

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **OAKLEY INFANT SCHOOL**

Oakley, Basingstoke

LEA area: Hampshire

Unique reference number: 116047

Headteacher: Mrs Wendy Tully

Reporting inspector: Mrs Stephanie Lacey  
3764

Dates of inspection: 5 - 11 May 2000

Inspection number: 189396

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Community
School category:	Infant school
Age range of pupils:	4 - 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Oakley Lane Oakley Basingstoke Hampshire
Postcode:	RG23 7JZ
Telephone number:	01256 780445
Fax number:	01256 781687
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Jean Elkin
Date of previous inspection:	30 September 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Stephanie Lacey	Registered inspector	Under fives, English, art, history, geography and religious education.	The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
Derek Bowers	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Fred Riches	Team inspector	Mathematics, science, information technology, design and technology, music and physical education Special educational needs Equal opportunities	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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The Registrar  
Inspection Quality Division  
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## REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>	<b>10</b>
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
<b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>27</b>

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Oakley Infant School is a small village school with 187 boys and girls on roll. At the moment there are more boys than girls. All pupils have their cultural roots in Europe. When they begin in the reception classes in the September after their fourth birthdays, baseline assessment shows that children's understanding, knowledge and skills are wide ranging, but above the average for Hampshire schools. Thirty-two per cent of the pupils are on the school's register of special educational need, which is above average. Three of these pupils have a statement of special educational need. Many parents from outside the village choose to send their children to Oakley.

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

Oakley is a very good school where pupils do well. Standards are high, especially in English, mathematics and science. Pupils achieve well because the teaching is good. The school is led and managed very well and as a result the school makes very good provision for the pupils' needs. It provides very good value for money.

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

- Standards are high in English, mathematics and science.
- Teaching is good and ensures that pupils achieve well.
- The curriculum is interesting and stimulating and enriched by excellent community links.
- Excellent provision for pupils' social development helps them to build very good relationships and behave very well. This is complemented by very good provision for their spiritual, moral and cultural development.
- The school makes excellent provision for pupils' welfare, including very good provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- There is a very good partnership with parents.
- The headteacher, very well supported by an extremely effective team of staff and governors, gives an excellent steer to the work of the school.

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

- There are no significant areas for development in this school. Some minor areas for review include the development of pupils' numeracy skills across the curriculum, the amount of time spent on design and technology, length of time pupils spend listening to their teachers, planning for the development of historical skills and setting targets for individual pupils.

**Oakley is a school with many strengths and no significant areas for development. However, staff are continually striving to improve both provision and standards even further.**

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

The school has made very good progress since its last inspection in September 1996. It has successfully addressed the areas for development outlined at that time. These were related to improving the performance of higher attaining pupils, standards in information technology, the quality of the teaching, long term curricular planning, the curriculum for children under five and the roles of curriculum co-ordinators and the senior management team. It is a measure of the commitment and hard work of the staff and governor team that most of these former weaknesses are now strengths of the school. The quality of teaching is much improved, for example, and this has contributed to the rise in standards.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 7 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
reading	A	B	A	C
writing	A	B	B	C
mathematics	A	B	B	C

**Key**

very high                    A\*

well above average      A

above average            B

average                     C

below average            D

well below average      E

very low                    E\*

*(Similar schools to Oakley are those where less than 8 per cent of the pupils are entitled to free school meals)*

This table shows that in 1999 pupils' performance in national tests was above average in writing and mathematics and well above average in reading. Standards have been high at Oakley since the last inspection, with particularly high performance in 1997. In comparison to schools similar to Oakley, pupils' attainment matched that of their peers. This does not fully reflect the good achievements of pupils at Oakley. In fact higher attainers did better than their peers in similar schools in reading and mathematics and did particularly well in science. Oakley has more pupils than average on its register of special educational need and overall pupils do very well to reach the current standards. Although a few of the pupils on the register are higher attainers, with significant physical disabilities, many others come to the school from other villages and Basingstoke because of the school's good reputation for work with pupils with learning needs. The school has set challenging yet realistic attainment targets for statutory tests for the next two years, which it is likely to meet.

The inspection found that standards have risen since the last inspection and are continuing to rise in the current year. They are now well above average in reading, mathematics and science and above average in writing. There has been good improvement in standards in information technology since the last inspection and pupils more than meet the requirements of the local agreed syllabus for religious education by the time that they leave the school. Pupils achieve well in other subjects, with standards of art in Year 2 being a particular strength together with pupils' achievements in physical education.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils enjoy school and most work hard and concentrate well.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils behave very well in classrooms, in assembly and at playtimes. There has been an exclusion for bad behaviour in the last twelve months, but this was an isolated and unusual incident.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils get on very well with each other and with the staff. They are keen to take on extra responsibilities.
Attendance	Good and above the national average.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

<b>Teaching of pupils:</b>	<b>aged up to 5 years</b>	<b>aged 5-7 years</b>
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good

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

The quality of teaching is good at Oakley and a significant strength of the school. In the lessons seen 11 percent of the teaching was excellent, 29 per cent was very good, 39 per cent was good and the remaining 21 per cent was satisfactory. The good and very good teaching is spread throughout the school. Most of the excellent teaching was in the reception year. All subjects, including English and mathematics are taught well. This has a positive effect on the quality of pupils' achievements. The quality of teaching has improved considerably since the last inspection.

Teachers have successfully implemented the literacy and numeracy strategies and this has contributed to the rise in standards in reading and mathematics. Several strengths underpin the teaching in the school. These include the very good relationships between staff and pupils, which help pupils to become successful learners. The very good teamwork evidenced in joint planning is also a strength, as is the contribution of the teaching assistants.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good overall. The curriculum is interesting and stimulating. The school makes very good use of the grounds and excellent use of the local community to broaden pupils' experiences. Planning is much improved. Subject focus weeks promote enthusiasm among pupils. Minor weaknesses in the time given to design and technology, the development of historical skills and teaching of numeracy across the curriculum.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Well-trained teachers and assistants support pupils very effectively. Pupils' learning, emotional and physical needs are assessed very well and appropriate work is planned for them.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good overall with excellent provision for pupils' social development. Circle time offers good opportunities to share ideas and respect those of others. The monthly generation lunch helps pupils to know and respect older citizens. The school has improved the range of study about other cultures since the last inspection.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very effectively. Every care is taken to ensure that pupils are safe and well cared for. Their progress in academic and personal areas is assessed and monitored very well. There is a very effective partnership with parents, which contributes to the good progress that pupils make.



## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent. A very clear agenda for improvement. A commitment by all staff to improving provision and raising standards. Very good team who are very supportive of each other.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very well. Skilled governors bring their own expertise to bear to help the school move forward further. All statutory requirements are met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. Thorough monitoring procedures means that staff and governors have a clear picture of strengths and areas for improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Excellent. Budget is very carefully planned and every opportunity is taken to gain extra money for the school. The school applies the principles of best value very well. Staff are deployed extremely well. The accommodation and resources are very well used.

Oakley is well staffed by committed and talented teachers and assistants. The administration office is very well run. Lunchtime staff make a very positive contribution to the work of the school. The accommodation is very good and looked after very well by the caretaker and cleaning staff. The grounds are very well developed and very well used. Resources are also very good.

## 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>• The teaching is good.</li> <li>• The school expects children to work hard and do their best.</li> <li>• The school is helping children to become mature and sensible.</li> <li>• Staff are approachable.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> <li>• Children are making good progress.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The range of activities outside lessons, especially the opportunity for ball games on the playground.</li> <li>• A few would like some changes in the amount of homework.</li> </ul>

The inspection unreservedly supports parents' positive views and agrees with those who feel that Oakley is a very good school. Twenty-one per cent of parents indicated on the questionnaire that they did not think that the school provided an interesting range of activities outside lessons. At the meeting held for parents before the inspection, some parents also felt that ball games should be a feature of playtime games. Inspectors looked into this very carefully. They found that the school provides a very wide range of activities outside lessons to enhance the curriculum, most notably special curriculum events, such as the recent music week. Pupils in Year 2 are also able to learn the recorder and attend the choir and country-dance club outside of lessons. Inspectors feel that currently the activities provided for pupils at playtimes are appropriate. They include board games, comics, books and skipping ropes as well as the freedom to play more imaginative games or sit quietly. The playground is not large enough to set aside an area for ball games at the moment, although plans for resurfacing and zoning the playground are in hand. When the weather is dry pupils play on the field and balls are then available. The inspection found that the amount of homework provided is appropriate for the age of the pupils.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1 When children begin school at Oakley, in the September after their fourth birthdays, baseline assessment shows that their skills, understanding and knowledge are wide ranging and above average compared with other Hampshire schools. Children achieve well in the reception classes and by the time they reach their fifth birthdays, most reach the desirable learning outcomes in their personal and social development, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative and physical development. At the time of the inspection all children in the reception classes, including the sixteen who were still four, were working on the early stages of the National Curriculum.

2 Since the last inspection, much higher standards have been achieved and maintained, with particularly good results in 1997. In 1999 pupils' attainment was well above average in reading and above average in mathematics, writing and science. Higher attainers now do well at Oakley with more pupils than average reaching the higher levels, particularly in science and reading. This marks a significant move forward since the last inspection.

3 However, when all pupils' attainment in national tests is compared with similar schools it appears that the attainment of pupils at Oakley only matched that of their peers in similar schools in 1999. This is a slightly confusing picture and masks the good achievements of the pupils. Oakley has more pupils than average on its register of special educational need and in reality pupils do very well to reach the current standards. It is true that a few of the pupils on the register are in fact higher attainers, with significant physical problems, but many others come to the school from other villages and Basingstoke because of the school's good reputation for work in the area of special needs.

4 Although there is a higher proportion of boys than girls on the school's special needs register, there is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls over the past four years except in reading. In this area boys have not done as well as girls in reading tests, with the difference being more than that found nationally. Staff have tried to address this issue by providing a wider range of non-fiction texts to appeal to the male reader. Recent assessments show that this is beginning to have an impact on boys' attainment.

5 The inspection confirmed that standards are high in reading, writing, mathematics and science. This improvement in mathematics since last year is due in part to the successful introduction of the numeracy strategy and a greater emphasis on mental mathematics. Pupils achieve well in the numeracy hour, but have fewer opportunities to develop their numeracy skills in other curricular areas.

6 Standards were high in English before the introduction of the literacy hour and staff chose to adopt the strategy in order to enhance provision still further. Pupils do particularly well in reading and have enjoyed and learnt from the increased emphasis on the development of phonic skills and learning about texts. Standards in writing are good, but the school is working to increase the number of pupils reaching higher levels. There has been an increasing emphasis on the use of imaginative language this year and this has certainly lifted the pupils' use of language. Good links are made with other subjects, especially the humanities, to develop pupils' literacy skills.

7 Standards in science are high. They have improved since the last inspection as a

consequence of better planning, improved teaching and a greater emphasis on environmental work within the school grounds and locality.

8 The school has also made great strides in the teaching of information technology and pupils now achieve well in this area because of the frequent opportunities given to them to practise their skills. Skills in information technology are developed well in work across the curriculum. Standards have risen since the last inspection. Pupils more than meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education by the time that they leave the school and are very interested in learning about and learning from their studies on Christianity and Sikhism, for example. Pupils also achieve well in geography and music throughout the school. They do particularly well in physical education. They achieve high standards in art, particularly in Year 2. Pupils were not studying history or design and technology during the inspection, but their work shows that they do well in history and achieve satisfactory standards in design and technology.

9 Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress in all areas of the curriculum as a result of the early and precise identification of their needs and the very well planned support they receive. Pupils with learning difficulties meet the challenging targets on their individual education plans by working well with their class teacher and assistants. Pupils with statements of educational need due to physical conditions are also making very good progress in all aspects of the curriculum, including physical education, as the school makes every effort to ensure their full and safe participation. Gifted and talented pupils are well catered for and also make good progress because they work on appropriately challenging activities.

10 The school has set challenging targets for pupils' performance in national tests for the next two years, which they are likely to meet. Staff continually review individual pupils' progress and also set targets for them on a short-term basis. This has helped staff to move pupils forward more quickly.

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

11 The good attitudes of pupils to their work and the good standards of behaviour that were reported during the previous inspection have been developed and improved. The very good relationships between pupils and with adults have been maintained and the pupils respond very well to the increased opportunities to take responsibility.

12 Pupils are happy to come to school and enjoy lessons, assemblies and all aspects of school life. The youngest children have settled well into school. They are now very familiar with all school routines and conform to all expected standards of behaviour. They sit very sensibly in assemblies, for example. All children under five and older pupils are clear about the difference between right and wrong.

13 Throughout the school, pupils listen well in discussions and are keen to answer questions. Pupils' attitudes to work develop well in the reception year and by the time they reach Year 2 they are exceptionally good. Sometimes pupils are expected to sit and listen to their teachers for a lengthy period. Occasionally some of the pupils in Year 1 become inattentive during these discussions, but they respond quickly to requests from their teachers to pay attention.

14 The behaviour of pupils is very good in lessons, assemblies and at lunchtimes and playtimes. They collaborate very well when they are working in groups and get on extremely well at lunch and in the outside play areas. They are good-natured and polite

and are very aware of the expectations of good behaviour, which they share with their teachers and parents. They listen well in lessons and in the sharing assemblies to the contributions and achievements of others and respond with warm appreciation. They show a good awareness and acceptance of the class and school rules they help to establish each year. One pupil was temporarily excluded appropriately last year. This was an isolated and unusual incident. There is no evidence that bullying is a problem. Pupils with emotional and behavioural needs are making very good progress in improving their social behaviour and collaborative work by participating in regular collaborative games, organised by assistants at play times.

15 Relationships in the school are a considerable strength. Pupils get on very well with each other and this helps to create a very pleasant, constructive working environment. They take on responsibilities well for a wide range of duties in the classroom and around the school. They frequently take initiatives to hold doors open, move furniture or collect playground games. In physical education lessons they work very effectively and safely in groups to set up and dismantle the large apparatus with the minimum of instruction. Pupils' relationships with all adults are very good throughout the day. Teachers and lunchtime staff frequently participate in friendly discussions and games with the children at playtimes and lunchtimes. Older pupils show great maturity in acting as hosts to the local residents who attend the special generation lunches at the school each month.

16 Attendance is good and is higher than the national average. There are no unauthorised absences and parents rarely take their children out of school for holidays during the term. Pupils almost invariably arrive early for school at the beginning of the day and return to their classrooms quickly after playtimes so that all activities start on time.

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

17 The overall quality of the teaching is good and is a strength of the school. This has a significant positive impact on pupils' learning. In the lessons seen, 11 percent of the teaching was excellent, 29 per cent was very good, 39 per cent was good and the remaining 21 per cent was satisfactory. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. This marks a considerable improvement since the last inspection and reflects the very good attention given to improving teachers' skills. The good quality of the teaching has a very positive impact on pupils' attainment and helps them to achieve well.

18 This good quality teaching is spread throughout the school and is a feature of the work with children under five as well as those in Key Stage 1. It is not associated particularly with any subject areas and all subjects are taught well. Individual teachers have particular strengths, but work together well so that good practice is disseminated effectively.

19 There are common strengths that underpin all the teaching and these contribute well to pupils' learning in most lessons. All staff have established very good relationships with pupils and this helps them to feel secure, known and valued. As a result, pupils have a high self esteem and are confident learners. Teachers have good knowledge of their pupils, and plan work and organise their classes effectively to take account of their particular needs. They ensure that both sexes take a full part in all activities and that they offer boys and girls equal opportunity to contribute in class discussions and participate in additional clubs, such as country dancing and choir, for example.

20 Another significant strength is the very good teamwork. This is particularly evident in the joint planning within year groups. Teachers work together to draw up half-termly and weekly plans and this enables them to discuss in some detail what they hope that pupils will

achieve. Good ideas are shared and staff with particular expertise in a subject area take a lead in the planning. Consequently, pupils of the same age, but in different classes, work on very similar tasks.

21 Another strength is the way in which teaching assistants are deployed to help individuals and small groups. Not only is the assistants' time very well organised, but also their interactions with the pupils are of a high quality and help them to move forward more quickly. In literacy hours, for example, assistants often slip unobtrusively into lessons at the beginning of the group activity time to work very effectively with a small group. In one session with pupils with special educational needs, two assistants gave excellent focussed support to pupils. They were caring and encouraging and the very structured session meant that the pupils made excellent strides forward in the development of their phonic skills. Teachers plan appropriate tasks for pupils with special educational needs. They deploy assistants very well, briefing them clearly on the activities and the teaching and learning points. Assistants give excellent support in classes when working with small groups and by organising and carrying out screening and assessment procedures, which help identify pupils' specific needs. Teachers are also mindful of the needs of gifted and talented pupils and ensure that they work on suitably challenging tasks.

22 Classroom organisation is also good. Resources are well organised, and so pupils settle quickly to work because pencils and books are readily available. Routines, such as clearing up at the end of sessions, are well established and so pupils know what is expected of them. Groups are carefully selected so that pupils work on appropriate tasks with their peers. Displays are attractive and stimulating and help to create an environment conducive to good learning.

23 The teaching of children under five ranged from satisfactory to excellent in the lessons seen and was good overall. A feature of the excellent teaching was the way in which the teacher extended the children's understanding. She did this very skilfully by asking challenging questions and introducing new ideas based on what they already knew.

24 Literacy and numeracy are both taught effectively. Standards have been above or well above average at Oakley for some years, but the school adopted both new strategies in order to improve standards further. This has been a contributory factor to improving provision still further in both mathematics and reading. Teachers have worked hard to refine their skills in planning and teaching within the frameworks of both the literacy and numeracy strategies. Planning is thorough and teachers are clear in their explanations. Good use is made of work in other subjects to develop pupils' literacy skills. In history, for example, pupils in Year 2 practised their letter writing skills when they pretended to be evacuees in their topic on '*When granny was a girl*'. Although there are some numeracy tasks planned in science the development of pupils' skills in number outside of the numeracy hour are less well developed.

25 Science is also well taught. There is a particular emphasis on planning interesting activities that capture pupils' imagination and help them to move forward quickly. The teaching of information technology is much improved and all teachers take care to plan activities using the computer in most subjects. Consequently pupils achieve well because they have regular opportunities to practise their skills.

26 Homework is used well to help pupils to consolidate and practise skills at home. This is particularly the case with reading and spelling. Pupils also undertake investigative work at home and work on the 'Impact' mathematics project. Pupils in Year 2 looked carefully at how their houses were constructed in relation to their topic on materials, for example. A

few parents noted in the questionnaires that they were unhappy with the amount of homework given. The inspection found that the tasks and the amount are appropriate for pupils of this age.

27 There has been an increased emphasis on whole class teaching since the last inspection. This has been introduced well, but teachers are aware of some of the possible disadvantages. One of these is associated with the length of time that pupils spend sitting listening to the teacher. On occasions some pupils become restless at these times, especially when assembly and then the literacy and numeracy hours follow closely together. This slows the pace of their learning. Teachers generally manage pupils well during these sessions, but are conscious that some have shorter concentration spans. Some teachers are particularly adept at maintaining pupils' interest in whole class work. In one excellent lesson at the end of the day, for example, one teacher used the book *'We're going on a bear hunt'* to develop skills in map work, sequencing, reading and listening. She held the children entranced for almost thirty minutes and although the whole time was spent sitting on the carpet the teacher took every opportunity to involve the children both in discussion and movement.

28 Teachers use assessment well to identify areas where pupils need to improve. Books are marked regularly and teachers write helpful comments to encourage and give guidance for subsequent work. Useful checklists are kept of work undertaken. Teachers are beginning to set individual targets for pupils in literacy and numeracy and have plans to develop these further.

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

29 The school provides a stimulating curriculum, which is broad and balanced. Teachers make learning interesting and relevant by linking subjects through topics, where appropriate. The school's curriculum successfully promotes the all-round development of all pupils, including higher attainers and those with special educational needs. The structures ensure that pupils build progressively on previous learning and are prepared well for the next stage in their education. Overall, the school has made very good improvement in its development of schemes of work and its curriculum for children under five. These aspects, which were reported as weaknesses by the last inspection, are now strengths.

30 The school places appropriate emphasis on the teaching of English and mathematics, but ensures that all other subjects are equally carefully planned. It raises the profile of subjects such as religious education and music, enriching the curriculum by organising special focus weeks. These involve visitors, who share their expert knowledge and skills with all pupils, promoting interest and enthusiasm in each subject chosen. Work with visiting artists and musicians has made a significant contribution to the quality of pupils' learning. The school takes full advantage of opportunities to establish strong links with the local community. Links with local businesses have helped the school develop its environment as an educational resource. The wildlife area provided a peaceful haven for pupils sketching and sharing their thoughts and feelings during the inspection week, as the blossom drifted gently onto the surface of the pond. The local cluster of schools provides an effective forum for the sharing and exchange of ideas and the mutual support of other member schools. Annual music and dance events involve pupils from all phases of education in a joint celebration of talents. This offers added enrichment to the curriculum for Year 2 pupils. Teachers also run a regular after-school country-dancing club, choir, and recorder groups, which give further opportunities for pupils to develop particular skills and

interests.

31 A significant strength is the efficient way in which staff have introduced and developed the national literacy and numeracy strategies throughout the school. These initiatives are proving effective in helping to enhance pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, with literacy successfully applied in all subjects across the curriculum. The staff's enthusiastic implementation of both national strategies contributes greatly to the high standards achieved in these subjects.

32 There have been very good improvements to curriculum planning since the previous inspection. Each subject co-ordinator has worked conscientiously to create model yearly and half-termly planning systems for each year group. The school now has supportive schemes of work in place for all subjects, although the history scheme lacks sufficient guidance about the development of historical skills. Common weekly planning frameworks, as in mathematics, offer very positive support to all teachers. Religious education is taught according to the locally agreed syllabus and all statutory requirements are met. Broad time allocations to each subject over the year are mainly appropriate. The school sensibly plans to give concerted focus to a particular subject, such as geography, in one half term, and to another, such as history, in the next. Although the school's planning shows sufficient breadth of work each year in design and technology, the overall time allocation for this subject is too low to achieve satisfactory coverage. Close links with local playgroups and with the neighbouring junior school ensure smooth arrangements for admission at age four and transfer at age seven.

33 The school has also fully addressed the key issue of reviewing the curriculum for children under five. Planning documents detail a carefully staged progression through the six areas of learning for under fives during the first two terms of the school year. Planning then focusses more on the earliest level of the National Curriculum during the summer term of the reception year. This system is working very successfully. Together with the school's thorough screening and assessment systems, curriculum planning for the reception year ensures that the needs of children of different attainment levels are fully met.

34 The school provides equality of access and opportunity for all pupils to learn and make progress. This includes very good individualised planning for pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements of special educational need. Teachers plan carefully matched tasks for pupils with specific learning needs, who also have extra support in small groups both within and away from the classroom. Individual education plans are used by teachers and assistants, who give knowledgeable and caring support for pupils with physical, emotional and learning needs. Gifted and talented pupils are challenged well and work on appropriate tasks.

35 The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall, with social development outstanding. This represents a marked improvement since the previous inspection. The school's arrangements for personal, social and health education are also very good. Teaching is based on a very good scheme of work, which underpins the school's caring and reflective ethos. Suitable provision is made for sex education and education about drugs.

36 The daily act of collective worship complies fully with statutory requirements. Assemblies are extremely well planned and make a major contribution to the promotion of pupils' spiritual awareness. During the inspection week, pupils received a visit in one assembly from the handler and guide dog, whose training they support. In another, they identified with the emotions of temptation, panic, honesty and forgiveness, as they listened

intently to the tale of *'Reginald and the Pobble Cakes'* in an illustrated tale told by a parent. They also participated in a celebration assembly, at which pupils' efforts both in and out of school received recognition. The school also fosters pupils' spiritual development in lessons, as when reception pupils respond to the mood of contrasting pieces of music, and when pupils ponder, observe and share their thoughts around the pond during a lesson on art and speaking and listening. Pupils create class books about *'Our Precious Things'* and *'A Look at the Pond in Spring'*, each pupils writing a reflective comment. A *'Book of Golden Celebrations'* records individual pupils' achievements each week alongside their name in gold lettering. These achievements are celebrated in a weekly assembly, recognising and valuing pupils as individuals and building their self-esteem.

37 The school's golden rules underpin the accepted moral code, which is evident in all aspects of school life. Class rules, discussed at the start of each school year, also help pupils rapidly develop a clear understanding of right and wrong. Teachers and assistants are good role models, working calmly and confidently with pupils and expecting good behaviour. Circle times offer regular, positive opportunities for pupils to reflect, to share their thoughts and learn to respect those of others by listening to them. A class book entitled *'We enjoy saying nice things about each other'* shows how the school promotes positive relationships between pupils through circle time discussions. Comments such as *'He is a good friend in the playground'* and *'she is considerate'* follow the introductory paragraph by one higher attainer, who explains, *'It made certain people feel good about themselves'*.

38 The school offers particularly strong support to pupils with identified emotional and behavioural needs. Assistants work with pupils during break times and lunchtimes, teaching social skills through a series of games and activities. Pupils' social development is excellent. Pupils take turns in routine class responsibilities, such as collecting and delivering registers and taking out playground equipment. Older pupils take on whole community responsibilities, such as feeding the birds in the wildlife area, keeping the library tidy and taking daily temperature readings. A particular highlight of the school's provision is the monthly generation lunch, at which pupils play host to invited senior citizens, chatting over lunch, before playing traditional board games with them.

39 Staff promote pupils' cultural development very successfully in art, music, physical education and religious education. Pupils learn about famous artists and use Van Gogh prints as a stimulus for their own carefully executed paintings. They regularly listen to music from Western and other world cultures in assemblies and music lessons. They participate in traditional country dancing. They learn to respect the symbols of world religions. The school's annual focus weeks offer additional valuable opportunities to develop pupils' awareness and appreciation of their own and other cultures. Staff and pupils dress as characters from traditional tales during 'Book Week'. A local Sikh shared information about his culture and religion during 'RE Week'. An African drummer taught pupils dance and percussion rhythms from his culture during 'Music Week'.

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

40 The school's excellent provision for the pupils' health, safety and welfare has been maintained and developed well since the previous inspection. All of the staff know the children and their families very well. They are very caring and parents find them very approachable. There is close liaison with the local nurseries and playgroups and this complements the substantial pre-school arrangements to ensure a very smooth induction into the reception classes. Parents are visited at home by teaching staff prior to their



children starting school. The school actively and successfully sought additional funds to enable playgroup leaders to work in the reception classes in the first term and this is proving very beneficial in settling the children into their new classes and in sharing professional expertise.

41 The school has established a substantial set of policies supported by detailed procedures covering all essential aspects of support, guidance, health and safety. The guidance to staff and parents is clear and there is effective sharing of information. Attendance is monitored regularly and the school stresses to parents the importance of good attendance. The well thought out behaviour policy underpins the clearly shared views and common approach to pupil management. There is appropriate guidance for dealing with bullying and oppressive behaviour. Teaching staff and lunchtime supervisors are in close contact to ensure good teamwork in pupil care. All members of staff are familiar with the very clear policy and procedures for child protection.

42 The staff and governors work actively within the substantial framework provided by the health and safety policy and support documents, which cover procedures and practices in good detail. The outcomes of health and safety audits and risk analyses and the actions taken are recorded fully in the minutes of the governing body meetings. There are good arrangements to deal with illness and accidents. Details of all accidents are recorded and reported to the governors. Letters are sent home to parents if a child has an injury to the head. All electrical, physical education and fire prevention equipment is tested regularly and the outcomes are recorded fully in the logbooks.

43 The school's procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress were reported as a weakness by the last inspection. They are now a strength of the school. The assessment co-ordinator has worked together with the whole teaching staff to develop an extremely thorough system.

44 Beginning with a baseline assessment shortly after entry to the school, staff monitor all pupils' progress closely, using the information to alert parents to particular gifts or difficulties and planning appropriate additional challenges or necessary interventions. Teaching assistants carry out a further screening test at the end of the reception year under the overall guidance of the co-ordinator. Where areas of possible difficulty are identified, staff use further assessments to define more closely the specific areas needing support. Throughout Key Stage 1, staff use assessment systems which track pupils' progress in English and mathematics against a projected series of targets. In this way, they check every half term that pupils are making the desired progress, exceeding this or falling behind. Again, they deploy assistants or provide extra support themselves as appropriate. Staff are beginning to set group targets for pupils in English, these are pasted into pupils' individual books. They intend to develop the use of these further to set targets for individual pupils. In most other subjects, teachers check at the end of units of work whether pupils have met or exceeded the objectives set and make notes accordingly. In science, they also use a planned series of investigations each year to assess pupils' skills in this aspect of the subject. These procedures are increasing the staff's confidence in the effectiveness of their planning and teaching. The precision with which they are able to plot progress and intervene when necessary is of clear benefit to all teachers and pupils.

45 All staff show a very good understanding of the purposes and uses of assessment and everyone is clear that the ways the new procedures are being used is improving the quality of their teaching. Staff feel more skilled at matching the work to pupils' differing attainment levels because the assessment information they have is more accurate. The marking policy is also reflected in the good practice in the classrooms. Each class teacher knows

her pupils well and is available to speak to parents daily on an informal basis. In this way, the teachers are fully aware of each child's personal and social development.

46 The school makes very good use of the information gathered through its rigorous screening and assessment procedures. These ensure early identification of pupils' learning needs and trigger support for pupils with special educational needs. Staff monitor the progress of all pupils on the school's register of special educational needs and set targets for them to work towards each half term. The careful analysis of the end of Key Stage 1 test results by gender ensures that all teachers keep a close watch on equal opportunities issues during their teaching and assessment. The school gives parents good information on general learning targets in English and mathematics for each year group, helping them participate in the assessment process.

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

47 The very good partnership between the school and parents has been maintained and developed well since the previous inspection. It is a substantial strength of the school and sets a firm basis for ensuring that staff and parents work together in the pupils' best interests. An overwhelming majority of parents feel that the school is helping their children to achieve good standards in all subjects of the curriculum and that pupils of all abilities are making good progress in their time at the school. Almost all parents believe that their children enjoy coming to school, that they behave well and work hard. They feel that teaching is good and that the school is managed well. The school works closely with parents and they are confident about approaching the staff if the need arises. A few parents would like more opportunities for ball games at playtimes. At the moment pupils are allowed to use the field for this purpose at lunchtime, when the grass is dry, but staff and governors sensibly restrict the use of balls on the playground. The planned re-surfacing and zoning of the playground will create further opportunities to widen the scope of games in the future. Pupils currently have good opportunities to engage in a variety of activities at playtimes. These include skipping, board games, reading and playing imaginative games with their friends. In the questionnaires approximately one-fifth of parents did not feel that there is a good range of extra-curricular activities. However, the well-attended recorder, choir and country dance clubs compare favourably with similar activities provided in other infant schools.

48 The information provided for parents in the weekly newsletters, guidance booklets, annual reports and brochure is substantial and of a very good quality. The presentation of all documents is enhanced by illustrations prepared by the pupils. Weekly curriculum plans are displayed prominently in the teaching areas. The annual pupil reports are detailed and cover all subjects of the National Curriculum. They give a clear picture of academic progress and personal development and include areas for improvement. The pupils and parents add constructive, honest written comments.

49 The school's very good links with parents start with visits to the pre-school library. Prior to entry into the reception classes all parents are visited at home and there is an extensive induction programme. Following baseline assessments in the reception class the teachers meet all parents to agree targets. These are developed and reported upon during the year. Throughout their time at the school pupils are given substantial support at home with reading and mathematics. Parents discuss chosen topics with their children and this has a positive impact on the quality of their creative writing. There is very good general support for all school events, assemblies and consultation evenings and several parents help in lessons regularly. The school provides good information on curriculum initiatives including the numeracy and literacy strategies. There is wide consultation between the staff and

parents on all key aspects of school life and this results in a strong partnership. Consequently the well-prepared home-school agreement enjoys wide support. The strong Friends' Association is very active and makes significant contributions to the wider school community, in addition to raising substantial income for the benefit of the pupils. In recent years, for example, they have funded a gymnastics centre, purpose built picnic tables, an early years outside play area and developments in the pond area. Parents also support the school very well in collecting tokens from places like local supermarkets and this also raises useful funds for the school.

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

50 The headteacher, very well supported by the staff team and talented governors, sets a very clear direction for the work of the school. Consequently the school runs very smoothly, there is a clear agenda for development and standards are rising further. This continual striving for improvement is set within an environment where everyone is valued and feels able to contribute. The aims and values of the school are evident in all aspects of the school's work.

51 The headteacher is the keystone in this school and brings her many talents to bear to undertake her role very effectively. She is a very experienced headteacher and has a rich background in working with young children. She has very good inter-personal skills, with a genuine interest in the welfare of all with whom she comes into contact. She is extremely well organised with a very good attention to detail. Above all, she undertakes her daily work enthusiastically; while at the same time keeping her vision firmly set on continual improvement. She gives an excellent steer to the work of the school.

52 Since her appointment, five years ago, she has established a very effective staff team, who are continually striving to improve provision for the pupils. As a consequence of the hard work of staff and governors, the school has successfully addressed the key issues for improvement outlined by the last inspection. These were related to improving the performance of higher attaining pupils, standards in information technology, the quality of the teaching, long term curricular planning, the curriculum for children under five and the roles of curriculum co-ordinators and the senior management team. It is some measure of the school's very good progress since the last inspection, that many of these weaknesses have now become strengths.

53 The staff and governor team have used several tools well to help them to move forward quickly. One has been a very effective school improvement plan, which clearly sets out the agenda for improvement, maintenance and review and enables all involved to have a clear view of the planned way forward.

54 Another important factor in improvement has been the very good way in which staff and governors have monitored and evaluated provision and practice. Subject co-ordinators, for example, have a clear framework for monitoring and evaluating work in their particular subjects and as a result of their work have been able to support colleagues in working on identified areas for improvement. The literacy governor has monitored the implementation of the literacy hour and fed back to staff and governors on the impact of this in the classrooms.

55 Alongside this governors have fulfilled their role as critical friends effectively and have contributed their own particular expertise very well. The chair, for example, has a background in early years education. The literacy governor also has educational expertise

and has contributed well to the introduction of the literacy hour. The chair of the finance committee is suitably qualified to support the school in its financial planning. Governors are kept clearly informed of all school developments and are very effectively involved in planning for the future. They make a very good overall contribution to the work of the school and all statutory responsibilities are met.

56 The school is committed to providing for all pupils' learning needs. Staff work hard to ensure that pupils have equal access to the broad curriculum and equal opportunity to succeed. Governors, headteacher and all staff share an explicit approach to equal opportunities, which is reflected in all aspects of the life and work of the school.

57 The special needs co-ordinator gives a conscientious lead in her thorough approach to this role. All documentation for pupils is kept in meticulous order and the special needs team works extremely efficiently to record and convey information to staff, parents and appropriate agencies. The governor with responsibility for special educational needs works at the school and is therefore able to liaise particularly well between staff and the governing body, reporting fully on the effectiveness of the school's provision. The co-ordinator ensures that she sees all pupils on the register of special educational needs on a rota basis in their class setting, as well as when giving them individual or group support in the special needs bay. The school's identification and monitoring of pupils' needs are excellent. All funding allocated is used efficiently on staffing and resources. As a result, pupils with a variety of needs make very good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans.

58 The good standards of financial planning have been strengthened considerably since the last inspection. Planning at all levels is of a very high standard and is used actively to determine expenditure decisions. It is easy to identify the links between staffing levels, staff training, educational resourcing and premises developments to the school's planning priorities. The staff and governors make very good use of national and local information to compare their costs with those of similar schools. For example, there has been a thorough review and re-organisation of the administration and this has reduced costs closer to the national average. The headteacher is very active in seeking additional income from grants for special initiatives to enhance links with parents and the wider community. Recent successful bids have resulted in financial support for parenting sessions, regular lunches in the school for local elderly residents and participation of playgroup leaders in reception classes during the first half-term.

59 Staff and governors apply the principles of best value well. They monitor and review all of the service contracts regularly to ensure value for money. There are clearly defined procedures to ensure competitive bids for development work. The partnership between governors, staff and parents is very strong. All feel valued and supportive in the development of the school as a result of the wide formal and informal consultation that takes place. The monitoring and evaluation by staff and governors of curricular and financial decisions has developed considerably since the last inspection. Taking into account the average unit costs under the fair funding arrangements and above average standards of attainment on entry to the school and comparing these with the good standards of teaching, the well above average standards of attainment, and the very good standards of behaviour and personal development of the pupils, the school is giving very good value for money.

60 The administration staff are very efficient with good routines and systems in place to ensure that the school runs smoothly. The recent re-organisation, together with well-targeted training will help to ensure continuing development. Information technology is

used well to support the running of the school. Financial controls are very good with full up-to-date records and regular monitoring by the staff and governors. All decisions of the governors are recorded fully in the minutes of the committee meetings. The most recent auditor's report confirmed the sound state of the school's financial procedures and controls.

61 The school employs a good number of teaching staff of very good quality. Together with the excellent support staff they are deployed very effectively. Lunchtime supervisors and kitchen staff complement the staff team well. Staff development and training maintains a good balance between the needs of the individual and those of curriculum development. All expenditure of the standards fund is accounted for fully and clearly linked to the school improvement plan. New staff are supported very well by colleagues and this helps them to take their place effectively in the staff team. Members of staff share their experiences well with each other. For example, a teacher from each year group has attended courses on the teaching of information technology and this has helped to raise standards in the subject throughout the school. The next phase of staff appraisal is scheduled to start during the current term. The headteacher has been set appropriate performance targets, which are closely linked to the school improvement plan.

62 The accommodation is very good and has some excellent features. It is well maintained by conscientious caretaking and cleaning staff. Parents have made substantial contributions to the development of the premises and grounds through the active Friends' Association. The classrooms are large and well organised. The arrangements of shared and specialised areas ensure optimum use of the space for a wide range of activities. The multi-purpose hall and excellent library are used well throughout the week. The grounds are very spacious with a good hard-play area, very attractive field and a valuable wooded area with picnic tables. There is an excellent wildlife area with a rich variety of plants, birds, animals and insects. The school makes very good use of these facilities in lessons and at playtimes. The school has improved the outdoor play area for the reception children substantially since the last inspection.

63 The resources available in all subjects of the curriculum are very good and are used efficiently. The resources for history and music have improved considerably since the last inspection. The school supplements its own resources by making efficient use of the history packs provided by the local authority. The resources for music are now excellent and include a wide range of instruments so that all pupils are able to play at the same time.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

64 This school has no significant areas for improvement and so there are no key issues for the school to address. In the context of its many strengths, the headteacher, staff and governors should consider the following minor points for inclusion in its improvement plan.

- The length of time that pupils spend sitting listening to the teacher, which sometimes leads to restlessness;  
*(Reference paragraphs: 13, 27, 68 and 79)*
- The development of numeracy skills across the curriculum;  
*(Reference paragraphs: 5, 24 and 87)*
- The scheme of work for history - which is content led and lacks guidance on skills progression;  
*(Reference paragraphs: 32 and 110)*
- The time spent on design and technology;  
*(Reference paragraphs: 32 and 100)*
- Target setting in relation to individual targets for children.  
*(Reference paragraphs: 28,44,80 and 86)*

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	38
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	39

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
11	29	39	21	0	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 pupils

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	YR- Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (full-time equivalent for part-time pupils)	187
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	4
<b>Special educational needs</b>	YR - Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	59
<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0
<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	4
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.3
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

### **Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1**

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	1999	34	36	70

<b>National Curriculum Test/Task Results</b>		<b>Reading</b>	<b>Writing</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	27	28	30
	Girls	35	35	33
	Total	62	63	63
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89 (85)	90 (85)	90 (85)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

<b>Teachers' Assessments</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	29	30	32
	Girls	35	34	35
	Total	64	64	67
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91 (91)	91 (91)	96 (96)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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



### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	128
Any other minority ethnic group	0

*This table refers to pupils 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	2	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR– Y2**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23
Average class size	27

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y2**

Total number of education support staff	13
Total aggregate hours worked per week	202.5

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1998-1999
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	£
Total income	370,847
Total expenditure	360,136
Expenditure per pupil	1,916
Balance brought forward from previous year	4,817
Balance carried forward to next year	15,528

## **Results of the survey of parents and carers**

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	187
Number of questionnaires returned	95

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

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	59	38	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	54	44	2	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	55	41	2	1	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	35	54	8	0	3
The teaching is good.	63	37	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	48	46	5	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	65	33	1	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	62	38	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	49	47	3	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	59	38	1	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	58	41	1	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	29	34	18	3	16

## **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**

65 Children start school in the autumn term after their fourth birthday. This year they started in one of the two reception classes, with a few of the oldest children going into mixed reception and Year 1 class. At the time of the inspection sixteen children in the two reception classes were still four. When they begin school baseline assessment shows that the skills, understanding and knowledge of these children are wide ranging, but above average in relation to children in Hampshire schools. There is a similar pattern from year to year. Most children reach the desirable learning outcomes in personal and social education, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world and their creative and physical development before their fifth birthdays. At the time of the inspection all children in the reception classes, including those under five, were working at the early levels of the National Curriculum.

66 There has been good improvement in this area since the time of the last inspection. The new planning document takes into consideration the early learning goals and this year staff have referred to these in their planning. At the beginning of the year staff planned the curriculum in the light of the six areas of learning for children under five. The literacy and numeracy hours were introduced gradually and at this stage in the summer term children are working within the early stages of the National Curriculum. This is appropriate for these particular children. Staff plan a well-balanced programme of activities and children have opportunities to work in a range of situations, with attention given to structured play. The outside area has been very well developed since the last inspection and provides a safe place for children to play.

#### **Personal and social development**

67 Children settle well into school because of the good support given to them by staff. School routines are now well established. Children put up their hands to ask a question, for example, and line up sensibly for assembly. They are confident in all school situations, including the dining hall and playground. They clearly know the difference between right and wrong and get on well with each other.

#### **Language and literacy**

68 At this stage in the year all children are taking part in the literacy hour. Generally they manage well within this structure. Staff are aware that occasionally children find the whole class part of the literacy hour too long and a few lose concentration. Children are developing good speaking and listening skills. These are fostered well by the care that the staff take to involve them in class discussions. Most children listen particularly well to stories and are developing a love of books. Most share books regularly with their parents and carers at home and this has helped them to make good progress. There is a good emphasis on helping children to develop phonic awareness and many are beginning to use their phonic skills to read simple texts. Most children write independently and a few are joining letters confidently.

#### **Mathematics**

69 Children are developing good numeracy skills because they are taught in an interesting and imaginative way. In one excellent session, for example, children searched for objects

buried in the sand tray in order to sort and count them. This gripped their imaginations and the children were fully involved in the activity. Consequently they achieved well and made good progress. All children are confident in recognising and counting numbers up to ten, many are confident with numbers up to 20 and some can count and order numbers to 100. Sometimes children take mathematical tasks home to work on with their parents. In one such activity children drew around their feet and subsequently compared and ordered the feet shapes in class.

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

70 Children are developing a good knowledge and understanding of the world around them. Work is linked well to their own experiences. The train birthday chart, for example, helps children to appreciate the order of the months of the year. Their study of materials, for example, involves thinking about their own houses, as well as those of *'The three little pigs'*. Much of the work is appropriately based on the local area and children have looked carefully at plants in order to identify their different parts. Most have correctly drawn and labelled the plants in their books. Children are confident in using the computer for a variety of purposes, including games and word processing. Most use the mouse well and follow instructions carefully, often without direct supervision. With support some children write their own names and save these to a file.

### **Physical development**

71 Children move confidently around the reception area, with due regard for other people. They use the space well in the school hall in their games and apparatus sessions. These are well planned and managed and so the children achieve well. Some are beginning to control balls well and hit or roll them accurately to their friends, for example. They explore the large apparatus well and demonstrate good balancing skills. They are also confident in their movements at playtimes, running and jumping freely in the playground. Children are developing their fine motor skills well. Again imaginative planning helps them to achieve good standards. *'Trotter's DIY Shop'*, for example, provides the materials for children to make houses for the *'Three Little Pigs'*. They select the materials sensibly and use the tools carefully.

### **Creative development**

72 The reception classes are well organised and staff take care to organise the rooms so that there are opportunities for creative and physical development as well as for more formal work. Role-play areas are used well to help children to develop their own sense of story. During the inspection children enjoyed playing school in these, for example. They enjoy painting and drawing and their work about what they like doing at school shows an imaginative and lively response.

73 The staff team work very well together and as a result children settle quickly into school. The co-ordinator works with the joint reception and Year 1 class, but has a good overview of standards and provision for the early years. She offers good support to colleagues and organises the initial liaison between home and school. She has set up good links with the local playgroups and this contributes to the very smooth transition for pupils from home to school and provides opportunities to share expertise.

## ENGLISH

74 In 1999, pupils' attainment in national tests at the end of Year 2 was well above average in reading and above average in writing. Teacher assessments indicated that pupils' speaking and listening skills were also well above average. Higher attaining pupils did particularly well in reading. Pupils' achievements matched those of their peers in similar schools in relation to the proportion of pupils claiming free school meals. This masks the good achievements of the pupils at Oakley because of a higher than average proportion of pupils with special educational needs, especially in the area of language. Standards were high at the time of the last inspection and they have continued to rise, with particularly high achievement in national tests in 1997. The inspection confirmed that attainment was well above average in speaking and listening and reading and above average in writing. Pupils achieve well in all lessons and pupils with special educational needs do particularly well because of the very good support that they receive.

75 Many pupils start school as confident speakers and from the reception year onwards are encouraged to develop their speaking and listening skills. Most pupils listen well to their teachers and each other. There is a sound framework of suggested activities for pupils each term, which outlines work for different speaking skills. There is a good balance of work in all classes. An emphasis is put on involving pupils in class discussion, especially at the beginning of sessions. Most pupils speak confidently at these times, in increasingly complex sentences. The role play areas in each room also provide good opportunities for pupils to speak at length. In one Year 1 class, for example, two lower attaining girls were happily working together to write letters to the headteacher, talking all the time about what they were doing. No class drama sessions were seen during the inspection, although these are sometimes planned into history topics. In a topic on schools, for example, pupils spent a day as Victorian children and enjoyed taking on the roles of their predecessors. Pupils sometimes speak to a larger audience. The celebration assemblies, for example, are times when individuals talk about particular achievements. In one such assembly during the inspection the pupils were happy to tell the others what they had done, but many spoke very quietly.

76 Pupils achieve well in reading. There are several reasons for this. Firstly all staff feel that the development of pupils' reading skills and their love of stories and books are fundamental to their early education. Consequently reading is given a high profile. Staff help pupils to value and enjoy books by providing them with opportunities to look at and read good quality literature. The library, for example, is a delightful room, with lively displays and well ordered collections of books. It is much improved in the last few years. Book collections in classrooms are also attractively displayed and inviting to the young reader. The school organises book weeks and book fairs and again this helps pupils to become familiar with books. A recent theatre production of *'The lion, the witch and the wardrobe'* by CS Lewis, introduced pupils to a more complex story, which their writing shows they enjoyed thoroughly. Within the literacy hour teachers choose good quality texts to share with the pupils and help them to appreciate the magic of written language by reading them stories. As a result pupils are enthusiastic about reading and enjoy talking about their books. Most have firm favourites and talk confidently about their preferences and the reasons for these. Teachers teach pupils about the structure of books. In Year 1, for example, pupils studied setting during the inspection and in one class groups of pupils successfully compared three books about tigers in order to tease out the similarities and differences in the settings. Staff are aware of the difference in attainment levels between boys and girls and have introduced some more non-fiction texts to appeal to the male reader. Teachers also concentrate well on teaching phonic and other reading skills. This helps pupils to tackle new and unfamiliar words with confidence. The introduction of the

literacy hour has sharpened the teaching of phonics and teachers are consistent in their approach. At the same time they engage in healthy and professional debate about possible adaptations to the strategy, such as the order in which to introduce the magic 'e' and the 'ee' sound to the pupils. Pupils have many opportunities to practise their reading skills during the day, not only during the class sessions and group reading part of the literacy hour, but also within other subjects. Another very important contributory factor in pupils' achievements is the good support that they receive from home. Most share books with parents or carers on a very regular basis. Their progress is noted in reading diaries, which provide a very useful dialogue between home and school.

77 Staff have worked hard to improve standards in writing to match those in reading. Pupils achieve well throughout the school, but still do better in reading. There is a very good emphasis on ensuring that pupils write for a real purpose and use a range of writing techniques. Often their writing is lively and imaginative. In some reflective writing about winter, for example, one pupil wrote *'nature sleeps through the winter. She dresses the world with snow.'* Another wrote *'snowflakes fall like feathers'*. This high quality in the use of language is typical of many pupils in Year 2. Staff sensibly plan for extended writing sessions outside the literacy hour in Year 2 and this means that pupils have more time to complete their work. Sometimes they also undertake writing tasks in other subjects, especially the humanities, and this also gives them opportunities to develop their literacy skills. Joined handwriting is taught from the reception year and pupils achieve well and most form their joins correctly by the time that they are in Year 2. Pupils also do well in spelling. Pupils learn to build up words by sound as well as learning a bank of common words. Again homework is used well by teachers to help pupils to move forward.

78 Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported. They often work with extra support in the literary hour, when focussed support from teaching assistants helps them to move forward well. Tasks are well matched to their levels of attainment and all experience success and so have the confidence to move forward more quickly. Gifted and talented pupils also do well because of the good encouragement that they are given.

79 The quality of the teaching is good overall, although in the lessons seen it ranged from satisfactory to excellent. Particular strengths include the quality of the joint planning and the emphasis on interesting activities to capture pupils' imaginations. Teaching assistants are also very well used in all classrooms and make a significant contribution to pupils' achievements. Classrooms are well organised and pupils are clear about their groups and how they are expected to behave and work. Teachers track pupils' progress very well and this helps them to plan well for the future. In some lessons resources are very well prepared. Sometimes, especially when the literacy hour follows on from assembly or another whole class session, pupils become a little fidgety in the whole class work because they have been sitting too long listening to a teacher. Generally teachers manage this well, but sometimes the momentum of the lesson slows at this point and pupils lose concentration.

80 English is very well co-ordinated by an experienced and knowledgeable co-ordinator. She has a firm grip on provision and standards in all classes because of her careful monitoring. She has successfully overseen the introduction of the literacy hour and offers good support to colleagues. In association with other staff she is involved in tracking pupils' progress and setting numerical targets for improvement. Teachers are now beginning to set targets for groups of pupils on a termly basis. These are pasted into the front of pupils' books. The co-ordinator hopes to refine these to make them more personal to each child.

## MATHEMATICS

81 Pupils' attainment in Key Stage 1 national test results in 1999 was above the national average and in line with that of similar schools. Higher attaining pupils did particularly well. Standards at the end of Year 2 in the current year are well above average, as the school continues to improve the quality of mathematics teaching and assessment. Overall, standards have risen considerably since the time of the last inspection, when they were reported as average. At that time, higher attainers were not sufficiently extended. Staff now ensure that they challenge these pupils very well.

82 Standards of teaching and learning throughout the school are good overall. In half of the lessons observed, teaching was of very good or excellent quality. It was good in a further quarter of lessons and the other quarter was satisfactory. The school has implemented the national numeracy strategy very successfully. The school's planning system underpins the good quality of teaching and learning throughout the school. Teachers in each year group plan very carefully together, making good use of a common planning format. This ensures equality of opportunity for children in different classes in each year group and in the one mixed-age class. It also ensures that planning for each lesson includes group work matched specifically to pupils' prior attainment. Staff teach numeracy skills very well. They make good use of praise and encouragement to raise pupils' self-confidence. Their very good subject knowledge enables pupils to understand and use mathematical vocabulary correctly. Year 2 teachers draw their pupils' attention to the target for the lesson, which they write on the whiteboard, and this ensures that pupils share a knowledge of the purpose behind the activities undertaken.

83 Teachers begin all lessons with a crisp oral activity, when pupils focus on their mental mathematics. Some of the youngest children made excellent progress in one lesson, learning the pattern of numbers, as they counted accurately to 50, spreading the fingers on one hand as they reach a number ending in five, and both hands as they reach a round ten. Year 1 pupils count in twos confidently starting on zero or one and recognise the patterns as they count. 'We're counting even numbers backwards,' said one. All Year 1 pupils are building towards good recall of addition and subtraction facts to ten and a good proportion are already working with pairs of numbers that make twenty. One higher attainer recognised the pattern that if  $6+4 = 10$ , then  $60+40 = 100$  and  $600+400=1000$ . Year 2 pupils recognise that the value of each digit depends on its position in a number. Most pupils in this year group are confident ordering numbers to 1000, forming the largest and smallest numbers from three given digits, for example. Boys and girls show high attainment as they double numbers such as 135 mentally, in response to their teachers' brisk questioning. In one class the teacher made very good use of an unnumbered 'number stick'. She directed pupils to work out the number at given points on the alternate coloured bars, changing the scale, by altering the overall length from 100 to 50 to 20 units. Each of these exercises promoted pupils' mental agility with number and sparked their enthusiasm, as teachers shared their fascination with the patterns of number.

84 Work is very well matched to pupils' needs in all year groups. Teachers brief and deploy support staff particularly efficiently and in this way offer very good teaching for pupils with special educational needs. These pupils learn successfully as a result of the focussed attention they receive on tasks well matched to their current knowledge and understanding. For instance, when Year 1 pupils are pairing numbers to make ten or twenty, an assistant talks pupils with special needs through the process of partitioning a set of ten objects practically, before recording a picture of the subsets and the appropriate sum. All pupils discuss their work using mathematical language. Where teachers encourage pupils to explain the strategies they are using and encourage them to put into

words how they doubled 14, for example, this improves both the skills of pupils explaining and those of the rest of the class, who are encouraged to follow their classmates' explanation carefully. Where pupils sustain mathematical discussion through good eye contact and encouragement, the teaching is of a higher quality. Occasionally, teachers do not use these opportunities for careful mathematical speaking and listening so well and listeners become inattentive, but, for the most part, pupils respond with enthusiasm to their teachers' instructions and questioning.

85 In the most successful lesson observed, the teacher added a touch of imagination and excitement to the other teaching qualities evident in all of the good and very good lessons. Focussing on the ordering of numbers to ten and the formation of each of the digits, the teacher devised three activities which were stimulating at the children's own level. Each child in each group became engrossed in a little time of exploration. One group dug for treasure in the sand tray, discussing with an assistant how they had found eight buttons, five plastic fir trees, each set of objects from one to nine buried ready for the dig. The group then traced the numbers in the sand. A second group sported fabric numbers from one to nine, feeling the different textures as they glued each in order to their strip of paper. The third group assumed a responsible air as, armed with pencil and 'Class Resources Audit Sheet', they strode purposefully to different parts of the room to count and record items the teacher had prepared on the word-processed audit sheet. Each child was learning to count and record numbers correctly and each was enjoying the 'game' or exploration that the teacher and assistants had prepared for them. This lesson showed exemplary teamwork as well as a highly imaginative and stimulating approach to mathematics teaching.

86 The school's new assessment system is proving highly successful in increasing teachers' confidence in tracking pupils' progress. All teachers keep a regular two-monthly note of each pupil's progress towards a target set for the year. They therefore identify pupils who are struggling or exceeding expectations and are able to provide additional support or adjust the level of work set. Teachers do not currently share these individual targets with pupils and parents, but they do provide them with a clear guide to targets for each year group, pasting these into each pupil's homework diary. Teachers make good use of day-to-day assessment, and where this reveals particular needs, the school provides very good intervention. Teachers set interesting homework tasks for pupils throughout the school, involving parents as much as possible in talking with their children about the tasks to be undertaken. A display next to the reception class entrance highlights the value of parents' participation in the shared home learning tasks. Pupils in Year 2 receive additional homework to boost their understanding of number skills and consolidate their knowledge. Teachers insist on neat presentation of work and ensure that all work is dated and marked appropriately.

87 The subject co-ordinator has led the subject very well since the last inspection, ensuring that areas highlighted for attention have been fully addressed. There is no longer any weakness in teachers' subject knowledge and the school now clearly identifies higher attainers, setting them appropriately challenging work. The school's improvement plan includes the further raising of attainment in mathematics as one of its main priorities. The school is aware that numeracy skills could be developed further in other areas of the curriculum. Staff have agreed challenging targets for attainment by the end of Year 2 in the current year and are set to meet them. Each classroom is well resourced and the school provides a mathematics library, from which parents and children borrow games and activities to promote mathematical understanding. The governor with responsibility for numeracy has attended courses on the introduction of the numeracy strategy and has helped in classrooms, to sharpen her knowledge of the way pupils learn. Under the subject



co-ordinator's enthusiastic and thoughtful leadership, the subject has become a strength of the school.

## **SCIENCE**

88 Teachers' assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 show that standards were above the national average in 1999 and that the proportion of pupils attaining beyond national age-related expectations was well above average. When compared with similar schools, standards overall were much the same, but, once again, a higher proportion of pupils attained the higher level 3. Inspection findings confirm continuing high standards. By the end of Key Stage 1 in the current year, standards are well above average. The school has made significant improvements to its grounds during the period since the previous inspection. Better teaching and improved resources have resulted in good improvement since the previous inspection, when teaching was mainly satisfactory and standards were above average.

89 Thorough planning by teachers ensures that pupils acquire new knowledge and skills through a well-organised balance of activities as they move through the school. During the inspection, teaching and learning focussed on materials and their properties. In the reception year, pupils gathered in a circle round a feely box and took turns to feel and describe the properties they could discern through their sense of touch. One boy's accurate description, 'round...hard...there's a hole in it...made of glass', conveyed a very clear picture to his classmates. Other reception pupils sifted sand to discover objects made of four different materials and sort them accordingly, while a further group used a selection of objects made from the same four materials to create a collage of a house. Throughout these group activities, teacher and assistant were continuously questioning pupils, encouraging them to express their knowledge of the properties. In a Year 2 lesson, higher attaining pupils working on the same theme used a prepared worksheet to investigate the properties of an array of materials by carrying out different tests on them. These included, for example, discovering if they were magnetic or if they conducted electricity. Pupils worked in pairs on these investigations, selecting and organising their materials and equipment with care and recording their findings. They showed considerable sustained concentration as they tackled the series of tests on a hot afternoon. The teacher supervised closely a collaborative group task she had organised for below average attainers, who were recreating the textures observed in local houses while making a large collage of a house. Average attainers worked in pairs to list properties and the appropriate uses of a selection of materials, before creating a joint report as a group of six and reporting back to the class on their findings. In this lesson, the teacher challenged pupils appropriately at all levels of attainment, ensuring that they applied their knowledge and expressed it by collaborating with their classmates. The quality of thought and knowledge was apparent in one pupil's response when asked to describe a goblet: 'It's tough, shiny, hard, smooth and fireproof'. As a result of careful assessment, thorough planning and rigorous organisation, pupils of all abilities make good progress in all aspects of science.

90 Overall the quality of teaching is good. It ranges from satisfactory to very good in lessons. The good overall quality of teaching ensures positive attitudes among all pupils. The collaborative investigations, which are a feature of each half term, make a significant contribution to pupils' thinking skills and social development. Teachers' knowledge of science is good, and the school has adopted a national scheme of work to ensure good balance and continuity over the three years. Currently, the school opts to teach science in blocks of time, occasionally leaving this core subject untaught for half a term. Results show that this has not had a detrimental effect on pupils' learning. Teachers assess their pupils' progress in each unit of work and are aware which pupils meet the challenges well and

which pupils need further consolidation. On one occasion, the teacher's strategies for holding pupils' attention were not fully effective, with the result that a few lost concentration, but overall teachers engaged all pupils well through precise questioning, using scientific terms as much as possible, and good eye contact and encouraging responses to pupils' contributions. The presentation of pupils' work is good. All work is dated and marked, providing a clear record of pupils' recorded work. Teachers ensure that pupils apply their literacy skills well when recording their experiments, but there is less evidence of the application of numeracy skills.

91 The subject co-ordinator has given a very positive lead since taking on responsibility for the subject at the beginning of the last academic year. Following the introduction of the newly adopted scheme of work, teachers' planning effectively concentrates on developing skills of scientific investigation in a broad range of contexts. Each teacher is evaluating each unit of work during this first year of the scheme. The subject co-ordinator notes that the most effective contexts are those which stimulate pupils' imaginative interest. One notable example is the testing of paper strength by elves, who must report back to Father Christmas on the most effective wrapping. The school is in the process of developing the use of information technology to support the subject. Good use is made of the school environment, especially the wild life area to extend pupils' skills. Occasional trips, such as the Year 2 outing to 'Intech' in Winchester also extend pupils' understanding.

## **ART**

92 Pupils achieve well in art because of the good concentration on the teaching of skills. Consequently standards are high. Some of the work, such as the portraits based on the work of famous artists in Year 2 classes, is exceptional. The positive picture identified by the last inspection has been maintained and developed well.

93 During the inspection pupils in Year 1 were developing their skills with clay. They were given the opportunity to experiment with and to enjoy handling clay within a focussed session on using fingers to pull and push the clay. Within the different classes teachers used different organisational strategies. In two classes the teachers organised a small group of pupils to work with clay at a time, while other pupils were engaged on other tasks. This enabled them to give individual support. In the other class, the teacher organised a whole class lesson. This had the advantage of enabling her to concentrate on developing specific skills with the pupils simultaneously. She also provided an opportunity for pupils to evaluate their work and to appreciate the work of their friends.

94 Pupils in Year 2 worked on developing their painting skills in relation to colour mixing. In both classes they managed this well. They worked very carefully, handling the brushes and powder paint well. All successfully produced a strip of different shades from one base colour. Again, in the lesson seen, the teacher took care to extend pupils' skills by giving them an opportunity to comment on how they could improve their work. This good attention to the development of skills is very well supported by an extremely clear and helpful scheme of work, as well as by the joint planning within year groups.

95 Good attention is paid to helping pupils to develop and appreciate the work of famous artists. This is particularly evident in the paint and pastel portraits in Year 2, based on the work of Modigliani, Van Gogh and Toulouse-Lautrec. The visit of a portrait painter this year also contributed to work in this area.

96 The quality of the teaching was good in the two lessons seen and pupils' achievements indicate that this is normally the case. Planning is securely based on the National

Curriculum and embraces work in drawing, painting, printing, collage, three dimensions and fabric. Currently there is less evidence of the development of printing skills in the work displayed, but this is planned for later this term. Resources are well organised within the classrooms. The storing of brushes according to size, for example, helps pupils to develop a craftsman like approach. Teachers take good care to display pupils' work to best advantage. The very good fabric work by pupils in Year 2, for example, makes a very good contribution to the pleasing visual impact of the environment work in the corridor. Teachers are also flexible and take good opportunities to extend pupils' aesthetic experiences. On one sunny day during the inspection, for example, the headteacher took advantage of the unusually clement weather to take a group of pupils to make some observational sketches of the pond area.

97 Pupils enjoy art work and are generally sensible in the way that they use materials and tools and in the way that they tidy up. In one class there was a tendency for some pupils to call out in the introduction to the lesson. The subject is very well co-ordinated by an enthusiastic and knowledgeable co-ordinator. She offers very good support to colleagues and has a clear view of standards and provision through the school.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

98 No teaching was observed during the inspection, as the subject was not timetabled for the current half term. Samples of work in pupils' books and on display show that the school has maintained the satisfactory standards reported by the previous inspection. Pupils acquire a clear knowledge of the designing and making processes and develop sound skills in the series of contexts planned using a national scheme of work.

99 Teachers plan work on a series of topics each year, effectively ensuring that pupils use a variety of media including paper, card, textiles, food, reclaimed materials and construction kits. Reception children have created 'Trotter's DIY' in a section of their area, in which all tools and materials are carefully labelled and organised. These children have made houses of sticks, straw and lego bricks, evaluating their strength. They have further developed initial approaches to evaluating products by asking whether their 'inflating frog' worked easily. Teachers plan increasing degrees of independence and responsibility for pupils as they move from reception through to Year 2. In the reception year, staff mainly provide materials for tasks. By Year 2 they require pupils to think carefully about which tools and which materials to select. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils demonstrate a sound understanding of how to design, make and evaluate independently, as they create a bag to carry two apples. They create a van for the jolly postman, using axles. The best examples of finished work and of the full process of designing, making and evaluating are in Year 2, where pupils have found ways to make incy-wincy spider climb.

100 Although no teaching was observed, teachers' plans and pupils' work indicate that teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and occasionally good, when planning focusses on skills and links these with imaginative ideas that catch pupils' interest. The tasks offer good challenge for higher attainers. The subject co-ordinator gives a good lead. She has ensured that each class in each year experiences equality of opportunity and has planned a reasonable range and number of activities for each year group. The overall amount of time allocated to the subject is low, but the school sensibly blocks the time allocation, so that children gain skills within a concentrated few weeks. The school has linked subject themes thoughtfully to topics that embrace other subjects. This helps make the learning interesting and relevant to pupils.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

101 Standards are good and pupils achieve well in geography because of the good teaching based on a good long term planning framework. Geography was not observed during the last inspection, but there are clear indications that the school's provision for the subject is improved, especially in the area of planning.

102 Pupils' mapwork skills are well developed, for example, because of the very good focus on this area. Work in orienteering has helped to address the lack of challenge for higher attainers noted in the last report. Pupils build up their skills in this area by working initially from their own experience. In Year 1, for example, pupils drew a pictorial map of their journeys to school. They were clear about the buildings and geographical features which they passed on their way and explained their journeys clearly. Pupils in Year 1 also wrote about the features of Oakley that they particularly liked. Understandably for many pupils these were related to their own homes, although several mentioned the park. Work about the locality is reinforced well by role-play in the class 'Post Office'. About half the pupils in one class can say and write their own address and some know their postcode. They practice these by writing letters and posting them in the box.

103 Planning is securely based on fieldwork. In Years 1 and 2, for example, pupils visit Bramley Frith, a local studies centre. Again attention is paid to the development of mapwork skills and on this project pupils' practice their map making skills in a relatively new environment. The current topic on materials provides good opportunities for pupils to develop understanding about the local environment. Pupils have looked carefully at the construction of their own homes, for example, and homework has been used well to gather relevant information. There is a good emphasis on investigational work. In Year 2, for example, pupils keep 'enquiry diaries' in relation to their work on weather, with predictions and actual weather conditions. They investigate the effects of weather on peoples' lives, asking teachers and staff how they are affected by the weather. Pupils are interested in finding out about places, enjoy making maps and are generally enthusiastic about their work.

104 The quality of teaching in the lessons seen was good and this has a positive impact on pupils' achievements. Work is well planned and integrated carefully into other areas of the curriculum, such as literacy and numeracy. All year group staff planning together and sharing ideas and this corporate approach enhances the planning. Resources are well used. In Year 1, for example, large aerial photographs help pupils to appreciate the layout of Oakley.

105 The co-ordinator is very enthusiastic and catches other staff up in her interest of the subject. She offers good support and advice to colleagues and with the help of Oakley staff, as well as teachers from local schools, has developed a very good scheme of work. She has a clear view of standards and provision in all classes and has collected together a very useful folder of work samples to show progression in skills and understanding.

## **HISTORY**

106 History was not a focus for the work in humanities during the inspection period and no lessons were seen in this subject. Pupils' work indicates that they are developing an understanding of their place in history as well as a growing knowledge of specific topics and stories. Work in the subject has been maintained well since the last inspection.

107 Within the fairly limited time allocated for history, some interesting work is planned.

This helps pupils to develop historical skills in a meaningful way. In Year 1, for example, pupils have studied school life in Victorian times. Their accounts of their visit to the old school clearly show that they appreciated some of the differences between the experiences of these former pupils and their own. The rats, bats in the roof, the cane and the slates obviously made a big impression. This understanding was reinforced well by a Victorian school in the role-play area and by the 'Victorian day', when the pupils dressed up and worked on the same subjects as their predecessors.

108 Similarly, pupils in Year 2 also stepped back into the past when they worked on the topic 'When granny was a girl'. Some pupils, for example, captured the feelings of evacuee children well, when they took on the role of an evacuee to write their letters home.

109 Teachers' planning shows that visits, such as the one to the Willis museum, are used well to teach pupils about the past. The local area is also used to bring the past alive. Resources have improved since the last inspection and the school makes good use of the local authority's history 'suitcases'. History is also used at times to develop pupils' literacy skills, especially in extended writing. Good use is made on these occasions of writing frames and scaffolding strategies. Occasionally, the text used in the literacy hour is also used to help pupils to develop their understanding of the past.

110 The co-ordinator has a firm grip on provision and standards through the school. She is developing a useful scheme of work. At the moment this does not sufficiently identify the progression of pupils' skills in relation to the key elements in the history curriculum.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

111 Standards are above average at the end of Key Stage 1. The school has fully addressed weaknesses identified during the previous inspection and the subject is now much stronger. Teachers and assistants have improved their knowledge of the subject by attending a number of courses and sharing their skills with staff throughout the school. The subject co-ordinator has given a positive lead and has ensured that both educational provision and standards have improved considerably. The school has provided a wide range of software to cover all strands of the information technology curriculum and is continuing to update hardware and increase the number of computers available. This will further improve pupils' access.

112 The quality of pupils' learning is good. Pupils take turns working in pairs on the computers and apply themselves enthusiastically to their tasks during the time slots allocated, making good progress in the main. Pupils in the reception classes are developing skills well above average in the current year. They use the keyboard to write their own names and save them in a file, with assistance from the teacher. Some pupils have used a word-processing program to create instructions for making a fruit salad. They select and place objects accurately, using the mouse. They create pictures, of Jack and the beanstalk, for example, selecting different colours. Pupils in Year 1 begin to develop desktop publishing skills by changing the font size and colour while typing their addresses. They fill areas with colour, after drawing fire engines, for instance. They use town-planning software, collaborating well as they decide on the positioning of the various components to create a complete plan. Pupils in Year 2 save unfinished work and recall it without assistance. They know how to print copies of their finished work. They draft and edit while writing. Several have learnt to combine text and graphics, as they develop early desktop publishing skills. They select from simple menu options, for example when using mathematics programs with varying levels of difficulty to enhance their learning of addition and subtraction facts to ten and beyond. By the time they leave the school, pupils have

experienced the full range of information technology applications. They handle data gathered through surveys on illnesses and types of houses. They send and receive e-mail, thanking the field centre workers at Bramley Frith after a visit, for example. They take turns to dial up a web site and discover the daily weather forecast for the region.

113 The quality of teaching is good in all year groups. This stems from a carefully organised planning system and increasing confidence among staff as a result of a programme of training. Teachers in all classes plan for pupils to use classroom-based computers throughout the day to support their learning. They provide a broad programme of experiences, which cover word-processing, data handling and control technology. Teachers use computers well to develop pupils' collaborative skills. This contributes positively to their personal and social development. A class book, 'Saying nice things about each other', includes a preface by a higher attaining pupil who has risen to the challenge of presenting the introduction in carefully word-processed form, adapting font, size and colour to suit his purpose. Throughout the school teachers ensure that pupils with special educational needs receive good support and that higher attainers are well challenged. The planned scheme of work in each year group promotes all pupils' learning in information technology, while enhancing their learning in other subjects, particularly literacy and numeracy.

114 With conscientious guidance and support from the subject co-ordinator, all teachers use the newly adopted scheme of work and are beginning to make judgements about pupils' progress. The information technology action plan provides for staff to develop appropriate assessment procedures during the coming year, now that the full scheme of work is in place.

## **MUSIC**

115 Standards in music are good overall, broadly maintaining those reported by the previous inspection. The school has addressed the main weakness highlighted in the previous report by introducing a comprehensive scheme of work`.

116 Pupils in Year 1 differentiate between loud and quiet sounds. They listen to sounds in the environment and use a variety of percussion instruments to change dynamics and repeat rhythms. All pupils listen very well to music played at the start and close of assembly, appreciating the soothing sound of the panpipes from Chile during the inspection week. They sing tunefully and quietly. Pupils learn hymns by heart, but when they sing without a conductor or focal point, they do not use good breathing, expression or clear diction. The lively piano accompaniment encourages all pupils to join in, although even better results would have been achieved if pupils had stood up for their final performance.

117 Teaching is good overall. In the lessons seen, there were equal amounts of very good and satisfactory teaching. The difference in quality was in the way the activities in the very good lessons derived clearly from teachers' planning. The high quality of lesson planning resulted in sharply focussed learning. For example, in a reception class lesson on tempo, the teacher asked pupils to listen to Bach's Air from Suite No. 3 in D and comment on the speed and mood, before repeating the process with Rimsky Korsokov's '*Flight of the Bumblebee*'. Pupils' comments showed their recognition of the contrasting tempos and their effect on the listeners. Such activities offer opportunities for pupils to experience times of reflection in which they exercise and develop their powers of imagination. After describing the first piece as 'nice and slow' and 'sleepy', pupils' images from the second piece included 'feels like someone's in danger'. The teacher then proceeded to develop regular rhythm patterns to the words 'walking' and 'running quickly'; giving pupils turns to

play the different rhythms. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils again watched and listened very closely as their teacher played a repeating pattern on four chime bars, accompanying a song on cassette, before offering pupils the chance to play the pattern to accompany the rest of the class singing the song. Teachers had prepared resources well for all lessons and made good use of these. Pupils use instruments in a controlled way and have clearly benefited from good training and regular use of percussion. In the satisfactory lessons, the theme of 'learning about sounds in the environment' lacked a specific musical focus. Teachers used percussion instruments to develop a little work on dynamics and rhythm, but pupils' involvement was not so complete as in the other lessons seen, as the lessons lacked sharp focus and a clear sense of purpose.

118 The subject co-ordinator has led a thorough review of the subject since the last inspection and has created a comprehensive series of planning folders, which offer very clear guidance to non-specialist music teachers. Together with other members of staff, she organises a choir and three Year 2 recorder groups. Pupils sing and play their instruments in assemblies and perform at the summer fete. The school participates in annual local cluster activities. In the school entrance hall, an eye-catching display tells of pupils' participation in a series of musical activities provided during this year's 'Music Week'. This is an annual event, at which the school invites musicians to share their professional musical and dance talents with all classes. The contribution of other cultures to music was clearly celebrated in the work with an African drummer and dancer. Another highlight of the week was a sponsored sing, involving all pupils, which raised £1000 for music resources. A little note in one of the class newspapers records a gift of flowers to the piano accompanist, who played 'nearly all day!' The subject is very well resourced. The subject manager leads effectively and the subject makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development and to the ethos of the whole community.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

119 This subject is one of the school's strengths. Standards are above average overall, particularly in gymnastics, the aspect observed most during inspection, where pupils show considerable bodily control and agility. The school has maintained the high standards reported by the previous inspection, offering the full range of Key Stage 1 activities, with teachers making effective use of the very good accommodation and resources.

120 Throughout the school, pupils demonstrate a very good response to teachers' instructions. Teachers plan and organise lessons effectively, always beginning with a brief warm-up, which focusses pupils' listening skills, and sets clear expectations of alert effort and quick reactions. During the whole class activities, pupils explore a range of imaginative movements and show a good awareness of space and others, while performing well-controlled balance and travel skills on the floor. Teachers observe and assess pupils' actions and involve pupils well in demonstrating examples of good work. As a result of the brisk pace, clear instructions and encouraging teacher commentaries, pupils participate eagerly and refine their skills as each lesson progresses.

121 The quality of teaching is very good overall. Teachers involve pupils in recollecting previous work, in order to build on a sequence of lessons. Pupils understand safety issues and show excellent care and responsibility in the way they set up apparatus. Teachers have clearly invested considerable time very successfully in establishing a pattern of purposeful group collaboration for pupils setting up and putting away large apparatus. Year 2 pupils sustain concentrated effort throughout the group activities, improving the skills of rolling, turning and twisting and creating sequences of these movements, for example, using a variety of apparatus. They make evaluative comment on their own and each

other's sequences, relating their points to the lesson aims and highlighting variety and originality. Where appropriate, teachers deploy classroom assistants extremely effectively, supervising pupils with special educational needs, for example. This provision ensures equality of opportunity and an appropriate level of participation for pupils with specific physical needs.

122 The subject co-ordinator has successfully developed a very well balanced physical education curriculum, which ensures a pattern of progression through skills in games, dance and gymnastics. The school's scheme of work offers very clear guidance for teachers to ensure that pupils' skills are developed progressively, building systematically on their earlier experiences. As a result, teachers are confident in their subject knowledge and pupils attain standards above those expected for their ages. The subject co-ordinator runs a thriving after-school country-dance club. School corridor displays emphasise the benefits of healthy and active traditional playground games.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

123 Pupils' knowledge and understanding more than meets the expectations of the local agreed syllabus by the time that pupils leave the school. Pupils achieve well in lessons and are interested in finding out about religious belief and practice because of the consistently good quality of the teaching. This marks an improvement from the last inspection.

124 Pupils are interested in their work because teachers take every opportunity to make it relevant. Sikhism was chosen as the religion to study alongside Christianity, for example, because at the time that the programme was planned there were some Sikh pupils in the school. Good links have been made with the Sikh community and a local leader comes regularly to school to talk about his belief. In the reception classes, for example, teachers used a recent visit to reinforce children's understanding of the five 'Ks'. They used artefacts to remind the children of what they had been told. In both classes the children listened very well and clearly understood the importance of special objects in different religions. In one of the sessions the way in which the teacher encouraged children to respect the religious beliefs of others was excellent.

125 In Year 1 pupils are starting a block of work on special books, especially the significance of the Bible to Christians. In one lesson seen the teacher made very good use of her own 'special' books, such as photograph albums, in order to prepare the pupils for subsequent work. She talked to them about things that are precious to individuals and rounded the session off well by reading Shirley Hughes' '*Dogger*'. This sensitive approach was a very good introduction to the topic and most pupils were very involved in the discussion. In Year 2, pupils link their understanding of special places to learning about St Leonard's Church, a special place for Christians. Again, by beginning with what pupils already know the teachers are able to help them to appreciate the significance of religious buildings. One pupil wrote 'I go to the bottom of my garden. It is calm and peaceful'. This perception prepared him well for the importance of a calm and peaceful atmosphere in church.

126 Pupils also achieve well because the programme of work is well balanced and interesting. Good links are constantly made with other curriculum areas and current events. In preparation for Christmas, for example, Year 1 pupils undertake work about angels and their place in the Christmas story. Pupils produce some delightful artwork and their writing shows that they have thought carefully about what they have been taught.

127 Special events also contribute well to work in religious education. A recent 'RE week',



enabled pupils to work with their peers from local schools. Highlights of the week were a day acting miracle plays and another day when representatives from different faiths came to speak to the pupils.

128 The co-ordinator is very enthusiastic and gives very good support to her colleagues. She benefits from very good links with staff from other local schools, who discuss planning and provision together. She has built up the resources well and is encouraging staff to use religious texts in the literacy hour.