

INSPECTION REPORT

ALDINGBOURNE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Chichester

LEA area: West Sussex

Unique reference number: 125816

Headteacher: Mr Peter Neale

Reporting inspector: Ian Knight
3031

Dates of inspection: 31st January - 4th February 2000

Inspection number: 191090

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Westergate Street
Westergate
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West Sussex

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Bryan Mundy

Date of previous inspection: June 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Ian Knight	<i>Registered inspector</i>	Science; Information technology.	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
Janet Godfrey	<i>Lay inspector</i>		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?
Jeremy Royle	<i>Team inspector</i>	English; Music; Design and technology; Physical education; Equal opportunities.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? How well does the school care for its pupils? How well is the school led and managed?
Patricia Lowe	<i>Team inspector</i>	Mathematics; Religious education; Art; Geography; History; Under fives; Special educational needs.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Aldingbourne Primary School is an average sized junior and infant school with 212 pupils on roll. Nearly all of the pupils in the school are white and all speak English fluently. Fewer pupils than average are known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with a special educational need is lower than average, although the number with a statement of special need is about average. Although there is a range of attainment on entry to the school, it is average overall.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a highly effective school. Children under five receive a flying start to their education in the reception class and make great strides in their learning whilst there. Very good teaching continues in Key Stages 1 and 2 so that pupils continue to do well and leave the school with levels of attainment much higher than average. The school is very well led and reflects on its own practice effectively, for example, recognising and taking action on the standards of more able girls in mathematics. This high level of effectiveness is achieved at a cost per pupil that is broadly average, and consequently the school offers good value for money.

What the school does well

- The school is very well led.
- All of the staff are extremely committed to the school.
- Parents make an outstanding contribution to school life.
- Teaching throughout the school is very good, and leads to very good learning.
- Excellent provision in reception, including outstanding teaching, results in excellent learning.
- Standards are high, especially in the core subjects.
- Pupils greatly enjoy coming to school and are enthusiastic learners.
- There is very good provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- Extra-curricular provision enhances high standards in sporting and creative performances.

What could be improved

- Target setting for individual pupils is not rigorous enough, so they do not know what they need to do to improve further.
- Development planning for subjects is not linked closely enough to that for the whole school.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in June 1996. Since then, academic standards have risen and teaching has improved. The quality of leadership is much improved. Most of the key issues have been effectively dealt with: the school development plan is an improved document, although subject action plans are not linked closely enough to it; curriculum planning and schemes of work have been developed; the role of co-ordinators is developing. Although there are more opportunities for pupils to investigate, this still requires further development.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	A	A	B	B
Mathematics	A	A	A	A
Science	A	A	A	A

<i>Key</i>	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

Standards in the reception class are well above what would be expected at this time of the year. At the end of Key Stage 1, test results in reading and mathematics were well above average and in writing the school is in the top 5 per cent nationally. Teachers' assessments in science show that standards in Key Stage 1 are well above average. There is a steep upward trend to results in Key Stage 1. The trend in Key Stage 2 is less well pronounced, but the school is staying ahead of the national picture except in science, where results have stayed at a similar high level over the last few years against a rising national trend. The slight dip in English shown above has been analysed by the school as being due to reduced emphasis on writing. The school has set appropriate targets for its own performance, based on its knowledge of the existing pupils. In all subjects, standards of work seen were at least up to the expected level; in the majority they were above average. Of particular note is dance, which is of a very high standard. Compared with pupils' attainment on entry to the school, these represent high standards of achievement.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have very good attitudes to school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good.
Personal development and relationships	Very good.
Attendance	Very good.

These areas are all strengths of the school and have a very positive impact on standards.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Excellent	Very Good	Very 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.

All teaching seen was at least satisfactory; 42 per cent was very good or better, including 13 per cent which was excellent. The teaching of English and mathematics is very good, enabling the core skills of numeracy and literacy to be taught effectively. There are no weaknesses in teaching overall, although in some satisfactory lessons in Key Stage 2 there was insufficient classroom support so that the pace was slower than in some other lessons. In general, the use of the available classroom support and of volunteers is outstanding. Work is well matched to all pupils needs; note is taken of targets in the individual plans of pupils with special needs. Higher attaining pupils have been targeted for focused teaching in mathematics. Ingenious timetabling allows for significant amounts of specialist teaching. This quality of teaching means that pupils learn effectively, making rapid gains in knowledge, especially in reception.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good overall; excellent in reception. An appropriate statutory curriculum is in place. Ingenious use of specialist teaching in mathematics, music and dance.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good provision leads to very good progress in Key Stage 1 and good progress in Key Stage 2.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good provision in all areas.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good procedures for child protection. The outcomes of good assessment procedures are used effectively in setting targets for the school. However, individual pupils do not have individual targets to aim for.

The school has a very productive partnership with parents, who lend it excellent support. Teachers know pupils well, but some areas of welfare, such as fire drills, are not recorded formally enough, though they are otherwise satisfactory. The curriculum meets statutory requirements.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good overall. Monitoring of teaching and learning is not well developed by all subject co-ordinators.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good: they have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good: tests are analysed and appropriate action taken.
The strategic use of resources	Good.

The school has sufficient, appropriately qualified staff. The accommodation is very good and the curriculum is well resourced. The school development plan appropriately focuses on raising standards, but action plans for subjects are not directly linked to that for the whole school. The school runs efficiently and the principles of best value are applied well.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The caring atmosphere and the way that pupils care for each other. • The high standards and quality of teaching. • The approachability of the staff. • The quality of extra-curricular art, music and drama. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents had no complaints.

The team agreed with parents' positive views.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Standards in the school are high at all levels.
2. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests for Key Stage 1, pupils' average scores in reading and mathematics were well above the average for all schools nationally. Scores in writing were even better; pupils in this school had very high results in that they were higher than those in at least 95 per cent of schools. These scores are so high because very large proportions of pupils attain the higher level (Level 3) in the tests. A similar, but better, picture emerges when the school is compared with others with a similar intake. Scores in reading were still well above average, but writing and mathematics were very high. Teachers' own assessments paint the same picture. Teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment in science show that all pupils gained at least the expected level (Level 2), and three times more than the national average (60 per cent compared with 20 per cent nationally) gained the higher level (Level 3). When these science results are compared with those for similar schools, the proportions gaining at least the expected level and the higher level are both within the top 5 per cent of schools nationally.
3. Comparisons with previous years' results show a steeply rising trend overall since 1997 when results in English were broadly average and in mathematics they were below average. There was a significant improvement in 1998, which was consolidated in 1999, although the results in reading fell slightly in that year. Nevertheless, the overall trend recently has been one of rapid improvement at a faster rate than nationally.
4. Since 1998, girls have outperformed boys in all the tested subjects by a greater degree than is found nationally.
5. In the 1999 Key Stage 2 National Curriculum tests, the average score in the school was above the national average in English and well above that average in mathematics and science. When compared to schools with a similar intake, the same picture emerges of above average English results and well above average results in mathematics and science. There is little difference in the performance of boys and girls. The school has been achieving high levels of success consistently since 1996. However, there was a fall in English results in 1999. The school has analysed the reasons for this and discovered that it had not given enough emphasis to writing during the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy, which caused the fall in average level gained. The school has taken action to correct this in the present year, and early indications are that the approach is bearing fruit. The school's mathematics performance approximately mirrors the national trend whilst remaining somewhat above it. However, in science, the school has maintained attainment at similar high levels since 1996 whilst the national trend has been one of improvement, so that the gap is narrowing.
6. Inspection findings, which take into account a wider range of evidence than test results alone, broadly confirm the picture of high attainment.

7. Children under five in the reception class are solidly in line to exceed the expectations of the official desirable outcomes for learning. Indeed, from a broadly average starting point, many have already exceeded these expectations and are working within the first levels of the National Curriculum. This is the result of consistently excellent teaching in a rich, stimulating environment. Many are already working at levels more usually seen in Year 1 in all of the areas of the curriculum, although the emphasis, appropriately, is towards language and literacy, mathematics and personal and social development. The high levels of achievement here give children a flying start, which has been a major factor in the steeply rising standards at the end of Key Stage 1. The challenge of the work and rapid progress made indicate that these pupils' achievement is quite outstanding.

8. At the end of Key Stage 1, attainment in English, mathematics, science, art and history is well above average. Attainment is above average in information technology, religious education, geography and physical education, and dance is a strength within physical education. Standards in design and technology and music are as expected. At the end of Key Stage 2, attainment in mathematics continues to be well above average, and it is above average in English and science. In science this is because pupils do not learn about investigative science well enough, an area not tested in the National Curriculum tests. Attainment in art and history is well above that expected, whilst it is above expectations in geography, information technology, physical education and religious education. Standards in design and technology and music are as expected. When the level of attainment on entry is taken into account, together with the levels of challenge that pupils are presented with, this represents outstanding achievement in reception and very good achievement in Key Stages 1 and 2.

9. Standards of pupils with special educational needs are below the expected levels set by the National Curriculum. These pupils make excellent progress in the reception class, very good progress at Key Stage 1 where there is very effective support from classroom assistants and good progress at Key Stage 2, where the same level of support from classroom assistants is not available on a daily basis. The school successfully sets appropriate challenging targets for individuals and groups of pupils with special educational needs, making effective use of its baseline assessment and other assessment test data and target setting in individual education plans and in statements. The progress of these pupils towards their targets in individual education plans and annual reviews is at least good, as is evident in their academic records, their responses in class, their performance across the full range of subjects, and how they learn in small groups and in one-to-one teaching. Pupils with special educational needs make identifiable gains in knowledge, skills and understanding due to very good teaching and focussed planning and support. The introduction of the National Literacy Strategy and the National Numeracy Strategy are having a positive impact on attainment of all pupils.

10. The school has undertaken a number of strategies to develop its support for more gifted pupils. This includes the provision for some specialist teaching, which is unusual in a school of this size. This has been effective so that such pupils make very good progress in reception and good progress elsewhere in the school. The high numbers of pupils gaining the higher levels at the end of each key stage is further proof of the effectiveness of the school's strategies.

11. These findings represent a significant improvement over those at the time of the last inspection. At that time, attainment was judged to be satisfactory throughout the school, but with standards that were too low in design and technology in Key Stage 1 and in information

technology in Key Stage 2. The progress of more able pupils was unsatisfactory. These shortcomings have been overcome in that the majority of pupils are now working at levels higher than expected in most subjects and the action to rectify the unsatisfactory progress of more able pupils has been effective, especially at Key Stage 1.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour, personal development and attendance are all very good, which has a very positive impact on their learning. Attitudes have improved since the previous inspection when they were judged to be satisfactory. This is because of the high commitment of staff and the very good teaching. Pupils enjoy coming to school and are enthusiastic learners. They settle quickly to tasks and are interested in their work. They listen and concentrate very well and respond well to teachers, working productively without direct supervision and persevering well with difficult tasks. Even the youngest pupils have a mature approach to learning. Pupils take care in their presentation and are rightly proud of their achievements. They discuss their work confidently and enjoy demonstrating movements in physical education. For example, the oldest pupils performed their dance based on 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner' very confidently in a whole school assembly. The youngest pupils posed happily for a photograph of themselves with their house made out of food. Many pupils enjoy the wide range of extra-curricular sporting and cultural activities provided by the school. During the inspection, several of the oldest pupils happily took part in an indoor athletics event that finished late in the evening.

13. Behaviour is very good in lessons and around school. This has a positive impact on pupils' capacity to extend their skills of personal study and independent learning. Pupils know the 'golden rules' and respond very well to the high expectations of behaviour and trust the staff put in them. On rare occasions, pupils' enthusiasm for learning makes them call out inappropriately in lessons, but they respond very well to teachers' praise and positive approach to discipline. Pupils enjoy the many games and activities that are available during break times. There have been no recent exclusions. Parents are pleased with behaviour in school and believe that pupils are good ambassadors on visits out of school. Parents and pupils are happy that bullying is not an issue in this school. Pupils are polite, trustworthy and show respect for property.

14. The quality of relationships throughout school is very high. The staff present excellent role models, and there is a strong ethos of caring and sharing across the school. Pupils are very supportive of each other, regardless of age. They listen well to each other and respect each other's feelings and beliefs. Pupils reflect well and fully understand the impact of their actions on others. Parents greatly appreciate this aspect of school life. Pupils work well in pairs and groups, willingly helping each other. The success at the indoor athletics meeting during inspection week demonstrates the effectiveness of teamwork. The Year 6 dance performance in assembly was also a most impressive team effort.

15. Personal development is very good. Pupils willingly take a lot of responsibility in the classroom and around the school. From an early age, they have a mature approach in lessons and are beginning to take responsibility for their own learning. Children in reception showed very good independence when choosing materials for their food house. Older pupils show increasing initiative, and can plan and organise their own work. Pupils of all ages are quick to help with daily chores such as handing out books, tidying up, ringing the bell and running

small errands. 'Playground buddies' enjoy looking after the younger pupils at lunchtime and 'book buddies' share books with younger pupils. Other pupils take their responsibilities as house captains, assembly monitors and members of the Millennium Council very seriously. Pupils give very good support to a variety of international, national and local charities, such as the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, Children in Need and Action Aid. Harvest produce is distributed to the local elderly. However, many lessons are directed by the teacher so that pupils do not get the opportunity to organise their own work. This is especially true in the area of experimental and investigative science.

16. Most pupils with special educational needs show enjoyment, interest, application and involvement. They work well independently and in groups, and most sustain concentration. They respond very well to focussed help and usually persevere when tasks are challenging. They form very positive relationships with all adults and with other children.

17. Attendance rates are well above the national average and are very good because pupils enjoy coming to school. The school ensures that parents appreciate the value of good attendance. There is no recorded unauthorised absence because of the rigorous approach to following up absence. Punctuality is very good and lessons start promptly. Registration procedures are efficient and fun because of the variety of techniques teachers use, such as answering with surnames or practising tables.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

18. Teaching is very good throughout the school. This is a significant improvement over the situation at the time of the last inspection when teaching was satisfactory overall.

19. Teaching was at least satisfactory in all lessons seen and was good or better in over four fifths. Teaching was at least very good in over two fifths of lessons and excellent in more than one lesson in eight. These statistics, especially the level of excellent teaching, are most unusual. There is very little difference between Key Stages 1 and 2: in both the vast majority of lessons were judged good or better and over a third were very good. The teaching of children under five in the reception class, however, is excellent. The effect of this high quality teaching was evident in lessons. Pupils learned very well and, consequently, they demonstrate high levels of achievement. This is especially pronounced in the reception class, in which children have moved from average levels of attainment, as measured by baseline tests, to levels well in excess of those expected in little over a term.

20. The excellent teaching in reception is characterised by lively lessons and very brisk pace. Expectations of what children will be able to do are very high, and children rise to the challenge. For example, in a lesson focusing on language and literacy, a group was encouraged to write independently a letter to the witch in the story of Hansel and Gretel. The teacher's enthusiasm soon rubbed off on the children so that they produced several sentences expressing their ideas, including that the witch should 'try to be as good as you can'. There is plenty of support in this class, both from classroom assistants and from volunteer helpers. These assistants are very well briefed and share the teacher's high expectations, so that all the class are firmly on the task they have been set. There were no weaknesses in any of the observed lessons in reception.

21. Teaching is very good overall in Key Stages 1 and 2. Again, lessons are characterised by high expectations of what pupils will do. In Key Stage 1, support in the form of classroom assistants and volunteers is very effective, and counteracts the potential problems inherent in having large classes. However, in some Key Stage 2 lessons, the lack of support for some large classes means that some lessons have a slower pace. Nevertheless, the contribution made by parent volunteers to learning is outstanding. When teachers are enthusiastic about their subject, this shines like a beacon and enthuses pupils. This happened in a very good lesson about The Gambia, which was focused on listening skills as pupils listened to a tape of sounds from The Gambia and compared them to sounds they could hear in school. The subsequent discussion following a reading of a poem built effectively on their previous knowledge of, for example, onomatopoeia. The school also offers French to Year 6 pupils. Excellent teaching took place in the lesson observed. The lesson was conducted entirely in French and catered extremely well for the different levels of ability and confidence in the group. This was combined with very clear explanations and very good questioning techniques that led to excellent interaction between the teacher and pupils. This in turn enthused the pupils so that they concentrated hard, learned well and made great gains in knowledge.

22. Less effective, but still satisfactory, teaching lacked the same pace and vivacity. In some larger Key Stage 2 classes, pupils were not always working as hard as they could because there was not enough support for them.

23. The teaching of English mainly follows the format of the National Literacy Strategy and is very good overall. The school noted that attainment in English fell slightly in 1999, and diagnosed this to be because writing was less well taught. As a consequence, some extra time has been given over to writing, and this was well used in the inspection period. For example, pupils in Year 3 had a topic lesson given over to creative writing following an initial discussion about magic toothpaste. In this very good lesson the pupils were so engrossed in the task that the teacher's management of behaviour was quite invisible. Her discreet circling of the class giving words of advice enabled pupils to learn very effectively and produce imaginative, sensitively written stories with powerful imagery, such as, 'I was standing on chocolate ground, sherbet snow was falling'.

24. Mathematics teaching follows the National Numeracy Strategy and is very good. The initial warm-up segment is used effectively and pupils are challenged to think through incisive questioning. Following this, activities are matched well to pupils' needs. This happened in a Year 6 lesson about circles. The highest attainers were set the task of discovering a link between the circumference and diameter of a circle; their weaker peers consolidated their knowledge of the vocabulary of circles and their skills of drawing circles neatly and accurately using a pair of compasses.

25. Teaching in science is good. Although there was a high proportion of very good teaching in science, as in many other subjects, the area of investigative science is not developed well enough. Instead of designing their own experiments, pupils mainly follow instructions or watch demonstrations. This is one reason why attainment in science has remained similar over the last few years when the national trend has been rising. Little direct teaching of information technology was observed. However, the lessons that were seen, combined with evidence from previous work, indicate that the teaching is at least good. The

teaching of religious education is very good. The time allocated to design and technology is small; no lessons were observed, but the evidence from planning and completed work indicates that teaching is at least satisfactory. Teaching is very good in art, history and geography. Teaching is good or better in all other subjects.

26. Teaching throughout the school is very effective in meeting the needs of all its pupils. In the majority of lessons, different pupils receive different work that is challenging at the right level. Tasks meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs very well. Class teachers' planning ensures that work is matched to pupils' needs, and on-going records keep track of the progress made. Planning is effective in ensuring that the special needs co-ordinator and local authority special educational needs support staff liaise successfully with class teachers, whether pupils are supported in the class or withdrawn from lessons. Individual education plans contain clear targets and are sufficiently practical for class teachers and classroom assistants to implement them. Classroom assistants are very effective in providing an appropriate blend of help and challenge, enabling children to make excellent progress in the reception class, very good progress at Key Stage 1 and good progress at Key Stage 2. The provision outlined in statements of special educational needs is successfully implemented. Higher attaining pupils are effectively supported in Key Stage 1 where, for example, the mathematics co-ordinator takes a small group of high attaining Year 2 pupils for one lesson per week. This has also taken place in the lower part of Key Stage 2, and is due to be extended to Year 6.

27. The high standard of teaching and teachers' uniformly high expectations of behaviour and work rate mean that all pupils learn effectively and make more rapid progress than their peers in other schools.

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

28. The previous inspection noted that the school offered a broad curriculum, with a good range of extra-curricular activities. Provision for pupils' physical development was judged to be particularly rich, and there were opportunities to learn French. However, the report noted a need to develop schemes of work to ensure progression. The school has maintained all of these strengths and made considerable improvements. Policy statements have been developed for all subjects and are supplemented with medium term plans. Schemes of work have been adopted for all subjects, identifying assessment objectives.

29. The curriculum for children under five in the reception class is excellent, and leads smoothly into the early stages of the National Curriculum. In Key Stages 1 and 2 the curriculum offered is very good. English and mathematics are given priority and all Key Stage 1 and 2 classes have a daily session of literacy and numeracy. All other subjects are taught for a suitable amount of time. Personal, social and health education is taught through other subjects and through 'circle time'. The provision for circle time is particularly good. Provision is made for sex education, and pupils are made aware of the dangers of drugs. The school arranges visits for pupils to places of interest to enhance and enrich the curriculum. These visits have included those to the local church to support work in history and a visit to

the Connaught Theatre in Worthing to support work in literacy. Visitors from the community are invited into the school to support topic work. The annual residential trip to the Isle of Wight gives pupils the opportunity to experience a variety of curricular and sporting activities to promote their personal development and social skills. The school has a homework policy that identifies the work that should be set.

30. In English and mathematics lessons, the school is following the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. In other subjects, the school has either adopted the nationally recognised schemes of work or adapted them to meet the needs of the school. There are long and medium term plans to ensure a reasonable balance within the foundation subjects and to help teachers plan for a systematic development of skills.

31. The school's provision for ensuring equality of access and opportunity for all pupils is very good. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum and all the other activities of the school. Pupils with special needs are very well supported through good curriculum planning. Their individual education plans are clear and precise, which enables teachers and learning support assistants to focus on the most important issues for each individual. Plans are reviewed regularly. Good use is made of assessment to identify pupils who need extra help and to measure their progress. The school has effective strategies for teaching them the basic skills of literacy and numeracy, particularly in Key Stage 1, where trained classroom assistants give regular help to pupils with special educational needs.

32. The school makes very good use of the specialist skills of local authority staff. Pupils at Stage 3 or above of the special needs code of practice receive half an hour of individual support once a week from the authority's support teacher. They make very good progress within these lessons as a result of very good teaching, which leads to very good learning. The school provides additional funding for special educational needs in addition to the special educational funding that it receives. Classroom provision is organised to meet the needs of pupils with special needs. Arrangements for their individual education plans are effective in ensuring that their needs are met, while enabling them to have full access to the curriculum. The provision in statements is fully implemented.

33. Provision for all pupils, including those with special educational needs, is enriched through a wide range of extra-curricular activities. There is a very good range of such activities, including football, athletics, music and dance which are well attended. Some pupils have music instrumental lessons during school time, and this enriches the musical life of the school.

34. The school offers a secure, welcoming and caring environment. Its aims are clearly stated and followed in the daily life of the school. Teachers and other members of staff provide positive role models by showing respect for the individual and concern for the school as a community. The overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very good. Parents have generally expressed strong support for the school in this area. The majority indicated in response to the pre-inspection questionnaire that positive values and attitudes are effectively communicated to pupils

35. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is fostered mainly through assemblies, the programme for religious education and in many other subjects where spiritual issues are explored. Assemblies effectively create an atmosphere that encourages spiritual awareness. They satisfy statutory requirements and provide opportunities for pupils to reflect on their

own lives and the lives of others. Pupils are encouraged to develop a thoughtful appreciation of the changing seasons, the wonders of the natural world and the creation stories. Appropriate extracts from poems and other literature, songs and music are selected to develop pupils' spirituality and there are opportunities for reflection. In English, texts used in the literacy hour and poems written by pupils and teachers reflect the sense of awe and wonder in the natural world, for example, poems about winter. Opportunities for spiritual awareness also occur through dance at the Christmas Concert and the Harvest Festival.

36. The ethos of the school, which stresses respect for self and others, provides a very strong and effective focus for pupils' moral development. Values are fostered through the caring and supportive relationships that exist between staff and pupils and by the good example of all who work in the school. The behaviour policy is presented as a good behaviour book, and it includes a section on golden rules. These eight simple rules, clearly displayed in the hall, encourage pupils to care for and help others. They demonstrate a clear sense of ownership of these rules as well as individual and collective responsibility. Right and wrong are emphasised throughout the school by staff. Pupils are encouraged at all times to care for one another, the school and the community. Relationships between all staff reflect the atmosphere of friendliness and support which is apparent and this has a strong effect on pupils. The open-plan design of the school also helps to create the strong sense of belonging to a community where everyone has both rights and responsibilities.

37. The school actively promotes the development of good social skills very well. In all classes, pupils are given opportunities to respond to the needs of their peers in a thoughtful and empathetic way. The school ensures that pupils with special educational needs take a full part in school activities. In circle time, pupils are encouraged to express their ideas, knowing that they will be given respect. All pupils are provided with opportunities to take on responsibilities within their class as monitors for a variety of jobs. These responsibilities are extended as they mature, providing opportunities to develop social skills and confidence and to play an active role as citizens. They participate in the school's decision making process; every pupil in Key Stage 2 is a member of a House team and is involved in the election of house captains. Pupils in Years 2 to 6 elect two of their number from each class to be on the Millennium School Council, which meets each half term. Older pupils look after younger pupils at playtimes and wear badges which are clearly marked as playground buddies. Paired and group work feature frequently in lessons and this helps to foster collaborative learning and team participation. The school takes part in a variety of out-of-school activities, including music festivals, festivals of dance and sports. These activities develop pupils' self-esteem as well as their awareness of how to work as members of a team. Pupils in Year 6, accompanied by their parents, deliver Harvest food and flowers to senior citizens in the community. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 take part in a week's visit to the Isle of Wight, which helps to develop independence and social skills outside the classroom.

38. The school promotes the cultural traditions of its own area and of other cultures and countries very effectively, with the aim of celebrating cultural variety. Visits to places of interest and visitors to the school play an important part in developing children's understanding of cultural differences. The local vicar, lay readers and members of the community help children to learn about different religious traditions and beliefs. Visits to places such as the British Museum, the Weald and Downland Museum, Fishbourne Roman Palace, Chichester Cathedral and the local church enable pupils to develop their understanding of their own cultural background. Opportunities to learn about other cultures occur in geography and history. Year 6 undertakes a study of Europe and Year 5 undertake a

study of Africa and of The Gambia, in particular. French lessons for older pupils and an after-school French club for younger ones provide further opportunities for pupils to increase their knowledge and understanding of other cultures and traditions. In a recent African Week, three members of a dance and music group worked in the school for the week, which enabled all pupils to learn about the music and dance cultures of southern Africa. The library is well stocked with books about world faiths and the lives of people from other countries and different ethnic groups.

39. The school has very good links with the community, which are used very effectively to extend learning across the curriculum. This has developed well since the last inspection. A wide selection of visitors contributes very positively to pupils' personal and social development. These include local clergy, police, fire service officers and the school nurse. Visits to many local attractions, such as Fishbourne Roman Palace and the wildfowl park at Arundel, have contributed to learning in history and science. Younger pupils are studying local housing in their topic work. Good use is made of loan collections to enhance work in history. Pupils' understanding in English has been extended by trips to a nearby theatre. The school makes sound use of company voucher schemes to enhance resources. Good use is currently being made of a local student to teach art to pupils in Year 2.

40. The school has good links with the local playgroup, which helps to settle pupils when they first start school. There are constructive relationships with other schools in the area. Joint training sessions are held and there is collaboration on some policies. Liaison with the local secondary school prepares pupils well for their move to this school, though many pupils choose to go to other secondary schools. Some pupils attend master classes in science and maths at this school, but other curricular links are more limited. There is good liaison for pupils with special educational needs. The school enjoys good sporting links with local primary schools, so that pupils' abilities are extended through friendly competition.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

41. Teachers know all pupils well, including those with special educational needs, and take good care of their welfare. They are fully aware of their specific needs. They respond to them in a very positive and supportive way. Together with classroom assistants, teachers keep good records to track pupils' academic and personal development. They know what pupils do well and where they need help. As a consequence, support is directed effectively to pupils who need it in Key Stage 1 and this has a very positive effect on learning. Nevertheless, it does not address the needs of many pupils in Key Stage 2, particularly in the literacy and numeracy hours. The school builds effectively on its assessment procedures when identifying pupils with special educational needs, to comply with the code of practice. There are effective and consistent procedures for placing pupils on the register of special educational needs and for deciding what further help is needed in accordance with the school's special educational needs policy and the guidance in the Code of Practice. There is a good awareness of health and safety, but the health and safety policy is not specific to the school. It is unsatisfactory that no formal risk assessments are in place. Procedures for dealing with identified hazards are satisfactory. First aid and medical care are good. Pupils are well supervised at all times. Arrangements for child protection comply with locally agreed procedures and staff have a satisfactory awareness. There are good relationships with support agencies.

42. The school promotes good attendance and behaviour well. Registers are marked efficiently and absences are followed up quickly. Good arrangements are in place to register and monitor late arrivals. The school raises parents' awareness of the importance of good attendance effectively. However, more than ten days' of holiday have been authorised on occasion. Liaison with educational welfare services is appropriate. The school's behaviour policy successfully promotes good behaviour. The 'golden rules' have a high profile and pupils are very familiar with them. Pupils, staff, parents and governors were involved in writing the Good Behaviour Book. The school promotes a caring ethos very well and pupils know that bullying is unacceptable. There are good procedures for eliminating all forms of oppressive behaviour. Staff make good use of praise, stickers and house points to encourage good effort and behaviour.

43. The school has good procedures for monitoring and supporting personal development. Teachers know individuals very well and monitoring of personal development is usually informal. The poor behaviour of a few pupils is very well recorded and tracked. Good behaviour is noted in the merit book and acknowledged in assemblies, but this is usually for whole classes and only rarely for individuals. Academic progress is monitored through assessments and although satisfactory is not sophisticated.

44. The school provides sound educational and personal support and guidance based on assessments and the informal monitoring of personal development. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment in both the core and foundation subjects are sound. Baseline assessment is carried out on entry to the reception class. This information, combined with the school's own assessment, is used to track pupils' progress and to set targets. The school is also using official tests at the end of each year in Key Stage 2. The results of these tests are thoroughly analysed and annotated to give levels of achievement against level descriptors. These are compared with national results, trends over time and presented in graphic form for teachers to identify areas of weakness. From the results of these tests, targets are identified in subject development plans. However, individual target setting for pupils is not well developed and they are not informed of the levels that they are achieving compared with the National Curriculum levels. Portfolios of pupils' work in all subjects provide good support for teachers in their assessments. The school undertakes termly assessments of pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

45. The school has a very good range of productive and consistent links with parents and carers, which has a very good impact on pupils' learning. This is a particular strength of the school. There is strong parental satisfaction with the school, based on regular involvement in its work. Parents and carers find the school welcoming and staff very approachable. Parents frequently praise the atmosphere of the school and caring attitude of staff and pupils. They are very supportive of all the school provides and achieves. Parents feel the school has improved in recent years, particularly in the provision of extra sporting and cultural activities.

46. Parents' involvement has an excellent impact on the work of the school. Several of the governors are parents, who are committed to raising standards. They provide a very good link between other parents and the school management. A large number of parents and some grandparents help regularly in the classroom. They are very well briefed and provide very good quality assistance in a variety of subjects. There is an active parent teachers

association, which organises a range of events and contributes extremely well to the social and financial life of the school. They raise a substantial amount of money each year that is spent on enhancing school resources. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are properly involved in identifying their needs. They provide appropriate support and regularly review their child's progress.

47. Parents are provided with good quality information through regular newsletters. 'Starting at Aldingbourne' gives good practical advice for new parents. The governing body's annual report and the prospectus are useful documents but have some minor omissions. The governing body's annual report does not contain information on facilities to assist access for pupils with disabilities, arrangements for admission of pupils with disability, or steps to prevent the disabled being treated less favourably. The prospectus omits the National Curriculum assessment results and the school's rates of absence. Pupils' annual reports are satisfactory, but they contain too few targets for improvement. However, these are augmented well by the termly consultation or open evenings. Parents find these very useful to discuss their children's progress, and teachers are available to talk to parents at either end of the day. The homework policy is clear, and parents can use reading logs to communicate with teachers. Parents like the advance notice of topics to be studied, and this helps them to aid their children's learning. There is a sensible home-school agreement. Parents were consulted in the production of the behaviour policy. Parents have a very good effect on learning in the school, for example, by supporting pupils' reading at home.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

48. The school is very well led by the headteacher and his senior team. The governing body fulfils its responsibilities well. The school's performance is monitored well and effective action taken, although targets are only set for a year at a time so that ongoing evaluation is difficult. There are good levels of staff and resources, and the accommodation is very good. The school makes good use of the resources available to it and applies the principles of best value well.

49. The clear leadership of the headteacher and his senior team gives a strong steer to the school. They lead by example, all having high expectations of what can be achieved and performing to a high standard in the classroom. A clear and outstanding commitment to high standards is evident and permeates the whole school. The members of the team complement each other well and have a good working relationship. Indeed, good relationships are a feature of the whole school at every level. The school's mission statement, 'to educate our children in a caring, happy, stimulating and secure environment so that they can develop their full potential through our commitment to high achievement' is supported by five aims. These are all appropriate and are very clearly visible in the school's day-to-day life. The school's ethos is extremely positive and pupils feel valued so that the commitment to high achievement is tangible in every classroom.

50. Other staff members have responsibilities for curricular areas and these areas are, in general, well led. The provision of a shadow co-ordinator for each area to support the named co-ordinator has been a useful technique in maintaining continuity as staff change.

51. The governing body is a good one and is effective in carrying out its statutory duties. There are some areas in which procedures could usefully be formalised: these include the authorisation of absence for family holidays, risk assessments and the recording of fire drills. Nevertheless, the governors take an active role in the strategic management of the school and have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.

52. Teaching is mainly monitored by the headteacher, although the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy last year and the National Numeracy Strategy this year have been monitored by the relevant co-ordinators. Because of the recent focus on these subjects, others have been monitored and developed less. Teaching is supported well, nevertheless. For instance, staff have had the opportunity to observe the mathematics co-ordinator demonstrating the numeracy strategy. Other co-ordinators are able to offer more informal advice to colleagues as required. Appropriate policies are in place for appraisal.

53. The school, despite its small size, has been able to offer a certain amount of specialist teaching. For example, most classes receive music teaching from the specialist co-ordinator. This has been an effective decision, reflected in the judgement that music teaching is good. The co-ordinator for physical education, a dance specialist, also exchanges lessons with some staff, and this has been a major contributory factor to the high standards in dance. More able groups in mathematics receive focused tuition from the co-ordinator in Year 2. This has been effective in driving up standards at this stage so that the proportion gaining the highest levels is very high; indeed, some Year 2 pupils last year performed at the level expected of the average 11 year-old.

54. The school development plan overall is a good document, focusing appropriately on areas identified as weak. These priorities are very well chosen and have included the provision for more able girls in mathematics and the use of the opening mental mathematics part of numeracy lessons. Success criteria for each target are identified and are commendably measurable. This good development plan could be further strengthened by including success criteria for the individual elements that are intended to bring about improvement. Each co-ordinator has an individual action plan for their subject, but this is based on their perceptions of priorities and not always rigorously linked to the whole school plan. Nevertheless, the quality of development planning is much improved from that at the time of the previous inspection when priorities were not based on any rigorous analysis of need.

55. The cohesiveness of the school, including all staff, governors, parents and pupils, together with the shared commitment to improvement show that the school is in an excellent position to continue improvement.

56. The school manages its available funds well and with care in order to achieve the most efficient use of resources. The governing body is effective and monitors expenditure carefully. The local authority has recently audited the school and the recommendations have been acted upon. The school makes comparisons with other similar schools in attainment and expenditure. This information is carefully analysed and from this targets are established and presented to the governing body. The headteacher presents the budget to the governing body and future spending is targeted to the needs of the school. The headteacher has a monthly meeting with the school bursar to monitor expenditure. Co-ordinators are not provided with regular statements. Balance sheets are presented to the finance sub-committee who meet on a termly basis. The school operates a bidding system for subject co-ordinators to allocate

money to departments. Expenditure is monitored regularly by the headteacher and the senior management team. The school regularly reviews building and maintenance contracts and invites competitive quotations from contractors. The governing body and the headteacher consult with co-ordinators, staff parents and pupils about expenditure for the school. The specific grant for special educational needs is used effectively for its designated purpose and the school commits further sums of money to special educational needs. The governing body regularly monitors special educational needs provision.

57. The school has sufficient staff who are well qualified and experienced to teach the curriculum. There are good numbers of support staff, although they are mainly deployed in Key Stage 1. This is undoubtedly having the effect of raising standards here, but there are large classes in Key Stage 2 which do not receive the same level of support. Nevertheless, the range of staff and the intelligent use of them are good. The accommodation is very good. The semi-open plan nature of the key stage bases is not a problem as pupils are keen to learn and disregard any intrusive noise. The interior is made inviting by lively displays. The outside accommodation is very good, including that for reception pupils and the small swimming pool. The school has good levels of resources to enable it to teach the curriculum. It also makes good use of loan services for religious artefacts, for example. The staff produce their own high quality resources which are also effectively used.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

58. This is a highly effective school with no areas of significant weakness. Nevertheless, the governors, headteacher and staff should consider the following minor points in their future planning. They should:

- Devise a system of recording pupils' attainment so that rigorous short term, specific, measurable, achievable targets can be set. Set these in consultation with pupils so that they clearly understand both their current level of attainment and what they need to do to achieve their target. Regularly review them with pupils.
- Ensure that targets contained in the school development plan are considered in the appropriate subject action plans so that all development planning is directed to the same ends.
- Formalise the procedures for risk assessment, the recording of fire drills and authorisation of absence.
- Ensure that the governors' annual report to parents and the prospectus contain all of the statutorily required information.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	52
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	23

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
13	29	38	19	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

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	208
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	19

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	31

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	15
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	10

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.0
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	19	16	35

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	16	19	19
	Girls	16	16	16
	Total	32	35	35
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	91 (95)	100 (95)	100 (95)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	16	19	19
	Girls	16	16	16
	Total	32	35	35
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	91 (95)	100 (95)	100 (95)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	19	13	32

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	14	18	19
	Girls	11	12	12
	Total	25	30	31
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	78 (82)	94 (88)	97 (97)
	National	70 (64)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	15	18	18
	Girls	11	12	12
	Total	26	30	30
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	81 (88)	94 (94)	94 (100)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (71)

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	182
Any other minority ethnic group	

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8. 4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24. 8
Average class size	29. 7

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	128

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Financial information

Financial year	1998/1999
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	£
Total income	342786.00
Total expenditure	350692.00
Expenditure per pupil	1655.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	11561.00
Balance carried forward to next year	3655.00

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	222
Number of questionnaires returned	75

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	66	24	1	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	63	32	4	1	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	61	38	1	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	37	34	4	1	0
The teaching is good.	59	38	3	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	47	49	4	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	80	20	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	72	26	0	1	0
The school works closely with parents.	66	26	7	0	1
The school is well led and managed.	75	25	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	63	34	1	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	55	19	1	1	0

Other issues raised by parents

Parents were very positive in their responses.

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

59. Children enter the reception class on a full time basis in September or January of the academic year in which they reach their fifth birthday, and most younger children attend part-time in the autumn term, prior to full-time attendance in January. There are currently ten children who have attained the age of five and twenty children who are four years of age. There are very strong links with the two nurseries that most of the children attend prior to entry to the school. The reception class staff visit the nurseries and the children visit the school on several occasions prior to entry. Packs containing a reading book and suggested activities are effective in helping children become familiar with the school setting. Parents' contribution to school life is very good, and there are strong home/school links, including parental help in the classroom, the home-school reading record, one-to-one consultations, letters to parents and meetings. The guide for parents whose children are starting school is particularly valuable in that it outlines the ways in which parents can help their child to develop general social skills, independence, speaking and listening skills, and promote their learning, as well as details of school procedures. Results of baseline assessment of four-year-old children in the reception class early in the autumn term indicate that the overall attainment on entry to the school is in line with levels expected nationally. Children are given an excellent, stimulating learning experience that caters for their individual needs. By the end of their time in the reception class, all children, including those with special educational needs have made excellent progress in all areas of the curriculum, and their attainment is well beyond what would normally be expected. In all areas, teaching is excellent, as is the support of classroom assistants and parents, who are well briefed for their roles. Planning is outstanding, expectations are very high, management of children is excellent and the interaction between children and adults is very effective. These factors serve to promote the excellent learning seen in reception.

Personal, social and emotional development

60. Most children settle very quickly into the routines of the reception class and thoroughly enjoy coming to school. Children quickly develop their confidence and self-respect, making excellent progress in the acquisition of social skills. They behave in appropriate ways and are aware of right and wrong. They are taught to be independent learners and to work well in groups. They are willing to take turns and to share fairly. They treat living things, resources and the environment with care and concern. They have excellent relationships with others and sensitivity towards them. They show a range of feelings, such as awe and wonder when the 'King of Number' paid them a visit. They respond well to cultural and religious events, contributing confidently to whole-school assemblies. They concentrate, persevere and work to achieve success. They take initiative and are able to select an activity or resources. They have personal independence, for example, in dressing and hygiene.

Language and Literacy

61. Teaching is excellent, as is the support of classroom assistants and parents, which enable children to be taught in small groups. Resources are excellent and very well prepared, for example an alphabet songbook to the tune of 'Skip to My Lou'. The pace of lessons is rigorous, assessment is on-going and learning is of a very high order. Achievement is

excellent and attainment is well above what might be expected, with many children already working at Level 1 of the National Curriculum. Children listen attentively to stories, songs and rhymes and talk about their experiences with confidence. They use increasing vocabulary to express thought and convey meaning. They take part in role-play and make up their own stories. They use and enjoy books and are familiar with their layout. All pupils recognise their own names and familiar words, recognise letters of the alphabet by shape and sound, and associate sounds with patterns in rhyme, with syllables and with words and letters. They use pictures, symbols, familiar words and letters in their writing to communicate meaning, and write their names with appropriate use of upper and lower case letters. About six four and five year old children are already able to write their own stories over two pages. For example, they write interesting letters, beginning 'Dear Witch' in response to a letter which the class received from her. Excellent relationships ensure that pupils are interested, enthusiastic, attentive, motivated and respond to challenge, leading to excellent learning.

Mathematics

62. Teachers' subject knowledge is excellent, leading to thorough and imaginative planning. In one lesson observed, for example, children were enthralled as the 'King of Number' burst into the room. The King muddled his numbers so that the children, who can count to 100, corrected him with glee. Through very effective use of questions and targeting of individual children, he developed their facility with number and strengthened their recall skills and mental calculation strategies. All children were successful in recognising numbers randomly from the hundred square. When he departed, telling them to work hard, a little girl observed, 'We'd better get our heads round it, before he comes back.' Such an excellent approach excites and inspires children to enjoy mathematics and to work with purpose and self-confidence. Attainment is well in excess of the norm, with pupils working at Level 1 of the National Curriculum and achievement is excellent. Children are familiar with real money, are able to add and, through role-play, spend it on items in the well-stocked classroom shop. In addition, they can describe shapes, such as a circle and a cube. They recognise and recreate mathematical patterns. They compare, sort, match, order, sequence and count, using everyday objects. Through practical activities, they begin to solve practical problems and show an awareness of number operations, such as addition and subtraction, and of language such as add one more, take one away, how many altogether, how many are left?

Physical development

63. Children learn to move with confidence, imagination and grace, with increasing control, co-ordination and awareness of space and of other children. They use balancing and climbing apparatus with increasing skill, and have daily access to their own covered and open play area with large apparatus and wheeled toys. They use a range of large and small equipment with increasing skill. An extremely effective lesson seen during the inspection focused on throwing and catching rugby balls in pairs, and developing an awareness of space. After an excellent warm-up, the children made very good progress in acquiring the basic skills of throwing and catching in rugby by a teacher who is an excellent role model in that she herself plays the game seriously. The children were engaged in the lesson throughout, as a result of the brisk pace and the opportunity to build on previously learned skills. Boys and girls work happily together and acquire the skills well. She extended their understanding through frequent, focussed questions and allowed them plenty of choice. Attainment is very good, with the children all working beyond the desirable outcomes for learning and within the National Curriculum for Key Stage 1. Achievement is excellent.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

64. Attainment is well above average and achievement is excellent. Pupils are well on the way to achieving the desirable learning outcomes. In many instances they have exceeded them and are working at the early levels of the National Curriculum. Pupils talk confidently about their families and past and present events in their lives. They talk about where they live, their environment and the purpose of some of its features. They explore features of living things, such as the plants in the school grounds and natural and made objects. During the inspection, they were given the opportunity to investigate the similarities and differences in different types of paper and materials. They were encouraged to observe and talk about why certain materials are used for specific things. This process was helped when 'The Jolly Postman' arrived in the classroom and needed help to choose the paper to use to write a letter and wrap a parcel. This excellent introduction engaged pupils' interest and promoted very good learning. The range of strategies used ensures that all pupils work with purpose. The purpose of this lesson was helped by the range and quality of resources and the fact that the parcels and envelopes were actually posted. They will eventually return to the school and confirm whether or not the materials, which they chose, were the best. As part of the same topic, the children built a house out of food, with a strong emphasis on hygiene. They sensibly discussed the merits of the materials used, for example, bread for the walls. They make appropriate use of technology to support their learning. In a lesson observed, they confidently used programmable robots, sending them forwards and backwards through instructions.

Creative development

65. Children explore sound through music and speech. They explore colour, texture, shape, space and form through art and movement. They are given frequent opportunities to respond in a variety of ways to what they see, hear, smell, touch and feel. They show increasing ability to listen, observe and use their imaginations through art, music, dance, stories and imaginative play. Assemblies make an excellent contribution to this and contribute strongly to the children's spiritual development. They use a wide range of materials, suitable tools, musical instruments and other resources to express and communicate feelings. They sing tunefully with a good sense of rhythm and successfully maintain the rhythm in a simple sequence clapped by the teacher. They recognise a variety of percussion instruments by name and the sounds that they make. They excel at dance. They recognise basic colours, such as red, blue and yellow, and know how to mix colours. They paint using bold brush strokes and explore texture, when other substances are added to paint. In role-play, the children use their imaginations well. The vibrant, colourful environment of the classroom, with its bold displays, such as that of 'Help Clumsy Clown to learn his colours' all assist in promoting excellent learning.

66. Leadership is superb. Children are encouraged, in a warm and sensitive manner to accept responsibility for themselves and their own learning. The partnership between the teacher, classroom support assistants and parents is outstanding. Every opportunity is used to extend learning, such as counting when totalling up the register. Resources are of a very high quality, many of them made by staff and parents. Very good use is made of all teaching areas. Very good records are kept of children's achievement, with careful assessments each week. Parents are very successfully involved in their children's learning. Reading books are sent home regularly and parents are encouraged to keep good quality, constructive records of their child's reading development through the home-school record. The provision for the reception class and the quality of teaching and learning are major strengths of the school.

ENGLISH

67. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests in reading for seven year olds, the proportion of pupils who achieved the expected level (Level 2) was above the national average and that for similar schools. The number of pupils achieving the higher level (Level 3) was well above the national average. In writing, the proportion achieving Level 2 was above the national average and that of similar schools, and the proportion attaining higher Level 3 was very high compared with the national average. Although there was a slight dip in the 1999 test results for reading, the overall trend over the four previous years is above the national average. Girls' attainment is above boys in both reading and writing.

68. The results of pupils aged 11 in 1999 were above the national average and that of similar schools. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher level (Level 5) was also above the national average and that of similar schools. Although the 1999 results show a slight dip, there has been a rising trend over the four previous years. There is no significant difference in attainment between boys and girls. Inspection findings show that attainment in English is well above the national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 and above average at the end of Key Stage 2.

69. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are good at both key stages. By the time they are seven years old, they use a wide range of vocabulary. The literacy hour is well used to develop their speaking skills and pupils respond enthusiastically when describing a new story. In the shared reading sessions, they listen carefully to the teacher, often joining in with a familiar text and volunteering opinions about characters. In discussion, they respect the ideas of others and respond to them, taking turns to answer. The friendly ethos of the school and the very good relationship between pupils and teachers give pupils the confidence to speak in front of others. By the time they are 11, they use a wide range of vocabulary. They contribute well to discussions and respond to the views of others. However, because of their enthusiasm to offer their views and opinions, they do not always wait their turn to respond. When speaking in front of others, either in the class or in assemblies they show confidence. They converse easily with adults.

70. Pupils' attainment at the end of both key stages in reading is significantly above average. By the time the pupils are seven, they read accurately with understanding. They have good sight vocabulary and use their earlier learned skills to sound out unfamiliar words. There is a good reading home-school arrangement. These reading records are frequently signed and checked, and contain positive comments. This system is an effective dialogue between parents and school, which contributes well to their progress. The higher attaining

pupils show good ability and can re-tell a story and describe the main characters in the text. By the time the pupils reach 11 years old, they are capable of reading more advanced texts. They read fluently, with expression, self-correcting when necessary and understand what they have read. The higher attaining pupils have knowledge of authors and talk about their favourite books with enthusiasm. Few pupils have read more challenging texts. Older pupils are able to retrieve and select information from non-fiction books and are familiar with the Dewey system in the library. The small number of pupils with special educational needs experience difficulties with reading, but, with the benefit of literacy support, they are beginning to establish strategies to read unfamiliar words. Pupils are familiar with authors such as Roald Dahl and describe accurately and clearly events in books they have read, for example, 'Toms Midnight Garden' and 'Greyfriars Bobby'.

71. By the time pupils reach seven years old, their attainment in writing is well above that expected for their age. Pupils write in sentences and most of them show the appropriate awareness of using full stops and capital letters. They are confident users of the dictionary, and can place words into alphabetical order using the first and second letter. Good use is made of adjectives when describing characters during their literacy sessions. The standard of handwriting is good. Some pupils in Year 2 are already beginning to use joined up writing and all work is well presented. Spelling is generally accurate. By the time the pupils are 11 years old, their attainment in writing is good, but less well developed with extended writing. Although pupils show the ability to plan their work for story writing, the opportunities to develop this creative style have been infrequent. The school is aware of this and has extended the time allocation for the subject to include sessions for creative writing. Pupils have a sound knowledge of sentence construction, and use similes and adjectives effectively in their short texts during literacy lessons. Although pupils have an understanding of paragraphing, there is little evidence of its accurate use. Pupils do however, write formal letters and are fluent when writing poetry. Higher attaining pupils have knowledge of speech marks and the possessive apostrophe. The range of writing for different audiences is well developed and interesting, and includes persuasive writing, play-scripts, character description and diary writing. Pupils have studied a Shakespeare's 'Romeo and Juliet', comparing the play, script and animated film. Pupils talk about this experience with enthusiasm.

72. Across the curriculum standards of literacy are good. Pupils can write in different styles to meet the demands of the curriculum. In mathematics there are good examples of writing. In some subjects there is a variety of different forms of writing, such as the recording of observations in science and descriptions about artists they have studied in art. All subjects encourage the appropriate use of technical language, and this is well supported with displays in all classrooms of key words.

73. Pupils' attitude to the subject is very good. They are keen to participate in discussion and respond well to teachers' questions. Relationships are good and pupils collaborate well, in particular the shared reading groups. Pupils' behaviour is good throughout the school. They are anxious to complete and produce work of good quality and, when finished, show independence by either completing previous work or progressing with extension work without teacher intervention. In the literacy sessions pupils concentrate well in lessons and remain on task without direct teacher intervention.

74. The overall quality of teaching in English is very good. All the lessons observed were at least satisfactory, with five sixths being at least good and two fifths were very good. Lessons are well planned, following the structures and the learning objectives of the National Literacy Strategy. Lessons have good pace, start well with a summary of previous work, with aims of the lessons clearly explained to pupils. This approach immediately captures pupils' interest, resulting in their being quickly on task and making good progress. Teachers maintain discipline well, allowing pupils to respond to questioning and to contribute to class discussion without interruption. This leads to pupils starting work immediately with a full understanding of the task. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use questioning skilfully to ascertain pupils' understanding. Teachers have high expectations of pupils, set challenging work and make it clear at the beginning of a session what is to be achieved. Learning support assistants provide good support for teachers, especially in Key Stage 1. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and benefit with extra help from assistants. The assessment and marking of pupils' work is satisfactory, with comments on how to improve their work. The impact of this is that pupils make an effort to re-draft and improve their work. Teachers give good oral feedback during lessons and plenary sessions, highlighting and praising good work. This strategy contributes well to pupils' learning and progress. Although there are long-term targets for the subject, pupils are not given individual targets and they are unaware of the levels they are achieving. The procedure for the correction of spelling is not consistent across the school. Where teaching is less effective, lessons are not planned with sufficient detail, leaving pupils unsure of the task and progress slows.

75. The subject meets statutory requirements, and, with the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy, progression of skills is ensured. A portfolio of assessed and annotated samples of pupils' writing provides good support for teachers in their assessments. The leadership of the subject is good. The co-ordinator, who has only had responsibility for the subject since the beginning of the academic year, spent time shadowing her predecessor and has continued the commitment to maintaining and improving standards. Teaching has been monitored and teachers have been given formal feedback and areas for improvement. Newly purchased materials have improved the range of texts available for class and group reading in the literacy hour. Class libraries provide a good selection of suitable fiction books. The school library has recently been re-stocked with a wide selection of reference books, providing good support for pupils' research skills.

76. There has been considerable improvement since the previous inspection. The standard of attainment has risen and the quality of teaching improved, from a satisfactory level previously to very good. Much of this improvement has been due to teachers' collective responsibility to raise achievement and a commitment to good quality teaching.

MATHEMATICS

77. Pupils make very good progress in mathematics during their time in the school because of very good teaching, based on very good planning. This represents a considerable improvement since the last inspection, when progress was judged to be satisfactory.

78. The proportion of pupils reaching Level 2 or above was very high in comparison with the national average in the 1999 National Curriculum tests for seven year olds. The proportion of pupils reaching Level 3 or above was also very high in comparison with the

national average. Overall, pupils' results were well above the national average and very high in comparison with the average for similar schools. These results show a substantial improvement since the last inspection when results were in line with the national average. In 1997, results declined to below national expectations but, since then, results have been well above the national average, with a rising trend.

79. The percentage of pupils reaching the expected level (Level 4) or above was well above the national average in the 1999 National Curriculum tests for 11 year olds. The percentage of pupils reaching the higher level (Level 5) or above was well above the national average. The same is true if the school is compared to others with a similar intake. This represents a considerable improvement since the last inspection, when results were in line with the national average. Results have been well above the national average since 1997. During this period, the performances of boys and girls have been similar.

80. Evidence from the current inspection shows that pupils are working above the expected levels set by the National Curriculum. A review of past and present work, test results and discussions with pupils show that attainment is well above average at the end of both key stages, with pupils working at a higher level than expected for their age. This is the result of very good teaching in both key stages.

81. By the end of Key Stage 1, almost all pupils can develop their own strategies for problem solving and readily explain their work. They easily identify odd and even numbers, add and subtract with confidence and use halves and quarters. They understand place value up to 1000, begin to use decimal notation, use mental recall of 2, 5, and 10 x tables. They classify two- and three-dimensional shapes and use non-standard units and standard metric units in a range of contexts covering length, capacity, mass and time. They extract and interpret information given in simple tables and lists, and communicate collected data through bar charts and pictograms, where the symbol represents a set of units. They interpret information given in the above forms. During lessons observed, Year 1 demonstrated a very good knowledge of addition and subtraction and ability to compare objects of unequal weight. Year 2 pupils compared weights with non-standard units using a balance.

82. By the end of Key Stage 2, the large majority of pupils use some effective strategies for solving problems. They use all four operations of computation, using whole numbers up to 1000 and beyond. They can order, add and subtract negative numbers. When drawing or using shapes, they measure and draw angles to the nearest degree, using appropriate language. They understand and use the mean of discrete data. They explain the conclusions demonstrated by graphs and diagrams, including pie charts. Their facility in mental mathematics is very good. During the inspection, Year 3 were introduced to the vocabulary of a circle, circumference, diameter, radius, semi-circle, sphere and quadrant. Year 4 worked with magic squares and Year 5 estimated and measured angles. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils use computers to support their learning. Achievement is very good at both key stages because of very good teaching, which leads to very good learning.

83. The school provides pupils with very good opportunities to develop their numeracy skills throughout the school. As a result, by the time they leave school, they are numerate and can use and apply their mathematical knowledge to everyday situations. Mathematics is also used effectively to support learning in several subjects, including geography, science and art, where shapes and symmetry are used to form patterns. Pupils make very good progress

in both key stages. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress at Key Stage 1 and good progress at Key Stage 2 because of very good teaching and the levels of support available in Key Stage 1. These pupils respond well to the demanding but achievable tasks they are given.

84. Pupils' attitudes contribute positively to their learning. They listen attentively, sustain concentration and work hard to complete tasks with genuine enthusiasm. They work very well on their own, in pairs and small groups. The presentation of their work is usually very good. Very good quality displays, changed regularly to support what is currently being taught are used successfully to reflect pupils' work in mathematics.

85. The quality of teaching is very good in both key stages. Apart from two lessons in Key Stage 2, it was good or very good in all lessons seen. This picture is a considerable improvement on the last inspection, when teaching was sound overall with some shortcomings, and this improvement is reflected in the consistently high test results at both key stages. The use of homework is good. Teachers use incisive questions to check and extend pupils' mathematical understanding. Relationships are very good and are used well to set high standards of behaviour. Teachers mark pupils' work constructively and, where practice is best, informatively, to guide pupils.

86. The subject is managed very effectively by an enthusiastic and well-trained co-ordinator who monitors the planning and teaching of mathematics, gives demonstration lessons and provides in-service training for staff. Information from assessment procedures, including tests, is used well to help organise support for pupils grouped in similar levels of attainment. The co-ordinator has recently worked for one period a week with the highest attaining pupils in Years 2, 3 and 4; this initially came about through the target to raise the number of Year 2 pupils achieving Level 3 and has proved very successful. The success of this has led to its continuation and the targeting of other groups. The co-ordinator and the class teachers are aware of what pupils understand, know and can do through weekly teacher assessments, half-termly assessments of the objectives covered, termly assessments of work based on using and applying mathematics, and formal test results. There is a portfolio of work for guidance. The subject is a priority in the school development plan. The last inspection report indicated that Key Stage 1 results for higher attaining pupils were below the national average. They are now very high in relation to the national average.

SCIENCE

87. Standards are high in science in all areas, although investigative work is not yet emphasised enough. The levels of attainment and quality of teaching have both improved considerably since the last inspection.

88. Teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment in science at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999 show that every pupil gained at least the expected level in all areas. This placed the school firmly in the top 5 per cent of schools nationally. The school was also in the top 5 per cent in the proportion gaining higher than expected levels, except in the area of life and living processes, although even here the proportion was still well above the average nationally. The same picture emerges of a school performing very well and in the top 5 per cent when the school is compared to others with a similar intake. At the end of Key Stage 2, the average level gained in 1999 was well above the national average, with a particularly good

performance at the higher level (Level 5). The school achieved over 50 per cent more Level 5's than average. There is very little difference in the relative performance of boys and girls. Again, if the school is compared to others with a similar intake, these results remain well above average. However, the trend since 1996 has been very flat against a rising trend nationally so that the gap is narrowing.

89. Observations of pupils' completed work and of work in lessons show that attainment is well above that expected in all areas in both key stages, with the exception of practical and investigative work. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to design and carry out their own experiments. Although they have a good understanding of, for example, fair testing, they do not design experiments with this in mind. Most experiments are designed by the teacher and are quite often demonstrations, as happened in a Year 6 lesson about light and reflection. Although pupils carried out the actual experiment – shining a torch on surfaces and measuring the angles of incidence and reflection – in doing this they were following closely the teacher's directions. Nevertheless, pupils were able to discuss how the test had been made fair and did learn useful facts about how light travels. This is a significant improvement over the situation at the time of the last inspection when standards were judged to be average overall.

90. When their prior attainment is taken into account, the levels that pupils work at throughout the school indicate good levels of achievement in that they continue to make progress at a faster rate than expected.

91. Pupils invariably enjoy science lessons and demonstrate good attitudes. They are keen to find out what will happen in an experiment and are happy to discuss their ideas and make predictions. The uniformly good relationships mean that behaviour is easily managed so that pupils work hard and at a good pace. Consequently, their learning is also very good.

92. Teaching of science is good overall and very good in Key Stage 1. All lessons seen were at least satisfactory and nearly all were good or better. Two in five were very good. However, the analysis of completed work and discussions with pupils indicate that investigative science is not as well taught in Key Stage 2. This partly follows from a lack of confidence and guidance from the scheme of work, both of which are being addressed. Nevertheless, the school is very successful in its science teaching overall. In the very good teaching in Key Stage 1, groups were very well organised with the aid of classroom assistants and parent helpers. In discussion, for example in Year 1 about which materials would be good for the roofs of the three little pigs' houses, the teacher was very careful not to lead pupils so that they were able to make good quality predictions based on their prior experience. Although the thrust of the lesson was about testing to see if materials were waterproof, the teacher accepted that, for example, plastic sheeting might not be a good roof material as it is thin and the house might get cold. Further skilful questioning meant that pupils were able to understand how to make their test fair, unaware that the teacher was discreetly leading them. As a result pupils learned very effectively, made noticeable gains in their understanding and consolidated their prior knowledge. They were focused on the tasks and worked productively. When teaching is less effective, though still satisfactory, pupils' role in an experiment is a trivial one as the teacher gives a demonstration. For example, Year 3 pupils' contribution to an experiment about how toothpaste protects teeth was confined to dropping eggs into liquids and looking to see what happened. Although learning about caring

for teeth and the technical vocabulary of 'plaque', 'acid' and 'calcium' was well promoted, the skills of investigation were not. Nevertheless, this represents a considerable improvement over the situation at the time of the last inspection when progress in investigative science was judged poor throughout the school and teaching was judged sound overall.

93. The co-ordinator leads effectively and acts as a resource for other staff. She has not been able to monitor teaching and learning because of the recent emphasis on literacy and numeracy. For the same reason, development of a more rigorous scheme of work is only now taking place. The sections already completed of this give good guidance to staff about activities to use and the level at which to pitch lessons. More importantly, it gives guidance on investigative approaches. A useful folio of pupils' completed work has been assembled although the work contained in it has not yet been assigned National Curriculum levels.

ART

94. Opportunities to observe art being taught during the inspection were limited. Only one lesson was observed in Key Stage 1 and one lesson in Key Stage 2. Additional evidence was obtained from the pupils' past and present work, teachers' planning, school documentation, art portfolios, sketch books and displays around the school. This evidence shows that standards of work seen in both key stages are well above that which might be expected. This represents a considerable improvement on the last inspection when attainment was satisfactory overall with many good features. The achievement of pupils in both key stages is very good.

95. Very good work was seen during the inspection in Year 2, on observational drawings of penguins and clay models. In this, pupils recorded what they had learned, experimented with tools and techniques to produce accurate drawings and clay models. They used first-hand experiences, resources and materials to stimulate and develop ideas. Their classroom has very good displays and models of penguins and pictures of winter scenes.

96. Year 6 pupils focus on the Victorians and produce very good symmetry in designs, using water colours and repeat printing, based on the work of William Morris. In conjunction with their study of Europe, they work on still life and scale perspective, having studied the work of Van Gogh. They study the work of Picasso and Beryl Cook on the body and focus on a clay mother and child, Klee faces and abstract Modroc faces. Their work, in all these aspects is of a very good standard. Their very good level of achievement is due to very good, well informed teaching.

97. Pupils' attitudes to art are very good. They are interested and receptive and show involvement, application, enjoyment and enthusiasm. They work independently and show initiative. They sustain concentration and strive to achieve success, persevering when tasks are challenging. They work well collaboratively when required to do so. They build on previous knowledge and show respect for resources. Their behaviour is very good and they form positive relationships with adults and their peers. These very positive attitudes lead to very good learning, attainment and achievement.

98. Teaching is very good at both key stages and has a very positive effect on learning. Teachers' knowledge and understanding are very good and pupils are encouraged through homework and the use of excellent books on art and artists in the school library to undertake research for themselves. Planning is very effective. Teachers' expectations are very high,

and they create and sustain interest and motivation in the way that they introduce the topic and provide very good resources and examples. Their methods and organisation are very effective. Through effective use of questions and targeting of individuals, they provide opportunities for pupils to demonstrate methods and reasoning. They cater for the needs of all pupils and encourage success. The management of pupils is very good, as is the use of time, support staff, parents and resources, The quality and use of ongoing assessment is very good and excellent portfolios of work are used as a benchmark. The use of homework to support learning is good, for example, Year 6 pupils this week have to examine kitchen or garden utensils to design their own Archimboldo inspired face.

99. The curriculum is closely linked with termly topics and is broad, balanced and relevant at both key stages. The experienced co-ordinator gives very good leadership and sets a very good example with regard to display. She gives very good support to colleagues, encourages focussed planning and places emphasis on high standards of display and work. The improvement since the last inspection is directly attributable to strong leadership, very good teaching and very good attitudes on the part of the children. Parents are very appreciative of the high standards in art.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

100. As no lessons were observed during the inspection, judgements on standards have been made by the scrutiny of pupils' work, discussion with pupils, teachers and the subject co-ordinator. This evidence indicates that pupils make satisfactory progress at both key stages. Pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated into lessons and make appropriate progress. Design and technology is taught as a separate subject and, where possible, linked with a current topic.

101. From the earliest stages in the school, pupils begin to develop making skills, for example examining how a puppet is made and making their own. In these early topics, they work with 'buddies' in Years 5 and 6 who give extra support. Pupils in Year 2 develop their skills by examining packaging, how they are assembled and discussions about bar codes. Most begin to evaluate their products and make suggestions as to how to improve their work.

102. At Key Stage 2, plans show appropriate progression, relating to the requirements of the National Curriculum. Pupils demonstrate a better understanding of the design process. Their designs have detail and are clearly labelled. Pupils in Year 3 make a maze, demonstrating an understanding of the process of planning, making, testing and evaluating their work. Pupils in Year 4 begin to extend their skills by using a wider range of tools in a weather vane topic. Here pupils displayed their skills of cutting angles using a mitre block. The disassembling of a telephone during a communications topic developed pupils' understanding of the workings of a telephone. The disassembled parts were examined, drawings made and labelled. Pupils in Year 6 made furniture for a model house during a Victorian topic. They chose the appropriate materials, then designed and made the furniture with an emphasis on the correct scale. Pupils respond well to their work. They show an interest and can discuss methods they have used with the appropriate vocabulary. They take pride in their constructions and suggest ways that they could have improved them.

103. Evidence from pupils' work and teachers' planning indicates that the quality of teaching overall is satisfactory. However, because of the emphasis on core subjects, the time allocated for the subject has been limited. Although there are opportunities for pupils to study aspects of design technology, the opportunity to experience the complete design process is limited.

104. The subject is well led by the co-ordinator. There have been considerable improvements in many areas since the previous inspection. There is now a scheme of work, which has led to improved planning because it gives detail of practical activities and the development of skills. Attainment was judged to be unsatisfactory at the last inspection but has now improved. Resources for the subject are good, with a wide range of tools and materials that are easily accessible to both teachers and pupils.

GEOGRAPHY

105. Opportunities to see geography being taught were limited during the inspection to two lessons at Key Stage 1 and one lesson at Key Stage 2. Additional evidence was obtained from pupils' past and present work, teachers' planning, school documentation, photographic evidence and displays around the school. This evidence shows that standards of work at both key stages are above average, and achievement and learning are very good, due to very good teaching. This represents an improvement since the last inspection when attainment and progress were judged to be satisfactory.

106. Pupils in Year 1 further develop their knowledge of themselves and different types of houses. They successfully produce maps of their journeys to school, use simple co-ordinates and plans of the inside of a house. The subject is successfully introduced and creates interest through the example of the three little pigs' map of the wolf's journey. Pupils also visit the Weald and Downland Museum to study different types of homes. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are able to talk about the distribution of food, including a number of exotic foods and their places of origin. They plan the journey of a particular item of food from harvest to the table. They are able to compare and contrast a hot and cold country, namely Kenya and the Arctic, with regard to physical features, climate, people, plants and animals. They take daily weather recordings, and make rain gauges. During the inspection, Year 2 successfully developed their understanding of an atlas and what it is used for. They learned the difference between a continent and a country. They located hot and cold countries on a world map and identified the line of the equator. Very good learning occurs because teachers give very good instructions so that pupils are clear about what needs to be done, and they are engaged in interesting and challenging activities. It also takes place because pupils stay on task and maintain a good work rate. Their work is supported by a very good display on globetrotters and mapwork.

107. Pupils in Year 3 successfully use and interpret maps and keys. They interpret aerial photographs of the River Arun and recognise and describe common landscape features. Their learning is extended through the use of the river/flight program on a CD-ROM, which helps them to understand that computer simulations can represent the real world and provide valuable information. Year 4 use atlases and globes to locate Egypt. They can describe the functions of the River Nile, today and in the past. They study the physical features, climate, land use, people, plants and animals. Year 5 pupils have a very good knowledge of Gambia and compare a Gambian village with Westergate. They study the physical features, trade,

markets, tourism and the economy. Year 6 link with their history topic to trace the routes of New World exploration, using globes, old maps and the route of the Armada. They study Europe in detail, the physical and human features, settlement, trade, industry, climate and agriculture. A very good display and the learning of French support their studies. They discuss topical issues such as currency. They compare and contrast Aldingbourne village with the Isle of Wight, during their week's visit to the island.

108. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good and this has a very positive effect on learning. They are interested and keen to learn. They contribute eagerly to discussions and listen carefully to the views of others. They work very well both independently and collaboratively and maintain concentration. They build on previous knowledge, for example, of rivers and are keen to search out new facts. They use information technology with confidence. Their relationships with their peers and with one another are very good. All of these positive factors make a valuable contribution to learning.

109. Teaching is very good at both key stages and successfully promotes learning. Teachers' knowledge and understanding is very good and they encourage pupils to become independent learners through the use of homework, research and information technology. The expectations of teachers are very high and they encourage pupils to achieve success. Their methods and organisation are very effective and class management is very good. Well-established class routines ensure that pupils know what is expected of them and they make full use of their time and resources, as a result. Pupils are encouraged to demonstrate methods and reasoning and to respect the views of others. The quality and use of assessment is good and examples of good work encourage pupils to strive for success. Very good use is made of visits to places of geographical interest and these promote learning.

110. The curriculum is separate from but closely linked to the termly topics. It is broad, balanced and relevant at both key stages. The co-ordinator gives good leadership and ensures coverage and progression. The use of technology is effective. Monitoring and evaluation are good and could usefully be extended to include monitoring of teaching and learning. Learning resources are good and are well used and the scheme of work is currently being revised to have a sharper focus on skills.

HISTORY

111. Opportunities to observe history being taught during the inspection were limited. Only one lesson was observed in Key Stage 2. Additional evidence was obtained from the pupils' past and present work, the teachers' planning, school documentation, photographic evidence and displays around the school. This evidence shows that standards of work at both key stages are very good and achievement and learning are very good. This represents a considerable improvement since the last inspection, when attainment and progress were satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and at Key Stage 2, although progress in the skills of historical enquiry was limited at Key Stage 2.

112. By the end of Year 2, pupils can talk about famous men and women from the past, such as William Tell. They are able to talk about their parents' and grandparents' lives. They research what life was like for the native people of the Arctic Circle. They trace Captain

Scott's journey to the South Pole and talk about the dangers of travel, the contrast between Scott's equipment and that of today. They know about and can explain changes in means of travel since the invention of the wheel, and produce a timeline to show the major inventions of land transport.

113. Pupils in Year 3 have a well-developed sense of chronology. They can explain the achievements of the ancient Greeks and identify their legacy to the world. They broaden their knowledge through a visit to the British Museum. Work on the Romans is enhanced by a visit to Fishbourne Roman Museum, which helps to consolidate learning. Year 4 research the lives of inventors, such as Alexander Graham Bell and William Caxton. During the inspection week, they researched methods of non-verbal communication. Through good teaching, they discover how easy it is to communicate verbally, when it is useful and whether it is effective. Through skilled questioning, the teacher elicits information from pupils regarding e-mail, fax, sign language, Morse code, pictures and signs, semaphore, Braille, letters gestures and music. In groups, pupils succeed in spelling out a word using semaphore, Braille, mime and sign language. Pupils quietly and sensibly prepare group presentations, and perform well, due to clear instructions and good organisation. Year 5 are able to answer questions about life in Tudor times and the way of life of people at different levels of society. They have their own ideas about the character of Henry VIII. They have some understanding of his problems, leading to the break with Rome. They use information technology to devise various questions and use the Mary Rose web-site to find out facts. They understand how the lives of people in Britain have changed since the 1930s. Year 6 have a very good knowledge of Victorian times, which are brought alive for them on a visit to Osborne House, during their week's stay on the Isle of Wight. Their learning is further extended by a visit to the Weald and Downland Museum, where they take part in a Victorian rural life workshop and a Victorian school role-play. They are able to compare their own lives with those of children in Victorian times and are conversant with the lives of Lord Shaftesbury, Doctor Barnardo and with the writings of Charles Dickens, through strong links with literature. They trace the growth of the railways and the postal system.

114. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good and this has a very positive effect on their learning. They are eager, enthusiastic and interested. They are well motivated and are keen to achieve success. They work very well independently and co-operate well in groups. They contribute thoughtfully to discussions and respect the views of others. They build on previous knowledge and use resources wisely to extend their learning. They sustain concentration. Relationships with adults and their peers are very good. All these factors contribute to very good learning, attainment and achievement.

115. Teaching is very good at both key stages and has a very beneficial effect on learning and attainment. Teachers have very good knowledge and understanding. Pupils are encouraged to be independent learners and to use information technology and the very good quality history books in the library to support their learning. Their work in school is further supported through relevant homework. The expectations of teachers are very high, which successfully creates and sustains pupils' concentration. Their methods and organisation are very effective. They provide opportunities for pupils to demonstrate methods and reasoning. They cater for the needs of all pupils and give appropriate encouragement. The management of pupils is very good and, together with well established class routines, successfully promotes learning. The quality and use of assessment is very good and examples of good work serve as a useful benchmark. Very good use is made of visits to places of historical interest and these promote learning.

116. The curriculum is closely linked to the termly topics and is broad, balanced and relevant at both key stages. The co-ordinator gives very good leadership which ensures clear direction and reflects the school's aims and values in the work of the subject. The use of technology is effective. Monitoring and evaluation are good, though they could be usefully extended to include the monitoring of teaching. Learning resources are good and are well used and the good scheme of work ensures continuity and progression.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

117. Due to timetable constraints and inspection priorities, it was not possible to observe many lessons directly aimed at information technology. Judgements are based, therefore, on observations of its use in other lessons, discussions with pupils and teachers, and an analysis of completed work.

118. There has been considerable development of the subject since the last inspection, leading to significant improvements. At that time, limited resources meant that pupils did not have enough opportunities to use equipment and consequently did not make enough progress. The shortcomings have been largely overcome, and at the end of both key stages levels of attainment are now above expectations in all areas of the information technology curriculum.

119. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils understand the use of the computer as a source of information and know about searches. They can suggest appropriate phrases to search for in an encyclopaedia to find out about penguins. They know how to select text with the mouse and how to change its size. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have experienced the use of spreadsheets as calculating aids and as ways of holding information. They have mixed text and pictures on the page and made multimedia presentations linked with their history projects. When this is compared with their prior attainment, it represents good levels of achievement for these pupils.

120. In both key stages, pupils invariably enjoy using technology and do so sensibly. Pupils in Year 1 encouraged and helped one another to program a small robot to move in a predetermined path between the three little pigs' houses on the floor. In Year 3, the use of a simulation to support work on rivers helped to train pupils to become more independent in their learning and they did so, working well in small groups.

121. Teaching overall is good, leading to good learning by pupils. In the best lessons, the teacher understands the software well and is able to intervene effectively to help and introduce pupils to it. Good quality questioning is used to extend pupils' understanding. Volunteer helpers are very well briefed and promote learning very well, as happened in a Year 1 lesson when pupils were encouraged to program the robot with several stages of its journey at once. Adults did not correct mistakes so that pupils could identify errors in the programming and correct them themselves. This led to very good learning.

122. The subject is co-ordinated by a knowledgeable co-ordinator. He has produced an action plan to develop the subject through additional resources. However, this is not directly linked to the whole school development plan. The subject is effectively taught within the

topic system in the school. A folio of completed work is being compiled, but it is not yet complete or linked to National Curriculum levels. Significant numbers of pupils now have access to computers at home and the school is beginning to recognise this in its planning.

MUSIC

123. Progress in music is sound and provides a secure base for pupils' understanding and skills across the range of musical activities. Younger pupils sing songs from memory, clap in time and maintain a steady beat using percussion instruments. Pupils respond well when listening to music and are able to recognise the instruments played. By the time pupils are 11, they have an understanding of different types of music. They listen to and appraise the music that is played during daily assemblies. With the benefit of recorder sessions, pupils are beginning to read formal notation and can place notes in the correct place on a musical staff. In creative music, they record their work with symbols on a graphic score and use the appropriate vocabulary when discussing their compositions. The singing in assemblies is tuneful and of a good standard. They sing with enthusiasm, adding appropriate actions with good extended musical phrases. Pupils who have additional instrumental tuition attain high standards. Performance skills are developed in the school orchestra.

124. Pupils respond enthusiastically to music throughout the school. Their behaviour is good in lessons and they participate well in extra-curricular activities. They settle to work quickly, enjoy the practical sessions and are keen to demonstrate their playing ability. They work collaboratively when sharing instruments, and offer sensible comments when evaluating the work of others.

125. The quality of the teaching is at least satisfactory, and half of that observed was good. A specialist teacher who has good knowledge teaches the majority of lessons. Lessons have clear aims and are well planned to promote pupils' musical skills and understanding. Good improvisation skills are developed at the beginning of lessons because of an effective 'warm up' procedure. Teachers demonstrate skills well and transfer their enthusiasm to the pupils. Teachers have good discipline and deal with any misbehaviour quietly and efficiently. Good relationships are evident between pupils and adults. This was particularly noticeable in the extra-curricular recorder group, leading to good progress. Resources are well used during lessons and appropriately organised, so that pupils are quickly on task.

126. The school has an adequate range of resources, including tuned and untuned percussion instruments. The subject is well managed by the co-ordinator, who has revised the schemes of work to provide continuity and a balance in its elements. Good support is given to non-specialists by a well-structured commercial scheme of work that includes recorded musical accompaniments for practical music.

127. The previous report stated that there was insufficient time allocated to music, especially at Key Stage 2. This has now been addressed, with timetabled weekly lessons. Music in the school contributes well to pupils' cultural development, with opportunities to perform at concerts and school productions. Pupils also benefit from visits from local musicians.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

128. Pupils at both key stages achieve standards that are above expectations for their age. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Pupils make good progress when apparatus is set out for them and are fully active in the whole lesson. In gymnastics, younger pupils show ability and control in jumping and landing, and improve their performances through practice. They have good control of their movements when travelling in different directions, and devise a number of ways to travel over the apparatus. In Key Stage 2, pupils use their previously learned skills to develop sequences with precision and poise. Many of the movements are improvised and they work well in teams.

129. The quality of dance is very high. Pupils learn complicated sequences, develop good fluid movements, and contribute their own steps to the overall routine. All the routines are set to music and synchronised, so that pupils move at the appropriate point in the music. The extra-curricular dance group is of an exceptionally high standard, and often performs for events in the local community. Using a theme from a visiting African dance group, pupils have developed and refined their own version of a complicated dance routine that is exciting and rhythmically well co-ordinated.

130. Swimming is timetabled in five-week blocks for all pupils in Key Stage 2. All pupils, particularly those in Key Stage 1, benefit from the on-site swimming pool that is used regularly during the summer period. By the time pupils leave the school, the majority are competent swimmers who can exceed the expected twenty-five metres.

131. Pupils show an enthusiasm for physical education by their participation in the wide range of extra-curricular activities and competitive sport. During the inspection, older pupils took part in an inter-school indoor athletics competition and were awarded shields for their successes. Good quality teaching has continued since the last inspection. In the lessons seen, there were well-developed progressive activities and a gentle 'warm down' at the end. Activities are well planned and carefully delivered, with an emphasis on safety. There is no formal method of assessing pupils' skills, but teachers are aware of what pupils know and understand, and use this information to develop their skills in lessons.

132. The schemes of work provide continuity in teaching and learning. Teachers share their areas of expertise, which contributes to pupils' progress and learning. Resources are good, including appropriate apparatus for gymnastics. Hard surfaced play areas are in good condition and there is a well-maintained field. The subject is very well managed by a very enthusiastic co-ordinator who provides good support for teachers.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

133. At Key Stage 1, pupils reach standards that are above those specified by the locally agreed syllabus. This shows an improvement since the last inspection when standards were in line with expectations. They have a good understanding of Christianity, and receive an introduction to other world faiths, in particular, Judaism. In Year 1, pupils have a broad knowledge of the main events in the life of Jesus. They have a good knowledge of the local church, and this study is pursued further in Year 2. During the inspection, pupils in Year 2

demonstrated their knowledge of the symbolic nature of objects seen in the local church, for example, that a candle represents spiritual light. Their use of religious terminology is good; they speak confidently of artefacts, symbolism, and church furnishings, such as the pulpit.

134. At Key Stage 2, pupils reach standards that are above those expected in the locally agreed syllabus. This shows an improvement since the last inspection when they reached standards that were in line with expectations. Pupils continue to make good progress in building on their knowledge and understanding. Thematic stories are used to emphasise the importance of the individual and the good qualities inherent in everyone. Year 3 show awe and wonder in their appreciation of the world, and they study its harvest. They are aware that in many places there is hardship and not enough food to eat. They have a good knowledge of the seasons of the Christian year. Year 4 have an extensive knowledge of Judaism and of the life of Jesus. During the inspection, they revealed a very thoughtful approach to the parable of the sower. Year 5 reveal a good knowledge of the early church and the journeys of St. Paul. They study Islam in depth, and have an excellent display of artefacts. Year 6 have a good knowledge of Hinduism. They study Christmas, Easter, the Resurrection and the Ascension, in depth. During the inspection, they studied Martin Luther King as part of their study of people of faith. They were challenged to think about his dream and whether individuals can make a difference to the world. They exhibited depth of thought and very good literacy skills in speaking, listening and expressing their views.

135. Pupils' attitudes are very good and have a positive effect on learning. Lessons proceed at a good pace so that pupils make good progress. All are interested and enthusiastic, applying themselves well to their work. They are confident in contributing to discussions, listen well to others and respect their views. Their responses are very thoughtful. At Key Stage 2, the quality of debate and pupils' perception of other people and cultures is very stimulating. Very good relationships enable good learning to take place.

136. Teaching is very good at Key Stage 1. It supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well and promotes their literacy skills. The very good qualities of teaching in both key stages include detailed planning, high expectations, varied teaching methods, firm management of pupils, the effective use of time, staff and resources and the quality and use of ongoing assessment. The use of homework is good. Teachers are good at helping pupils to understand the elements of worship, and create an atmosphere of respect and reflection in lessons. The moral and social teaching of different faiths are well emphasised, and pupils are encouraged to link this with their own experiences. At both key stages, pupils engage in lively discussion which promotes literacy skills. Some opportunities are provided for recording their ideas and opinions, which help to develop expressive thought through writing. Resources, including artefacts, are used well to promote learning.

137. The curriculum is based on the locally agreed syllabus, which has recently been re-written. The experienced co-ordinator gives good support to colleagues and has provided books and artefacts to enable teachers to plan effective activities for pupils. The breadth, balance and relevance of the curriculum are very good. Assessment is good and teachers are very clear about what individual pupils understand, know and can do. Provided that monitoring procedures are enhanced, the subject has a good capacity for further improvement.