows that girls do better than boys in English. However, at the higher levels in both mathematics and science boys do much better than girls. Early indication is that results overall for 2000 show an improvement across the board on those for 1999.
- 13 Inspection evidence for reading in Key Stage 2 shows standards to be above expectation. Most children making good progress apart from able readers. Children enjoy reading and do so regularly in class and at home. Higher-attaining readers can read beyond the text, identify differences in style and comment on effective use of vocabulary. They make mature choice of text, selecting books not necessarily found in the school library. Time set aside for 'silent reading' is not effectively used to

extend reading skills. Girls' reading standards are better than those of boys. Writing standards are satisfactory, and most children make satisfactory progress, apart from the higher-attaining writers. Most children write for a range of purposes including non-fiction and have developed a sense of audience. Punctuation is mostly correct and the quality of handwriting is satisfactory. When given the opportunity, most children develop more complex sentences with varied vocabulary. Use of technical language is good. Presently there are insufficient opportunities for developing longer pieces of writing either in English or in other areas of the curriculum.

- 14 As with Key Stage 1, standards in speaking are above expectation, with listening skills being less well developed.
- 15 Inspection evidence in mathematics in Key Stage 2 shows standards to be above expectation, with all but the highest-attaining children making satisfactory progress. Children can measure accurately, are increasingly confident in selecting appropriate methods for solving problems, and present their findings in a clear fashion. Top juniors can add and subtract numbers to two decimal places in a variety of contexts.
- 16 In science, standards are above national expectation. Older juniors use appropriate terminology when naming parts of flowers, and can describe how plants adapt to their habitat. They are aware of the nature and impact of microbes and are able to undertake experiments in a satisfactory fashion. Although variable, most children make progress across the key stage. Children have insufficient opportunity to develop and apply IT skills in Key Stage 2, consequently progress is very limited and attainment is poor.
- 17 In the foundation subjects, standards are above the national expectation in art, music and lower junior PE. Standards in geography and history are average, but below average in DT.

### ***Key Stages 1 and 2***

- 18 After the last inspection, a considerable amount of work was undertaken by the school to develop appropriate procedures and strategies for working with higher-attaining children. These included, for example, the appointment of an able child co-ordinator, the development of an able child policy, agreed criteria for highlighting able children and staff training. In recent times this focus has lost momentum, and the progress the higher-attaining children make, and the standards they achieve are less than should be expected.
- 19 Standards achieved by children with SEN in both key stages are good, as a result of the appropriate Individual Education Plans which are well designed and shared with all, and help children to build upon their current skills, knowledge and understanding. They make good progress. Children with SEN enjoy working with the SENCO and with special needs assistants, and with their support, maintain relatively good levels of concentration and perseverance.
- 20 The school has set specific targets for 11-year-olds. Targets for level 4 and above in 2000 are 82% in both English and mathematics, whilst in 2001 they are agreed at 82% in English and 84% in mathematics. The school agrees that they lack the ambition that could be used as a vehicle for really raising standards significantly.

## Children's attitudes, values and personal development

- 21 Children across the school have very positive attitudes towards all aspects of school life. Children across the school are willing learners and keen to do well. They are interested in their lessons, especially when the teaching is planned to include different activities that are well paced and challenging. In preparation for their trip to see 'The Tempest' children in Years 5 and 6 took part in a Shakespeare workshop organised by an outside theatre group. For a whole afternoon they listened carefully, offered thoughtful answers about the play and enthusiastically assumed the roles of different characters. Children generally concentrate well and work productively and this helps to support their learning, particularly in the literacy and numeracy hours. Children like school and their enthusiasm is reflected in the high rate of participation in the many extra-curricular clubs. They take homework seriously and complete assignments as required.
- 22 Overall, children's behaviour is good and standards have been maintained since the last inspection. There is a calm, purposeful atmosphere and this contributes to a good environment for learning. Children respond well to the school's carefully structured approach to discipline, they support the rules in place and know what is expected of them. The house system is popular and children work hard to gain points to help win the house prize each term. Members of staff are consistent in their approach to discipline and know the children very well. Children are trustworthy and treat the building, resources and the many displays with care. Groups of children are able to work independently and this helps to extend the range of teaching activities available, especially in music and science.
- 23 Parents are aware that there has been an ongoing problem with misbehaviour among a significant minority of boys in Year 3. Although there has been some improvement during the year, their behaviour is still unsatisfactory. The class teacher is forced to divert too much of her time to continually correcting this group. As a result teaching and learning are interrupted and delayed for the rest of the class. A number of children in the rest of the school have a tendency to speak impolitely to each other and to adults. This reflects a decline in the standard of children's manners since the last inspection. Listening skills are not well developed. Children often chatter in lessons while a classmate asks or answers a question. During the plenary session in the literacy hour, children at the beginning of Key Stage 1 fidgeted and found it difficult to listen to their peers. There have been no exclusions for poor behaviour over the last reporting year.
- 24 Children are friendly with adults and each other and relationships in the school are very good. The school is successful in promoting tolerance and respect for one another by example and through lessons in PSHE. Children are particularly attentive and supportive toward those who have physical disabilities.
- 25 Personal development is very good and has improved since the last inspection. Children respond very well to the planned opportunities for them to take a more active role in the life of the school community as they get older. The youngest children are sociable and follow the school routine easily. Older children are given opportunities to support them. A successful activity in history set Year 6 children working alongside Year 1 to create Victorian weavings. Children help tidy up resources in their classrooms and set up equipment in PE lessons. Year 6 children can be house captains and they take their duties seriously. They also take part in a residential trip to support the curriculum and extend social skills. Music is very popular and children in



the school band and choir perform at local events. Children who transfer into the school at different times of the year are made to feel very welcome by the rest of their class.

- 26 Attendance and punctuality continue to be excellent and reflect the children's positive attitudes.

## **HOW WELL ARE CHILDREN TAUGHT?**

- 27 Overall the quality of teaching is satisfactory or better in slightly more than nine in every ten lessons (91%). Half of the lessons observed (51%) are judged to be good or better. In a number of these lessons (21%) the teaching is very good or excellent. This is a similar finding to that of the last inspection, when teaching was judged to be variable but rarely less than satisfactory. Approximately one in ten (9%) of lessons are judged unsatisfactory. While this is a small percentage, it is still too high and must be reduced.
- 28 Within the reception year teaching was judged to be particularly good at the time of the last inspection. It is now more variable. Overall, teaching is satisfactory and on occasions very good. The class teacher is exceptionally caring and hard-working. She works closely with the learning support assistants and a 'helping granny' forming an effective and efficient team. They ensure that the children have full access to the six key areas of learning, and they know their children well. Lessons are meticulously planned and are a good mixture of direct teaching for the whole class and opportunities for children to make independent choices and to learn through enquiry and play. Assessment is well used to help to inform the daily planning of tasks. The classroom is well organised with available spaces including those outdoors being well used. The quality of display to support learning is good. Good routines are in place at the start and end of each day.
- 29 There are weaknesses in teaching when the pace of sessions is too slow and individual or group activities are too long. This means that the children become restless. On occasion there is a need to give the higher-attaining children greater challenge at an appropriate level, so that they can reach their full potential.
- 30 During the period of inspection no unsatisfactory teaching was observed in Key Stage 1, which included a supply teacher covering for the absent Year 2 member of staff. 79% of the sessions observed in this key stage were judged to be good or better. Some really creative and challenging teaching, which could be used by the school as a model of good practice, was seen in the Year 1 class.
- 31 Within Key Stage 2, 92% of teaching was judged to be at least satisfactory, with 44% being good or very good. 8% of lessons observed within this key stage were deemed to be unsatisfactory.
- 32 The teaching of English is satisfactory in both key stages with the best practice seen in the lower infants and upper juniors. Lessons are generally well planned with careful account being taken of the requirements of the National Literacy Strategy. In the best lessons, teachers set clear expectations and share these with the children. Clear instructions are given and questioning is of a good standard. Good use is made of learning support assistants. Work set takes account of differing abilities, but sometimes fails to meet the specific needs of the highest-attaining children. Where the pace of lessons is slow and the task less challenging, the rate of progress is less marked.
- 33 The teaching of mathematics is never less than satisfactory across the school, and is

sometimes good and very good. Teaching of children with SEN by the SENCO is excellent. Where teaching is best, teachers have good subject knowledge, planning is thorough and activities are designed to meet the needs of different abilities. Activities build carefully on previous learning. Relationships between teachers and children are good and this supports learning well. Weaknesses are seen where teaching fails to address the needs of the highest-attaining children, and where marking of work fails to indicate what the child needs to do to improve or make progress.

- 34 Teachers have worked hard to plan for and implement both the National Literacy and National Numeracy Strategies. It is important now to evaluate fully their impact on teaching and learning. Some tasks derived from these strategies are too simplistic and fail to meet fully the needs of either individuals, or specific groups of children, such as the highest attainers.
- 35 In areas other than English and mathematics many good facets of teaching were observed. Most lessons are well planned and have clear learning objectives that are appropriately shared with the children. Questioning is especially good where it allows children to express fully their knowledge and understanding, values and attitudes. Good subject knowledge and expertise, for example in art and music, help teachers to explain, demonstrate and instruct very effectively. In art, high priority is given to teaching technical skills. Similarly, in one of the science lessons children were taught correct experimental procedures for investigating the effect of food preservatives. This supported learning well. PE lessons are well structured and managed with warm ups, evaluation and refining of performance and skills together with warm downs. Across most areas, teachers' understanding and use of subject specific terminology are good. Effective displays are developed to support teaching and learning in, for example, history, geography and science. Good examples of practical tasks are seen supporting learning in science. In all year groups classroom assistants and other helpers are effectively used and seen as being part of a team. They provide valuable support to the children and have a very good impact on learning. Good use is made of outside experts where applicable, for example, to support work on birds in Year 1 and on Basingstoke in Year 5. Most teachers make good use of plenary sessions to reinforce and extend learning. Homework is, in general, regularly used to extend and enrich classroom activities. Because of the shortfall in resources in the school, many staff spend a great deal of their personal time collecting and creating resources for planned activities. For example, those developed to support an understanding of the nature of schools in Victorian times, and for investigating Basingstoke are of an excellent standard. These have a very good impact on teaching and learning.
- 36 Weaker components of teaching observed across the school include: slow pace and over-domination by teachers; use of a very limited range of resources to support learning; overuse of worksheets that fail to challenge children; ineffective use of day-to-day assessment to inform planning and a failure to meet the needs of the highest attainers. There is insufficient teaching of IT.
- 37 There are examples across the school in subjects other than English and mathematics of some support for, and development of, basic skills. In science for example children develop their writing skills when describing the 'life of a broad bean', or when outlining procedures and findings of investigations. Reading of non-fictional text is supported in their work on flowering plants in science and the redevelopment of Basingstoke town centre in geography. Again there is some IT used to support this facet of the geography curriculum. Although there is evidence of the use of numeracy skills in science, these are not used sufficiently to support learning in other areas. Sampling of children's work

indicates that presently, too few planned opportunities exist for children to develop and extend their basic skills repertoire across the curriculum. Opportunities for using IT to enhance learning are presently poor.

- 38 At the time of the last inspection weaknesses were noted in long-term planning, monitoring, pace and the match of task to the ability of the children especially the higher attainers. Long-term planning is now in place and this ensures much better continuity and progression between classes, although there is still some evidence of repetition of work and activities in, for example, science. Monitoring procedures have been developed, but still need to be more rigorous. There is still an issue of pace in some lessons and the needs of the highest attainers are still not effectively addressed. Outlined in the school's able child policy is an agreed list of opportunities that should be afforded to this group of children by class teachers. It would serve as a valuable starting point in monitoring provision for them.
- 39 A key issue at the time of the last inspection required the school to promote the use of a broader range of teaching styles to create a stimulating and challenging learning environment for the children. This key issue has largely been addressed through the school's policy for effective learning. Planning now indicates more effectively the nature of tasks to be undertaken, as well as suggesting different teaching strategies. The school is aware of the need to continue to expand the opportunities for enquiry, investigation, decision making and problem solving across the curriculum and to develop more opportunities for independent learning.
- 40 Teaching for children with SEN is very good and at times excellent. They are well served as a result of thoughtful lesson planning by teachers and very good support by capable, conscientious and well-briefed special needs assistants. The SENCO, who supports children in both class lessons and small withdrawal groups, is very skilful, patient and firm, and has an excellent understanding of the specific needs of the children for whom she is responsible. She maintains a brisk pace and has high expectations of both academic outcomes and behaviour.

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

- 41 The school provides a broad curriculum and has made significant improvements in planning the curriculum since the last inspection. However, the IT curriculum fails to meet statutory requirements and the curriculum is not balanced. In some subjects, such as geography, the school has adopted national schemes of work and in others, such as history, has yet to complete a match of national recommendations against the school's planning.
- 42 The school has worked hard to implement the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, and to ensure that the content of these lessons meets the needs of the children. Additional curriculum time has been allocated to English outside the time given to literacy hours. However, there is no clear rationale for the use of this extra time, nor does it support the school's own target to improve the standard of writing across the school. The Literacy Strategy is having an impact on raising standards of attainment in reading and speaking, but has yet to make an impact on children's listening skills and writing ability. The Numeracy Strategy is having an impact on raising standards in mathematics.
- 43 The curriculum for under-fives is broad and balanced and builds effectively into the programmes of study for the National Curriculum. Planning is detailed and fully addresses

the DLOs. There is an appropriate emphasis on developing literacy and numeracy with the school recognising the need to develop children's listening skills. Baseline assessment is used effectively to identify class targets and individual needs.

- 44 In infant and junior classes the curriculum is broad, but retains some of the imbalance identified at the last inspection. The school has successfully addressed the lack of investigative and exploratory learning identified at the last inspection. The balance of the curriculum is affected by the additional time given to extra English, but also to an inefficient use of the time available for teaching. Because of the position of morning play and lunchtime work sessions are very unequal. As a consequence, some numeracy and literacy lessons are too long. They last for 80 minutes in one Key Stage 1 class, and odd half-hours are timetabled with activities such as extra English without a clear rationale or purpose. The time allocated to PE has been reduced, which is a concern of parents, and the frequency of the teaching of DT gives children limited opportunities to learn and apply the necessary skills. This affects the standards children attain.
- 45 Provision for children's PSHE, sex and drug education is very good. A well-constructed programme provides children with opportunities to understand their role as citizens and prepare themselves well for secondary education and adult life.
- 46 The curriculum is accessible to all children regardless of race or gender. Whilst teachers work hard at providing work appropriate to a range of ability, and in particular for the higher-attaining children the curriculum is not yet fully meeting the needs of the highest-attaining and gifted children. Strict adherence to the Literacy and Numeracy Strategy programmes, and failure to implement the range of teaching and learning strategies of the school's able child policy are disadvantaging this small, but significant group of children. In particular, there are limited, planned opportunities for the highest-attaining children to develop more sophisticated reading and thinking skills, to formulate their own opinions and to work independently at their own pace. There are also insufficient planned opportunities for children to apply skills and knowledge acquired in literacy, numeracy and IT across a range of other subjects.
- 47 A very good range of extra-curricular activities, including a choir, a brass band and sporting clubs, enrich the curriculum. There are also good opportunities for children to play competitive sport against other local schools. There are good links with the local community, especially the church with a termly communion available for all children. There are good links with all pre-school providers and with the feeder secondary schools over both transfer arrangements and curriculum. The school makes good use of parental expertise and enthusiasm as well as inviting visitors and visiting groups such as the Young Shakespeare Company who visited the school in the week of the inspection.
- 48 There is very good provision for children with SEN. The programmes for the work of these children are well targeted and are highly supportive of their needs. There is particularly good provision for the minority of children who require specific help because of physical disability. The care provided for these children, by both adults and children alike, is exemplary. Learning support assistants are well briefed and provide very good support in a variety of contexts and situations.
- 49 Individual Education Plans are well written, and are in the process of being reviewed to ensure that targets are specific enough to support children and extend their learning. SEN children have good access to the curriculum and are reintegrated appropriately into class lessons after individual and small-group work.

- 50 SEN children make an equal contribution to the social, moral, spiritual and cultural life of the school and have equal access to these areas of their own development.
- 51 The provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development continues to be a strength of the school. There is a strong, caring and compassionate ethos throughout the school which is fostered by the headteacher.
- 52 The provision for the spiritual development of children is good and is reflected in the school's mission statement. The planning and delivery of collective worship are good, giving children opportunities for personal reflection. Displays around the school give children the chance to think about the lives of others and curriculum experiences in drama, RE and PSHE allow children to gain in-depth experiences of exploring the thoughts and feelings of others as well as themselves. Good teaching skills, which promote the spiritual dimension in collective worship, are not always transferred into lessons.
- 53 Provision for the moral development of children is very good. Children are set targets for attitude and behaviour. They know right from wrong and are aware of the consequences of their actions. They care for and help each other. They are particularly caring to those children with SEN. The 'Superstar support group' in Year 4 helps support children who find it difficult to mix. Older children care for the younger ones at playtimes and they work together on many projects such as Victorian weaving. All teaching and non-teaching staff in the school provide very good role models for children.
- 54 The social development of children is very good. Achievement is regularly celebrated. Children, through the house system, have opportunities to take on social responsibility. There are many opportunities for children to work co-operatively and collaboratively. There continue to be strong community links including musical concerts at a local residential home for the elderly, as well as links with local nurseries and secondary schools. The school organises charity fund raising activities for schools and churches in Nigeria. The school band is a strength of the school and in great demand in the community. A range of visits is organised to support the curriculum, including visits to local theatres. On occasion, however, some children can be impolite and do not always use appropriate language to each other and when speaking to adults.
- 55 The cultural development of children has improved since the last inspection. There are now many opportunities in the curriculum to learn about their own culture as well as that of others. In art, African sculpture is explored and in music children experience a range of composers and learn to sing songs from different continents. In geography children enjoy the study of an Indian village. In RE children learn about a range of religions and celebrate different lifestyles and family structures. They are also interested in world and local news. Children have enriching opportunities to work with professional performers. The 'Tempest' workshop for Years 5 and 6 was a highpoint where children worked with actors, in school, on key scenes from the play and then saw a performance of the play at a local theatre. The Year 6 leavers' service at Winchester Cathedral celebrated their achievement and helped prepare for their move to a new secondary school.
- 56 The cultural richness in the curriculum is not fully supported by texts in the library which lacks books and other reading matter which informs them about their own literary heritage as well as that of other cultures.

## HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS CHILDREN?

- 57 Overall, the support and guidance given to children and the arrangements to ensure their well-being are good, and have been maintained since the last inspection.
- 58 Since the previous inspection the school has improved its procedures for assessing children's academic progress. A clear policy is in place. A range of information is collected, including reading and writing records and subject portfolios. Regular, half-termly writing assessments take place to guide target setting. Class targets are set for reading, writing and mathematics. However, best use is not consistently made of the available data and information. It is not consistently used fully to inform whole-school strategies or targets for improvement. For example, the underachievement of boys is easily identifiable but few targets address raising their achievement. The class and individual targets are often vague and unfocussed.
- 59 Children are set individual targets for literacy, numeracy and behaviour. Most know their targets but they are often too broad and do not focus children accurately on exactly which aspect of their work they have to improve. Targets for the highest-attaining children are pitched too low and are too vague.
- 60 Day-to-day assessment is presently unsatisfactory. It is not used sufficiently well to inform planning. Thus the planned task for some children, noticeably the highest-attaining, is not sufficiently challenging. However, good practice is evident in Year 1.
- 61 Procedures for assessing attainment and progress for children with SEN are excellent. Individual Education Plans (IEPs) are clearly written and targets are sharply focussed.
- 62 There are very good arrangements in place to support discipline. The behaviour and anti-bullying policies have clear guidance and are used consistently. Older children are now fully aware of what is expected of them. Teachers make regular use of the house point awards and the headteacher carefully monitors sanctions for children who misbehave. The school's positive approach to behaviour management is well suited to the needs of nearly all children. However, in Year 3 misbehaviour continues to be a problem among a significant minority of boys. The class teacher works very hard to manage this class but the guidelines in the behaviour policy do not address the problems she is facing. Some boys have special needs that include emotional and behavioural problems. There are no effective strategies in place to correct misbehaviour and make full use of the extra support staff available. Although staff generally have high expectations regarding behaviour, there is no whole-school approach to ensure that children refrain from interrupting and speak politely to each other and adults.
- 63 The procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are excellent. Registers are maintained to a high standard and all absences are followed up on a daily basis. Requirements regarding the reporting of attendance figures are fully met.
- 64 The school's arrangements for child protection are sound. The headteacher is the designated Child Protection Liaison Officer. There is a well-written school policy that supports the local authority's guidelines. However, there is no regular review to ensure that all members of staff, particularly the newest teachers, are fully informed about procedures.
- 65 The school takes great care to provide for the health needs of its children. There is an adequate number of staff trained in first aid. Specific medical information regarding certain children is made known to staff so that there is always a good level of support and

expertise. The health and safety policy is well written and is included in the guidance provided to lunchtime supervisors. Day-to-day routines and the sensible behaviour of children help to support safe practices. The school is a pleasant working environment and its caretaking staff ensure that it is cleaned to a high standard.

- 66 Risk assessments are up-to-date but the headteacher carries them out. The governors are relying too much on the efforts of the headteacher regarding risk assessments and are not directly involved in a routine for identifying problems and seeing that repairs are carried out.
- 67 SEN children are very well cared for. Awareness-raising for peers and adults forms part of the provision for children with a statement of special educational need for physical disability.

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

- 68 Parents have excellent views of the school and this is in keeping with the last inspection. They are genuinely concerned about the education of their children and help to maintain the outstanding partnership between school and home.
- 69 Parents provide excellent practical support. Family members help in school on a daily basis with small groups of children in lessons, with reading and by providing their expertise in arts and crafts. Teachers can rely on their help and this enables them to extend the range of activities in lessons. This is particularly useful in the literacy and numeracy hours. Parents also help with organising equipment, extra-curricular activities such as cycling proficiency and they help to maintain the grounds.
- 70 Overall, the quality of information provided for parents is very good. The school prospectus and governors' annual report to parents both meet legal requirements. There are regular informative newsletters, a large display area for parents and regular meetings to discuss children's progress. Parents like the annual meeting in September when class teachers provide information about the curriculum that will be studied. Teachers are friendly and easy to approach. Children's end-of-year reports to parents contain much helpful information, particularly about children's personal development. They have improved since the last inspection. Information about what children have learned and can do in English, science and mathematics is detailed and specific. However, progress in IT and religious studies is not reported in similar depth. Information regarding other subjects is sometimes merely a description of what was covered during the year or how much a child enjoyed the work.
- 71 The Parent Teacher Association is very active and organises social and fund-raising events over the year. A mark of the strength of partnership between the school and parents is shown by the numbers of parents interested in committing themselves to being put forward for election as governors. Parents' commitment to high standards is reflected in their high attendance at school meetings and functions and the excellent attendance rate of their children. Parents support reading and homework and make good use of the homework diaries to communicate with class teachers.
- 72 The SENCO and other teachers ensure that parents of children with special educational needs are kept closely informed of their progress and value their contribution to the planning of IEPs.

## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- 73 Prior to the last inspection the school had been through an "unsettled period", and before this inspection, the headteacher had been seconded as acting head to another school within the local education authority. Overall leadership and management of the school are satisfactory.
- 74 The school has clear aims and values. There is a shared commitment amongst governors, staff and other members of the community to ensure that the school's ethos promotes positive attitudes. This is reflected in the school's mission statement and embedded into the day-to-day life of the school, and in the 'inclusive' nature of the school. High priority is given to children's personal development and relationships are good. Linked to this there is a shared commitment to improve the school and without doubt the capacity and will to succeed.
- 75 The headteacher and other senior staff provide good pastoral leadership. Collectively, they are very caring and compassionate people, who ensure that all people in the school are valued as individuals. This is an important strength, and is highly valued by parents and other members of the local community. The headteacher is not averse to making difficult decisions which benefit the school, for example related to staffing issues. However, collective curriculum leadership and management are less secure, as is the vision for strategic school improvement.
- 76 With the exception of IT the school complies with the statutory requirements for the curriculum. The SEN code of practice is meticulously followed and the area well managed. The school meets all legal requirements.
- 77 All staff work very hard as a team. They are committed to providing the best possible quality of education to the children. There is a need to clarify individual accountability and the personal contribution of all staff to meeting whole-school priorities. Curriculum leadership and management roles and responsibilities for most areas are shared across the school. Presently, the two newly qualified teachers on the staff rightly have no responsibilities. However, from the start of the next academic year they will oversee IT and geography. Action plans are not sufficiently carefully linked to agreed whole-school priorities for improvement, such as improving writing. They do not set out longer-term strategies for structured and continuous subject, or aspect development, from existing starting points. Staff are given insufficient development and monitoring time.
- 78 Monitoring and evaluation procedures are in place across the school. The standards team developed since the last inspection is central to this process. The procedures for monitoring and evaluation lack real rigour and focus, as does the analysis of all data available to the school, thus priorities for school improvement are vague. Although a school development plan is formulated on an annual basis after discussion with all people involved in the day-to-day life of the school, it is not specific enough in identifying exactly what needs to be done to improve school performance. At present, the criteria for measuring success are not quantifiable and cannot be used to measure improvement.
- 79 The governors are very well organised to meet the range of their responsibilities through an appropriate pattern of regular meetings and an effective committee structure. They work very hard, give unstintingly of their time, and are committed to a continued school improvement. They value and appreciate what the school achieves for the children. Their work is appreciated by the school and parents. Most are well known within the school through a regular pattern of visits and by holding specific responsibilities, such as for SEN,



literacy and numeracy. Collectively, they have developed a shrewd understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Sometimes they place too much reliance on information and evidence that is provided by the headteacher and his staff. Their role as 'critical friends' is not currently well enough developed to enable them, where necessary, to hold the school to account for the standards that are being achieved and the quality of education provided.

- 80 The school plans the budget carefully and financial management is now satisfactory overall. Spending is linked to the existing priorities outlined in the school development plan, and is carefully monitored. Specific grants, such as those for children with SEN are used appropriately. The school is beginning to use a range of data to apply best value principles. In the 1998-9 financial year a large budget surplus of 9.1% existed. This was inappropriate when one considers for example the shortfall in teaching resources. Since that date the surplus has been reduced and agreed plans are in place to bring it in line with that recommended nationally.
- 81 The day to day finances of the school are effectively and efficiently managed by the school administration officer. All of the minor recommendations outlined in the last auditors' report of 1996 have been addressed in full.
- 82 The capable and conscientious SENCO works hard to fulfil her role in only 1.5 days a week. This does not allow her sufficient time to monitor either the support for SEN children in class, or the work of the special needs assistants. She manages and leads the work of other staff very well indeed. The code of practice for SEN is closely followed and already plans are in place to manage the review of the code of practice due next year. Records are meticulous and staff are regularly informed of the changing needs of some children. She works with teachers to review their IEPs and trains special needs assistants effectively.
- 83 Despite changes in staffing and the recent secondment of the headteacher to manage another school, there are sufficient numbers of qualified staff to deliver the requirements of the National Curriculum. Staff are adequately qualified and good subject knowledge is evident in, for example, the under-fives, mathematics, art, music, PE and RE.
- 84 All teaching and non-teaching staff work hard as a team and are committed to the school. The induction of newly qualified staff and the capacity to train new teachers are limited. Newly qualified staff are inappropriately deployed within Year 3, a class with a small minority of less well behaved boys, and Year 6, a key testing year. The former is a special issue.
- 85 The deployment of learning support assistants and SEN staff is well managed and they make a strong contribution to the welfare and education of the children in their care. The school caretaker, lunchtime supervisory staff, the catering team and cleaners all make a very good contribution to the life of the school.
- 86 The accommodation is mainly good for teaching the National Curriculum. Provision for children under five is good and includes attractive outdoor areas with murals and wooden sculptures. Classrooms are spacious and very good use is made of the playgrounds, gardens, playing field and environmental areas surrounding the school. Although there is sufficient space overall, the library is not well developed or laid out. Inclusion within it of the school IT centre, together with its use for small-group teaching, often of the less able, means that it is difficult for it to function effectively as a centre for research-based learning. The school is clean and well maintained.

- 87 Resources for learning are satisfactory in PE, music and art but are unsatisfactory in most areas including history, geography and design and technology. There is over reliance on staff providing resources for their day-to-day teaching. There are too few computers available, at present, and this has an adverse effect on standards in IT. There are too few books and other types of texts in the library to challenge the higher attainers, encourage boys to read widely or to support cultural development. The quality of display around the school and in most classrooms is excellent.
- 88 Presently, the school provides satisfactory value for money. This is a similar judgement to that made at the time of the last inspection.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to improve further, the governors, headteacher and all staff should work together to:

- Raise standards of the highest-attaining children by:
  - improving teacher understanding and expectations of the needs of these children
  - using day-to-day assessment more appropriately to ensure that teaching takes greater account of their needs
  - applying the strategies of the agreed able child policy, and in particular those related to developing higher-order reading and thinking skills and opportunities for working independently
  - monitoring and evaluating practice and performance in a rigorous and systematic manner. (*paragraphs 1, 6, 18, 29, 32, 33, 34, 36, 38, 46, 59, 89, 92, 94, 114, 118, 121, 131, 132, 133, 142, 154, 161*)
- Improve the attainment of boys in English by:
  - more careful analysis of test and assessment data to identify areas of weakness
  - refinement of planning and practice to ensure that all children's needs are met
  - the provision of targeted support for specific children and groups of children
  - thorough rigorous and systematic monitoring and evaluation of practice and performance. (*paragraphs 3, 12, 13, 58, 106, 108, 110, 114, 116, 117, 122*)
- Raise standards in information technology (IT) through:
  - developing a curriculum which meets in full the statutory requirements
  - improving both hardware and software available to deliver the curriculum
  - training teachers in the full application of the National Curriculum Programme of Study
  - providing opportunities for all children to use existing, and new IT skills within a range of subject areas
  - monitoring and evaluating practice and performance in a rigorous and systematic manner. (*paragraphs 9, 36, 37, 41, 46, 76, 119, 133, 164, 165, 167*)
- Improve the quality of strategic planning by:
  - working together to develop a longer-term plan for school improvement that targets a small number of agreed key priorities.
  - highlighting specific monitoring and evaluation roles of senior management and governors in support of improvement.
  - driving the developmental work of curriculum managers in a targeted and systematic way.
  - outlining clear criteria for measuring improvement. (*paragraphs 20, 38, 75, 77, 78, 79*)

In addition, the following less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- A review of curriculum provision in respect of the balance between subjects and the allocation of time during the teaching day. (*paragraphs 13, 42, 44, 116, 120, 168*)
- Ensure that the statutory order for design and technology is fully delivered. (*paragraphs 10, 17, 44, 148, 149*)
- Improvement in the overall quality and range of teaching resources, including those in the library area. (*paragraphs 35, 56, 80, 87, 98, 116, 123, 143, 157, 163, 166*)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	47
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and children	21

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	19	30	40	9	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

### Information about the school's children

Children on the school's roll	Y R – Y 6
Number of children on the school's roll (FTE for part-time children)	219
Number of full-time children eligible for free school meals	7

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Y R – Y 6
Number of children with statements of special educational needs	4
Number of children on the school's special educational needs register	21

English as an additional language	No of children
Number of children with English as an additional language	3

Children mobility in the last school year	No of children
Children who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	26
Children who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	10

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.4
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.6
National comparative data	0.5

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered children in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	22	13	35

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of children at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17	17	20
	Girls	13	13	13
	Total	30	30	33
Percentage of children at NC level 2 or above	School	86 (83)	86 (93)	94 (83)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of children at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17	21	21
	Girls	13	13	13
	Total	30	34	34
Percentage of children at NC level 2 or above	School	86 (93)	97 (90)	97 (90)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered children in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	15	16	31

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of children at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	12	13
	Girls	15	12	15
	Total	25	24	28
Percentage of children at NC level 4 or above	School	81 (90)	77 (81)	90 (88)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of children at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	12	10
	Girls	12	13	13
	Total	22	25	23
Percentage of children at NC level 4 or above	School	71 (94)	81 (97)	74 (100)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (72)

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

### **Ethnic background of children**

	No of children
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	0
Any other minority ethnic group	0

*This table refers to children of compulsory school age only.*

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

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

### **Teachers and classes**

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: Y R – Y 6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9
Number of children per qualified teacher	26
Average class size	31

#### **Education support staff: Y R – Y 6**

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	138

### **Financial information**

Financial year	1998/1999
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	£
Total income	396218
Total expenditure	380320
Expenditure per pupil	1737
Balance brought forward from previous year	20036
Balance carried forward to next year	35934

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	174
Number of questionnaires returned	90

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	67	26	6	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	53	42	4	1	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	51	47	1	1	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	26	55	17	2	0
The teaching is good.	53	43	1	1	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	44	40	13	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	74	18	7	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	72	25	2	1	0
The school works closely with parents.	53	38	6	3	0
The school is well led and managed.	69	28	1	2	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	63	31	1	2	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	28	49	14	1	8

### Other issues raised by parents

The findings of this inspection show that in most classes appropriate homework is set on a regular basis, in line with the agreed homework policy. The range of activities for children outside of school hours is good for those in the junior phase, but less diverse for infants. The school is constantly reviewing the range and effectiveness of strategies for ensuring that parents are kept fully informed with regard to how their children are getting on. In response to letters received the team agree that SEN provision in the school is very good. It also agrees with observations that IT provision is weak, and that the needs of the highest-attaining children are not given sufficient attention.

## PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

### AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

- 89 When children enter the school at the start of the reception year, they have well-defined social skills. By the age of five most children exceed the requirements of the Desirable Learning Outcomes. They do particularly well in mathematics, reading, speaking and their knowledge and understanding of the world. They do well in the other areas. The progress that they make during their time in reception is good for all but the highest attainers. Assessment procedures throughout the reception year are consistently well used to inform daily planning and to predict children's attainment at the end of the infants. The class teacher predicts that 81% of the children are working at a standard that will reach national expectations by the end of the infant phase, with 37% exceeding the level.
- 90 Teaching is satisfactory and on occasions very good. On occasions the pace of sessions can become slow, activities can take too long and the children become restless as a result.
- 91 Staff know their children well and have good knowledge about how young children learn. The co-ordinator and learning support assistant work closely together and form a highly effective team who give their children a very good start to school. Good use is made of parent helpers including a 'helping granny'.
- 92 The curriculum is broad, balanced and well documented. Lessons are a good mixture of direct teaching for the whole class and opportunities for children to make choices independently and learn through enquiry and play. At times more adult intervention is needed to direct the play to enable the children to extend their learning and understanding. Groupings are mixed and higher-attaining children are grouped together for special tasks such as literacy. On occasions the teacher does not give some higher-attaining children, sufficient direction and the quality of the work achieved could be better.
- 93 The accommodation for the under-fives is good. All available space is well used both inside and outside. The quality of the classroom display is good and resources are satisfactory. There are good routines at the start and end of the day. Relationships with parents and carers are good as are links with other pre-school providers.
- Personal and social development***
- 94 Children make good progress with their social skills. They reach standards that are good in this area compared to age related expectations. They enjoy school, know routines and are eager to learn. They work well with each other, take turns and share equipment fairly. For example, when two children wanted to play with the puppet theatre, they decided to share the puppets fairly and work together. They work collaboratively in large and small groups. They work independently but some higher-attaining children need firmer direction in order to achieve better levels of work when writing.
- 95 They are keen to help each other. For example, when collecting books from the library for their animal work, two children found books on owls to give to another group. Children are confident and happy. They organise themselves at lunchtime. They know right from wrong and express their views clearly about things that they enjoy. Behaviour is good particularly in collective worship.



### ***Language and literacy***

- 96 Children make good progress and by the age of five the majority of children achieve good standards in relation to age related expectations. Speaking and reading skills are good. The children speak well to adults and use a range of words to express their views. They need to develop better listening skills. Phonic skills are taught and most children, when listening, can articulate key sounds and match their letter names. They enjoy their role-play corners - 'The Bluebell Garden Centre' and 'Mary's Garden' provide good arenas for imaginative play. The dressing up clothes, for use as police and fire officers in the outside play area, provide good opportunities for children to explore words and actions that are appropriate to these roles.
- 97 Children regularly share books with teachers and are developing some reading cues - such as using the picture or breaking down the letter in the word and sounding it out - to access the print. Higher-attaining readers can read previously unseen text accurately. For example in the literacy hour, a letter from 'Mrs Owl' was read, without error, to the whole class by one child.
- 98 The choice of reading scheme books for good readers is not always as challenging as it could be. Library books are regularly shared with adults at home. The children know about books and have good retrieval skills when using the main library. The range of non-fiction books and other types of printed matter need to be improved so children have access to a broad range of texts.
- 99 Most children write their own names and accurately use letters and symbols to communicate meaning. More direct teaching of the writing process will support the higher-attaining children who are keen to write, but often lack confidence in committing themselves to paper for fear of making errors.

### ***Mathematics***

- 100 Children make good progress with their acquisition of knowledge of number and pattern. They reach a very good standard compared to expectation, with many working within level 1 of the National Curriculum Most count in twos to 10 and some higher attainers can count up to 100 using this pattern. These able children are encouraged, through very good teaching, to investigate number patterns and share their findings.
- 101 Good use is made of 'The Bluebell Garden Centre' for reinforcing number skills. Here children, with adult guidance, handle real money and learn to purchase items that are priced in multiples of two. Children can use basic mathematical vocabulary and enjoy rhymes and songs that include counting activities.

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

- 102 Children make very good progress in this aspect and achieve beyond the expected standard by the age of five. They are aware of their own environment and use animal studies to learn about creatures that live in the school grounds and surrounding area. They enjoy investigating books to discover information about owls, foxes and badgers. One child confidently related that bats 'are flying mammals'. They have a good knowledge of transport and through the use of computers have created a range of pictures. They have learnt about family trees and speak about different family structures. They are intrigued by the growing beans and articulate the conditions for good growth. Most are able to handle and use a programmable toy and have good technical understanding of instructions. Most have a good understanding of the local area and are aware, from personal experiences, of the nature of more distant places.

### ***Physical development***

- 103 By the age of five, standards for most children are above the age-related expectations in physical development. They enjoy PE, are immaculately dressed in their kit and follow instructions carefully. They join in parachute games demonstrating good spatial awareness as well as co-ordination when shaking the parachute for the 'Cat and Mouse' game. They run, jump and hop freely and enjoy their large apparatus. They enjoy playing with the older children in the main playground. They handle crayons, pencils, scissors and glue safely and with dexterity.

### ***Creative development***

- 104 The children reach good standards by the age of five. They have good opportunities to express themselves creatively through art, music, and dance. They enjoy singing rhymes and songs regularly, and responded well to the owl puppet used by the teacher to teach phonics. They participate well in the role-play and enjoy dressing up. Listening skills, however, are not as well developed. The children collaborate in creating two and three-dimensional objects including a large 'papier mâché' owl for their animal topic, and create simple pictures with the aid of a computer draw package to support their study of transport. They use scissors correctly and demonstrate careful cutting and sticking techniques when making their cardboard faces.

## **ENGLISH**

- 105 At the time of the last inspection children achieved standards in line with the national averages in reading and writing, and good levels, above the national average, in speaking and listening, by the age of 7.
- 106 In the 1999 tests the percentage of children reaching level 2 and above was close to the national average, whilst those reaching level 3 was well above it. In writing, the percentages for both level 2 and 3 were close to the national average. In speaking and listening the percentage of children reaching level 2 was above the national average, and those reaching level 3 well above it. In both reading and writing girls do significantly better than boys.
- 107 When compared to schools with similar characteristics, reading results were below average for the percentage of children gaining level 2 and above, and, above it for those reaching level 3. The percentage of children reaching level 2 and above in writing was well below average, and, broadly in line for level 3.
- 108 Trends between 1997 and 1999 indicate that girls consistently outperform boys in both reading and writing by the age of 7, and that the overall performance of boys has declined.
- 109 In the previous inspection it was judged that by the age of 11 children reached average standards, with the higher-attaining children not reaching the standards that they should. In 1999 when compared to all schools, the percentage of children reaching level 4 and above was above the national average, and those reaching level 5 well above it. The results were broadly in line with those of similar schools.
- 110 Trends between 1997 and 1999 indicate a very variable pattern. The percentage of girls reaching level 4 and above has remained fairly constant, whilst the percentage of boys has declined. There is a reversal at level 5 and above, where boys' results have risen slightly and those for girls have declined. Children with SEN make good progress and achieve appropriate standards for their ability.

- 111 Early indications show that the results for 7 and 11-year-olds in 2000 show an improvement to those for 1999.
- 112 Inspection evidence shows that by the ages of 7 and 11 standards in speaking are above average and children make good progress. They speak confidently and take part enthusiastically in class discussions and role-play. They have a range of opportunities to discuss interesting issues. However since the last inspection standards of listening have declined and are just satisfactory. They use technical language accurately, for example, in science when exploring growth cycles and in literacy when naming parts of speech. There are good opportunities to use drama to investigate issues such as the language of advertisements. Older children have good opportunities to take part in theatre workshops on Shakespeare. Younger children use role-play effectively to explore history topic work on the Victorians.
- 113 Listening skills are not as well developed, and have declined in both key stages since the last inspection. Children do not always listen well to their teachers or each other and this can have an adverse effect on the standards of their work. Similarly, they do not always listen to their classmates.
- 114 Inspection evidence indicates that standards for reading in the infant classes, though above average, are on the decline and girls do better than boys. In the juniors standards are above average but higher-attaining children are insufficiently challenged.
- 115 In the infants, children are developing a range of strategies for reading. They mainly rely on phonics and patterns of words to read accurately. The ability to predict, use picture clues and self-correct is less developed. Children often have a limited understanding of the text that they are reading and fail to use expression when they read. Their approach to reading is on occasion mechanical. Children read from a range of scheme books and take home a library book regularly to share at home. Books do not always meet the needs of individual children, and many chosen for the best readers can lack challenge which leads to boredom. Only higher attaining readers in Year 2 have access to the full library range. When in class good modelling of reading techniques takes place with younger infants, particularly when exploring rhymes within poetry. Progress is satisfactory for all but the highest-attaining readers.
- 116 In Key Stage 2 standards are above expectation. Girls achieve higher standards in reading than boys. All but the highest attainers make good progress. Children enjoy reading and do so regularly in class and at home. Many speak confidently about authors they like such as Alan Garner and J K Rowling. Higher-attaining readers are bored with the library choice and often bring their own books in to read. These children can read beyond the text, identify differences in style and comment on the effectiveness of language. In class some teachers model reading skills but opportunities are often missed to develop fluency and expression. Time set aside for 'silent reading' is not effectively used to extend reading skills. Children do not record their choice of books and their reading range is limited. Books do not always challenge or interest the children. Boys, in particular, would welcome a wider choice of reading matter in the library.
- 117 Since the previous inspection standards of writing in Key Stage 1 have declined with boys not doing as well as girls. Standards are now in line with those expected. Most children write using different styles such as poems, post-cards, stories and letters. Higher-attaining writers are beginning to gain an awareness of audience, but some tasks are too short and do not challenge them sufficiently. Most children are developing cursive handwriting, spell

simple words accurately and begin to use simple punctuation. Spelling lists are regularly taken home to be learnt. Able writers show an awareness of audience and use more complex sentences and vocabulary in their work. Simple errors are made by not checking work when completed. Much of the writing within English is through the use of worksheets, which do not meet the need of all children including able writers. These sheets often compound errors rather than teach new skills.

- 118 In Key Stage 2, writing standards are satisfactory, apart from that of the highest-attaining writers. Most children make satisfactory progress. Children write for a range of purposes, and have developed a sense of audience. Punctuation is generally correct and the quality of handwriting is satisfactory. When given the opportunity, most children develop more complex sentences with varied vocabulary. Some promising work, for example on 'Romeo and Juliet' is spoilt through basic spelling errors. Higher-attaining writers produce some excellent extended narrative stories, which show a good range of vocabulary and grammatical structures. Writing frames are used well to support less able writers.
- 119 Opportunities to model writing and intervene at different stages are often missed by teachers because too many short and undemanding tasks are set. Links between reading and writing are not fully explored. Throughout the school too much emphasis is placed on completing undemanding worksheets and, as a consequence, too few opportunities are available for children to use the full range of writing skills. One higher-attaining child was dismissive of the need to complete unchallenging worksheets and equated it to the-filling in of forms. Older children understand the writing process and are keen to do well. There is evidence of drafting but use of IT to support this process is very limited. Most children are using cursive script by the end of the juniors. Presently, there are insufficient opportunities to develop longer pieces of writing in English, or in other areas of the curriculum.
- 120 The teaching of English overall is satisfactory with better work observed with younger infants and older juniors. Lessons are well planned and careful account is made of the requirements of the National Literacy Strategy. Planned additional English lacks the clarity that would ensure that children are receiving a balanced pattern of work. There is no overview of planning for speaking and listening or drama. Time for English is generous. However, it is not always used effectively, and results in children undertaking low level and unchallenging tasks. School test results do not reflect the substantial amount of time given over to English.
- 121 In the best lessons, teachers set clear expectations and share these with the children. Lessons show good pace and timing. Clear instructions are given and good questions asked to extend learning. Work set takes account of the different abilities in the class and the use of support staff is well managed. Resources are well organised and attractive. However, some sessions are hindered by a slow pace and too many short, unchallenging tasks which are supported by low level worksheets. The needs of higher-attaining children are not always taken into account. Opportunities for direct teaching in small ability groups are not fully utilised during the literacy hour. Marking is inconsistent and does not move children's learning forward. Whilst children have reading and writing targets, these are often too vague.
- 122 The English co-ordinator has worked hard to support the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy. Writing has correctly been identified as an area of concern, as is the under-performance of boys. Whilst record keeping and assessment procedures have improved since the last inspection, and include half-termly written assessments, there is limited evidence of this data being used to raise standards in the areas of concern.

Monitoring takes place, but presently lacks rigour and detailed evaluation. Current planning for English constrains children's achievement and does not stretch all children particularly the higher attainers.

- 123 Resources for the National Literacy Strategy are satisfactory but a wider range of texts, reflecting the full range of available reading matter now need to be developed. The contents of class reading areas are limited and books are often in poor condition. There are too few non-fiction books for infants and too few texts for extending very able readers. The library area is not an attractive learning environment. Its current organisation restricts access and does not encourage children to browse. The use of IT is underdeveloped in English.

## **MATHEMATICS**

- 124 The previous inspection judged that standards in mathematics were above the national average at Key Stage 1, and in-line with national averages at Key Stage 2.
- 125 In the 1999 national tests at age 7, the percentage of children reaching the national expectation was above the national average, though at the higher levels children's attainment was below the national average. When comparing standards by average national curriculum points, the school achieves standards which are average in comparison to all schools, and well below average in comparison to similar schools, nationally. This represents a decline in standards since the last inspection. However, the school's own baseline data indicate that this group of children entered the school with below-average mathematical ability, and the very recently published results of the 2000 national tests indicate that standards have improved since 1999.
- 126 When looking at trends in performance between 1996 and 1999 the school's performance is well above the national average, though standards have not reached the exceptional performance of 1997 in recent years. A comparison of the performance of boys in 1998 and 1999, against the performance of children in a small selection of similar LEA schools, shows significant under-performance when compared to the attainment of girls.
- 127 In the 1999 national tests at age 11, the percentage of children reaching the national expectation was above the national average, and the percentage attaining the higher levels well above the national average. When comparing standards by average national curriculum points the school achieves standards which are well above average in comparison to all schools, and which are in-line with standards in similar schools, nationally. This represents an improvement since the last inspection. Results from the 2000 national tests published after the inspection week show a slight improvement on those for 1999.
- 128 When looking at trends in performance between 1996 and 1999 the performance of the school was well above the national average. A comparison of the performance of boys and girls against the performance of children in a small selection of similar LEA schools shows a decline in the relative performance at the national expectation of level 4, and performance by both boys and girls which does not go beyond average levels.
- 129 The evidence of the inspection shows that by the ages of 7 and 11 standards are above the national expectation, and that the majority of children are making satisfactory progress. However, standards for the small but significant number of the highest-attaining children are not high enough and their progress across the school is unsatisfactory. This is principally due to the strict application of the Numeracy Strategy, where the work for children is based upon their chronological age and not their ability level. The progress

made by children on the SEN register is good. The school has set appropriate, but not ambitious targets for 11-year-olds. Class targets are generally too broad.

- 130 Children demonstrate good mathematical ability and can use appropriate vocabulary well. Children in Year 1 show good recall of addition facts to 10 and can add a number sentence of four numerals using rounding up and rounding down. In Year 2 the higher-attaining children can explain the use of brackets to replace the multiplication sign. Many children have a sound knowledge of their tables. In lower junior classes children measure accurately and can explain how they will draw a plan of the school's netball court to scale. In upper juniors children are confident about choosing an appropriate operation to solve a problem and present their findings in a clear way, both orally and in writing. Top juniors add and subtract numbers to two decimal places in a variety of contexts.
- 131 Most children across the school have positive attitudes to mathematics. They particularly enjoy the pace and challenge of mental arithmetic at the beginning of their lessons. Many children work with sustained concentration and show an enjoyment of the opportunity to work co-operatively in group or paired work. They work productively. However, the behaviour of a small minority of boys in the Year 3 class does detract from the enjoyment of other children in the class, and children in lower junior classes show an inability to listen to either their teacher or their peers without constant reminders. In addition, the highest-attaining tend to work at a slow pace because planned tasks often lack appropriate challenge.
- 132 The teaching of mathematics is never less than satisfactory, and it is sometimes good and very good. The teaching observed in support of children with SEN, by the SENCO was excellent. Where teaching is best, teachers have good subject knowledge and use this knowledge to encourage children to use accurate technical vocabulary. Planning for lessons is thorough and activities are designed to meet the needs of the wide ability range in all classes. Activities build upon children's previous knowledge and understanding. Discussion between teachers and children, and the monitoring of progress are set against the intended learning focus of the lesson, and misconceptions by children are sensitively dealt with. Relationships are good and the management of children is a strength, including the management of the boys in Year 3. There are two significant weaknesses to all the teaching observed. The needs of the highest-attaining and gifted children are not being met because the strict application of the Numeracy Strategy, as published, caps the level of attainment that these children can reach. In the case of these children the school is not applying the strategies of its own able child policy in giving children opportunity to develop higher-order thinking skills or to identify their own challenges and work at their own pace. The second weakness is in the area of marking. The sample of children's past and present work, and the scrutiny of books in lessons show that whilst teachers use marking to correct and celebrate achievement, marking is not used to help children understand what they need to do to improve or make progress.
- 133 The subject is well led and the subject manager provides good levels of support and guidance to her colleagues. The school has successfully addressed the weaknesses of the curriculum seen at the last inspection. Investigative and problem-solving work is now better developed. The needs of the higher attaining, but not highest-attaining, are catered for. The current weakness of the curriculum is in the lack of planned opportunity for children to apply their mathematical knowledge in a range of other subjects, or to use IT in support of their learning in mathematics. Monitoring by the subject manager is having a positive effect on raising standards of children's attainment and of teaching. She is aware of the need to adjust the Numeracy Strategy so as to meet the needs of all children. The

subject is satisfactorily resourced, though mathematical display to support children's knowledge is inadequate. The practical resources are well used.

## SCIENCE

- 134 At the time of the last inspection attainment in Key Stage 1 in this subject was deemed good. However, in Key Stage 2 it was in line with the national average.
- 135 Teacher assessments of 7 year old children in 1999 indicate that the percentage of children reaching level 2 and above was well above the national average, as was the percentage reaching level 3. When compared to similar schools across the country, the number of children reaching level 2 and above was broadly average, whilst those reaching the higher levels was above average, with boys doing slightly better than girls at the higher levels. Standards have remained fairly constant over the past three years.
- 136 Test results for 11 year olds in 1999 show that the percentage of children reaching level 4 and above was higher than the national average, as was the percentage reaching level 5 and above. When compared to similar schools these results were broadly average. At the higher levels boys do significantly better than girls. Over the past three years the number of children obtaining level 4 and above has remained fairly constant. The number of boys achieving level 5 and above has risen significantly. Conversely, the number of girls reaching these levels has fallen. This issue has not been effectively addressed by the school.
- 137 Results for 7 and 11-year olds for 2000 published at and around the time of the inspection show an overall improvement from 1999.
- 138 Progress is at least satisfactory and often good across Key Stage 1, as results at the age of 7 indicate. However, progress across Key Stage 2 although satisfactory, is more variable. Work sampling indicates that children make more appropriate progress within the upper juniors. Children with SEN make satisfactory and often good progress across both key stages. By the age of 7, children can for example: identify and name using appropriate vocabulary, parts of flowers, and are aware of growth requirements; describe simple properties of materials and sort them according to these; name items in the home that require electricity to function, and can name different light sources; and describe how the ingredients of bread are changed when heated.
- 139 Lower juniors are aware of the different types of teeth and the jobs they do. They understand the function of organs such as the heart and the differences between natural and artificial light sources. They discover through experimentation how broad beans develop from seeds and how light changes as it passes through water. In Years 5 and 6 children show a good understanding of the structure of flowers. They are aware of how plants adapt to their habitat and how they disperse their seeds. The oldest children understand the nature of microbes, are aware of the importance of handling food items with care and, through experimentation understand how foodstuffs can be preserved.
- 140 The children's responses to science are positive. They are generally well motivated and conscientious in carrying out their work. They are keen and interested in the subject and sustain concentration well, especially during work of a more practical nature. They support each other well in co-operative situations, for example, when preparing an experiment to see how food can be preserved. The children enjoy discussing their ideas, such as in the creation of food care posters, and value each other's points of view. When asked to do so, they speak confidently about the tasks that they are undertaking. Occasionally, in

whole-class groups they have to be encouraged to listen more carefully to each other. Social skills and personal development are enhanced when they are given the opportunity to plan and work in small groups and to become more independent.

- 141 The quality of teaching varies across the school. Most is satisfactory or better. Teachers have sound subject knowledge and expertise. Lessons are planned in great detail with clear learning objectives that are shared with the children. Good exposition ensures that children are clear about the tasks set. Questioning is good, especially when it allows children to develop their responses. Staff use scientific vocabulary well and, where applicable give clear explanations of what the term means. Within the practical session in Year 6 related to preserving food appropriate practical techniques were taught to the children. Plenary sessions are well used to reinforce new learning. Where appropriate good interactive displays have been developed to support learning, for example, for those children in Year 5 investigating the structure of plants, methods of adaption to habitat and seed dispersal.
- 142 There are weaknesses in teaching when teachers fail to plan activities that build significantly enough on previous skills, knowledge and understanding. Day-to-day assessment is not used effectively to create activities which meet the needs of the children, especially the highest-attaining and an extensive diet of work sheets inhibits the opportunity for more independent recording of findings.
- 143 Since the last inspection, a detailed whole-school scheme of work for science has been put in place. In conjunction with this, sound planning and guidance related to experimental and investigative science have been developed, and this ensures better progression in this facet of science for each year group. Planning indicates that science is now more balanced than at the time of the last inspection. Work sampling indicates that there is in practice still a slight bias towards Life Processes and Living Things. The co-ordinator is not given insufficient time to rigorously monitor teaching and learning, and to support colleagues in their classrooms. It is also important that subject progression is carefully reviewed to ensure that work undertaken in one year is not repeated the same way in another. Presently, there is no work sample bank in place that could be used not only to help staff to extend their practice, but also as a school standards portfolio, especially for the higher levels. Resources for supporting science teaching, although centrally stored, are barely satisfactory in quality and quantity presently.

## **ART**

- 144 Children throughout the school attain standards in art that are above national expectations. In Key Stage 1, they are introduced to a variety of media and by Year 2, are confident and capable in painting, printing, paper and paste and collage. Year 1 children, for example, mix colours skilfully and purposefully to create interesting and exciting paintings inspired by Kandinsky's 'Concentric Rings.' They first practise, then evaluate their efforts before deciding on the composition of their finished painting. They use accurate technical vocabulary, such as tone, shade and texture. Year 4 produced beautifully executed mosaics, using tile and plaster. They were carefully designed and meticulously completed, reflecting a knowledge of Roman history as well as artistic technique. They also painted landscapes in a pointilliste style, revealing patience, perseverance and controlled brush skills. Throughout the school, there is art of high quality on display, expertly presented to its best advantage. Many pieces, such as the RE display in the hall and the 'Joseph' collage, were completed with the collaboration of different year groups. There is good progress in art skills through the school, although in



drawing this is not as clearly evident as in painting, collage, printing and three-dimensional work.

- 145 In the limited number of lessons seen, the teaching was good and this is supported by evidence from work sampling and viewing display around the school. Lessons are well planned and have clear objectives and there is a high profile given to the teaching of technical skills. Expertise is good and lessons begin with teachers explaining, demonstrating and instructing. This works well. Interventions to support individual children by teachers, special needs assistants and volunteer helpers are timely and supportive for children of all abilities. Adult helpers are knowledgeable and well briefed. Opportunities to encourage children's awe and wonder of the world are sometimes missed in lessons and children have too few opportunities to make their own decisions about their work, such as choosing paper and brush size. As a result, artwork is, at times, too teacher-directed and impersonal.
- 146 Children have a very positive attitude to art lessons and enjoy their work. From the youngest to the oldest, they maintain good levels of concentration and perseverance. All share materials and co-operate well. They take a pride in the finished products.
- 147 The use of sketchbooks as a means of exploring ideas, developing visual literacy and as a resource for future artwork is in place, but is not fully understood by all teachers, resulting in an inconsistency in quality. The subject is very well managed by a capable and enthusiastic co-ordinator, who has created an effective curriculum to ensure continuity and progression for children as they move through the school. This represents an improvement since the last inspection. The curriculum is enhanced by visiting artists and craftspeople, such as a woodcarver, patchwork-quilt maker and painter.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

- 148 No design and technology (DT) lessons were seen during the inspection week. Evidence from discussions with children and from work sampling suggests, that by the age of 11, standards are below what might be expected nationally. This represents a decline since the last inspection. Children in Key Stage 1 classes demonstrate some of the techniques involved, such as cutting, gluing and measuring. In Key Stage 2 children are able to describe the process of designing, making, evaluating and re-modelling and have some experience of these. However, the limited technical vocabulary and standard of finished work by the upper juniors suggest that their experiences have been too limited to afford them sufficient progress in this subject area.
- 149 There is no member of staff with responsibility for DT and teachers have subsumed planning for this subject within art planning. Resources for the subject are not satisfactory.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

- 150 During the period of the inspection, only one geography session was observed. Judgements are based on this together with findings from the review of children's written work, discussions with the new subject leader and children, and a scrutiny of subject documentation.
- 151 As at the time of the last inspection standards of attainment are in line with those expected by the ages of 7 and 11. Although variable, most children make satisfactory progress through their time in the school. A good general knowledge, and a wide range of personal

interactions with places, both locally, nationally and on a global scale, support the development of subject knowledge and understanding, for many children.

- 152 In the infants, children recognise and describe features in the immediate local area. They are aware of how people can affect the environment and are able, through their problem solving, to put forward ways of sustaining the school car park environment. The use of journeys made by Barnaby Bear and Katie Morag stories helps them to develop knowledge and understanding of more distant places. Work undertaken on Chembakolli, an Indian village, ensures that children develop knowledge and understanding, if very limited, of a contrasting locality. When given the opportunity, children are able to use and create maps well.
- 153 Younger junior children recognise and describe the way in which land is used in and around Silchester, and how the settlement is linked to other places. Year 5 children have a sound understanding of changes taking place in Basingstoke town centre, and the impact of these changes. Using aerial photographs most can recognise and describe simple land use patterns either in that town, or the Silchester area. The oldest juniors are aware of river features and some of the processes that help to form them.
- 154 Teaching in the one Year 5 lesson observed was of a good standard. It was well planned, resourced and had appropriate learning objectives shared fully with the children. If the children had been shown how to generalise land use prior to creating their maps, the lesson would have sustained its initial good pace and high level of challenge throughout. Opportunities for using IT were successfully incorporated into the planning. Work sampling shows that although variable, most teaching is satisfactory or better. It is best where children are involved in enquiry, investigation, problem solving and decision making. Good use is made, where appropriate, of local experts, for example within the Basingstoke study. Little opportunity for fieldwork beyond the immediate local area is built into lesson planning, and teaching is less secure where activities lack challenge and fail to meet the needs of differing abilities, especially the highest-attaining.
- 155 Within the lesson observed children have a positive attitude towards the subject, working well both individually, in pairs and when required as a whole class. They are confident to discuss fully the topic they are undertaking, and those working more independently in the computer area do so in a very mature fashion.
- 156 At the time of the last inspection, no overall plan was in place for the subject. This is no longer the case. The school has used guidance produced at a national level to help to create a whole-school curriculum map. Although, there are still some weaknesses in subject progression, it provides a valuable tool for moving the subject forward. It is now important that the new co-ordinator is given sufficient time to continue subject development, review and refine all levels of planning fully, create effective guidelines for staff and begin to monitor the effectiveness of classroom practice and outcomes.
- 157 Resources produced by the class teacher to support the study of Basingstoke are excellent. However, across the school the quality and range of resources available to meet the needs of the planned curriculum are unsatisfactory.

## **HISTORY**

- 158 By the ages of 7 and 11 standards meet the national expectation. By the age of 7 infant children have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of famous men and women such as Florence Nightingale and Guy Fawkes. They are able to recognise how people

acted in the past. For example in their experience of a Victorian school day in Year 1 some children worked with chalk on a slate, and all children were expected to address the teacher in the style of the period.

- 159 By age 11, children have a sound knowledge and understanding of the history they have studied, and the highest-attaining children in Year 6 can make comparisons between the architecture of different cultures such as Roman, Greek and the Indus Valley Civilisation. Children in Year 4 can identify why the Romans built straight roads and can use a variety of photographic evidence to support their views. Children in Year 3 can recount key facts about the Viking invasion of this country.
- 160 Children have a very positive attitude to the subject. They are well behaved and can sustain good concentration levels, especially when, as in the Year 4 work on Romans they have suitable and plentiful resources to work from. Children work well individually and co-operatively in groups. In both key stages, the finished portfolio of work for each study unit lacks depth in the sample of children's past and present works.
- 161 Overall, the teaching is satisfactory, though it ranges from very good to unsatisfactory. Teachers have sound, and sometimes good subject knowledge. In the best teaching, clear expositions at the start of lessons use good open-ended questions to remind children about what they already know and understand. The structure of lessons and the planned activities then enable children to build on this introduction and improve their knowledge and understanding. The focus of the lesson is clearly described. There is good management of children and good monitoring of the progress children are making. In the less successful teaching the needs of the higher-attaining children are not met. For example, in the study of the Indus Valley Civilisation the school's limited resources mean that children are unable to evaluate different sources of information, or select and organise information to produce structured and organised work of their own. Very effective use is made of displays, which are a strong and very attractive feature of some classrooms and shared areas.
- 162 The school has recently adopted the national guidance as a scheme of work. It has begun the process of revising their current overview of when history topics will be taught to match this guidance, and to match the individual strengths of teachers. Whilst this is an improvement since the last inspection, as yet guidance to staff does not indicate which key elements and aspects are the key focus for each unit of study. As a consequence, teachers are attempting to cover the full range in each history unit, and this adversely affects the development of key historical skills for all children. Whilst there is evidence of some cross-curricular links, as with geography in the study of Roman roads, and in the use of extended writing opportunities in the Year 3 study of Vikings and the Year 5 study of Britain since 1945, planned opportunities to develop literacy, numeracy and IT skills are inadequate. The subject is contributing to children's spiritual development through activities such as the study of a Victorian school day within Year 1.
- 163 Resources for the subject are variable. In established topics such as the Victorians resources are good. In others like the study of the Indus Valley Civilisation they are inadequate and impact negatively on children acting as historians. A good range of visits and visitors support the curriculum. The subject manager, who also has responsibility for English, has a clear view of developments necessary in the subject. There is a need for the school to target her work in a systematic and structured way if her ideas are to become embedded in practice.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

- 164 The school fails to meet the statutory requirements for IT and standards are poor. This represents a significant decline in standards since the last inspection, where the use of computers was seen as part of everyday learning for children.
- 165 The school has recently adopted national guidance as a scheme of work. The school's own overview of opportunities to teach the skills of IT is at an early stage of development. As in the previous inspection opportunities for children to experience control technology are not sufficiently built into the programme. Whilst several subjects have identified opportunities for children to apply their IT skills these planned opportunities are not being delivered in practice.
- 166 Current provision of hardware and software is insufficient to deliver the National Curriculum. Not all classes have a computer. A small IT suite, situated in the library has two personal computers, one linked to the Internet and two older machines. During the inspection, seven new personal computers were delivered to the school. These computers will replace computers in the classrooms, most of which are at the end of their useful life, or supply a computer in the two classrooms where there is no computer currently.
- 167 A scrutiny of children's past and present work across both key stages provides only one example of the application or use of IT. Of the work on display there is a single example of the application of data handling in the science work of a Year 2 class. The history of use of the Internet during the week of the inspection shows that the Year 5 class has been sending e-mail messages to America. Year 1 children were observed typing a neat copy of previously drafted written work, and Year 4 children were observed researching a modelling program to find information about the construction of Roman roads. Year 5 children reviewed changes in central Basingstoke from stored photographs. No other use of computers by children was observed during the inspection.
- 168 It is not possible to comment on the quality of teaching in IT as the only observed example was a learning support assistant providing good support to a group of Year 3 boys in their SEN work. The teachers are not delivering the agreed time for the teaching of IT skills, and too often the computers in classes are switched on but not in use. On many occasions during the week they simply displayed the menu available. The lack of regular and sustained access to computers means that children have insufficient time to practise and refine their computer skills, or apply learnt skills in other subject areas. This has an adverse effect on children's progress and the standards they achieve.
- 169 There is no subject manager for IT, though a newly qualified teacher has taken the lead in the subject since January. She has worked hard to identify the needs of the subject and is working to a sensible action plan, and liaising with other local schools. An audit of resources has been accompanied by some initial guidance on the potential use of the school's software. The introduction of a child-tracking sheet has the potential to be used by teachers to identify a progression in computer skills to be taught to children. She has a clear view of what needs to be done though as this involves improvements to provision, the training of staff and delivering an appropriate curriculum it is important that a structured and systematic approach is taken to any future developmental work.

## **MUSIC**

- 170 At the ages of 7 and 11, children's attainment in music is well above national expectations. They make good progress throughout the school, and at times it is very good. The very

high standards reported in the last inspection have been maintained.

- 171 Infant children sing tunefully in two parts and learn new songs quickly, recognising and following a series of signals to change tempo and pitch in their singing. They discuss their own music, and that of other composers, using correct musical vocabulary. They are able to appraise the work of composers and to evaluate the quality of their own singing, such as the Year 1 children learning a Victorian maid's song. Older children have further developed singing technique and sing a four-part, Roman marching song with accuracy and skill. They alter dynamic, tempo and rhythm, following informal and formal notation. Year 4 children worked in threes and fours, each group refining a rondo which they had begun to compose the previous lesson. They were able to do so within strict musical parameters set by the teacher, and to discuss their work confidently with sophisticated musical vocabulary. Whole-school singing in Collective Worship is of a high standard. Almost all children do well in music, including those with SEN and the highest-attaining and talented musicians.
- 172 Although only a small number of lessons were seen during the week, it is clear from samples of work on audio tape, and from the standards achieved by the children that overall, the standard of teaching in music is very good. There are some teachers who are knowledgeable musicians and there is some specialist teaching within the school. Expectations of both standards and behaviour are high and lessons are well structured. They follow a well-written and coherent whole-school plan. The standards of teaching in music have remained high since the last inspection and the teaching of percussion skills has improved.
- 173 Most children enjoy music and are enthusiastic in lessons. They co-operate well and work collaboratively to good effect. In some infant classes, they are not as attentive to each other as they should be, and in these lessons, progress is slower.
- 174 The curriculum is very varied and children are given many different opportunities to sing, to listen to and to make music. The curriculum is enhanced by peripatetic specialist teaching, a very well-attended school choir and a school band. These provide further opportunities for children, involving them in community and local events. They also have close links with other musicians who visit, such as members of the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra.
- 175 The skilful and inspirational subject manager and other members of staff ensure that music remains a strong feature of the school.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

- 176 No teaching was observed in Years 5 and 6. The standards achieved by the age of 7 exceed the national expectation, as do the standards achieved by lower junior-aged children. This represents an improvement from the previous inspection, where standards were judged to be in line with the national expectation. In infant classes, children can organise themselves well and have well-developed throwing skills. They are well co-ordinated in their running and show enjoyment in performing to the expectation of the teacher. In lower junior classes children understand the effect of exercise on their heart beat and demonstrate good skill in the throwing and catching of a ball in cricket related skills, and in the technique of running and passing a baton in athletics. Lower junior children are sensible in their appraisal of the performance of others and how performance might be improved. All children have a good understanding of how to participate safely in lessons, and their concern for and understanding of the children with physical disability,

and how they must adjust what they are doing, are exemplary. This is helping children in their social development.

- 177 Children are enthusiastic about PE. The vast majority are well behaved and contribute effectively to lessons. The exception is a small minority of boys in Year 3, who, though keen, show a lack of ability to concentrate and follow clear instructions. Children co-operate well when practising skills such as changing the relay baton. On a number of occasions some children showed good initiative when equipment needed to be collected, and put away at the end of the session.
- 178 There is detailed planning of the curriculum, good guidance for staff and the subject is well led by the subject manager. Her monitoring work is having a positive effect on raising standards of children's attainment and teaching. The time allocated to PE has decreased since the last inspection, and this is a concern of parents. The school is, however, delivering an appropriate curriculum in the time available.
- 179 Teaching in PE is consistently good, with some very good teaching. This represents an improvement since the last inspection. Lessons are planned to a good structure where children warm up at the beginning and warm down at the end, and where the main activity is undertaken to clear objectives for the lesson. The warm-up sessions are usually vigorous and prepare children for the activities to come. Teachers have high expectations and use child and teacher demonstration to help children to understand and develop the necessary skills. In the very best teaching children are provided with opportunity to evaluate their own and each other's performance, and to highlight good points and where improvements can be made. Time is then given for children to improve their performance. Of particular merit are the caring guidance and support given by learning assistants to the small number of children with physical conditions. The management of children's behaviour is good with the use of clear instructions to direct and guide children in what they have to do. The poor behaviour of a small minority of Year 3 boys is handled sensitively, though time taken to address their needs does impact negatively on the pace of the lesson.
- 180 Resources for PE are good overall. The excellent grounds and playing field provide good opportunities for athletics and team sports, and the hall is well suited to teach dance and gymnastics. Resources have been re-organised and there is a good supply of basic apparatus for games and an adequate range of large apparatus for gymnastics. A good range of extra-curricular activities enhances the PE curriculum where teachers contribute willingly to provide netball, football, rounders and athletics. There are also opportunities for children to participate in team games against other local schools, where children from Silchester consistently perform well.