

INSPECTION REPORT

SHOLING INFANT SCHOOL

Heath Road, Sholing,
Southampton,
Hampshire SO19 2QF

LEA area: Southampton

Unique reference number: 116108

Headteacher: Susanne Ottens (Acting)

Reporting inspector: Jeff Stanfield
18372

Dates of inspection: 13 – 16 March 2000

Inspection number: 191518

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Heath Road Sholing Southampton Hampshire
Postcode:	SO19 2QF
Telephone number:	01703 447447
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Katie Sims
Date of previous inspection:	September 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Jeff Stanfield	Reporting inspector	Science	What sort of school is it?
		History	What should the school do to improve further?
		Geography	The school's results and achievements
			How well are pupils taught?
			How well is the school led and managed?
Jo Philbey	Lay inspector	Equal opportunities	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?
Phyl Shaw	Team inspector	Mathematics	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
		Information technology	
		Music	
		Religious education	
		Special educational needs	
		English as an additional language	
Stella Counsell	Team inspector	English	
		Art	
		Design and technology	
		Physical education	
		Under-fives	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This is a broadly average-size infant school for children between the ages of four and seven with 190 on roll. It is located within the Sholing district of eastern Southampton. The number of classes has been reduced from eight to six since the last inspection. This is due to a reduction in the standard number from 80 to 60 from September 1999, to ensure smaller class sizes in the future. The attainment on entry for a significant number of pupils is below average. The school has identified over a third of children as having special educational needs (SEN). This is above the national average. There are a few children from an ethnic minority group, and there are three children for whom English is an additional language.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a much improved school. All staff, both teaching and non-teaching, work hard and are committed to the continued raising of standards. The majority of pupils make good progress, especially when one considers their attainment on entry to the school. Teaching and learning in Key Stage 1 are satisfactory and there has been an overall improvement in quality since the last inspection. The school has successfully tackled the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection report. However, the weaknesses identified in this report will need to be addressed.

The school provides satisfactory value for money overall.

What the school does well

- It has raised significantly the standards children achieve in reading, writing and mathematics.
- It has effective strategies for the teaching of literacy and numeracy.
- The teaching of music.
- The leadership ensures a clear educational direction for the school.
- The school identifies within its development plan clear priorities for future sustained improvement.
- It encourages a positive attitude towards coming to school.
- Provides a caring environment free from oppressive behaviour in which children can learn.
- Provides good educational and personal support and guidance for the children.
- Has good links with the parents and encourages them to contribute towards their children's learning.
- Provides a good, clean learning environment.
- Good procedures for the induction of children and new members of staff.
- Very good procedures for ensuring children's welfare.

What could be improved

- The opportunities for children to work with greater independence, and to use their creativity.
- The opportunity for children to have responsibilities both within the classrooms and in other areas of school life.
- The opportunity for children to enhance and apply literacy, numeracy and information technology (IT) skills in other areas of the curriculum.
- Provision for spiritual, social and cultural development, and for personal and social education (PSE).
- The teaching of, and learning in, religious education.
- Systematic and focused monitoring of teaching and learning across the whole curriculum.
- The quality and use of ongoing assessment to inform lesson planning and delivery.
- Procedures for monitoring unauthorised absences.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has successfully tackled the key issues identified in the last inspection report. Strategic planning now sets out a clear rationale for continued improvement, is carefully costed and has criteria against which improvement can be measured. Standards of attainment in reading and writing have improved significantly. It has put in place procedures for addressing the high percentage of unsatisfactory teaching observed at that time, and there has been a marked reduction in weaker teaching. Curriculum planning is now more detailed and ensures coverage of the National Curriculum Programmes of Study. There are increased opportunities for practical investigation, experimentation and problem solving; however, the school is aware of the need to continue to develop these areas of learning.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				key
	all schools			Similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
Reading	E	C	C	A	<i>well above average</i> A
Writing	E	D	C	B	<i>above average</i> B
Mathematics	E	B	C	A	<i>average</i> C
					<i>below average</i> D
					<i>well below average</i> E

By the age of five, the majority of children reach the standard expected. Their physical development is better than expected, but their creative skills are underdeveloped.

In 1997, standards were well below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Since that time, there has been a significant improvement overall. Standards are now in line with the national averages.

The school's performance in 1999, when compared to schools nationally, is average in reading, writing and mathematics. The number of children achieving level 3 in reading and mathematics is above the national average, whilst those achieving this level in writing is close to it. Performance is much stronger when compared to schools with similar characteristics. Here, in reading and mathematics it is well above the national average, in writing it is above average. Teacher assessment in science shows standards to be below average when compared to all schools, and average when compared to similar schools.

The trend over the past three years is one of improving performance in English and mathematics. Within its development plan the school has set targets for 2000 and beyond. Each target identifies clearly the percentage of children that the school expects will reach level 2 or above. Considering the attainment of pupils on entry to the school, the targets are realistic. The school monitors and evaluates attainment and, where necessary, is prepared to refine targets.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Most children like coming to school and enjoy being fully involved in a range of activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	The behaviour of the majority of pupils in and around school is satisfactory and often good.
Personal development and relationships	Presently, there are insufficient opportunities for sustained personal and social development. Personal development is underdeveloped.
Attendance	Attendance throughout the school is satisfactory and in line with the national average.

Most children know that they are expected to work hard and involve themselves readily, especially when lessons are interesting and tasks challenging. When given the opportunity, most are eager to contribute to discussions and to answer questions posed. This attitude makes a positive contribution to the standards they achieve.

Children behave well outside of the classrooms. Around the school, they are courteous and well mannered. They play happily together in the playground, enjoy each other's company and are very caring towards one another. Within lessons, the great majority of children behave very well all the time. However, some can become more restless and noisy, especially during afternoon sessions.

The provision for sustained personal and social development is presently weak. There are very limited opportunities for children to take responsibility or to show initiative. Where opportunities do exist, children respond well and apply themselves diligently. They do not generally use their own initiative in lessons, and take only limited responsibility for their own learning.

Although overall attendance is satisfactory, the number of unauthorised absences is above the national average, a similar finding to that of the previous inspection.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged up to 5 years	Aged 5-7 years	Aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	N/A

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.

Teaching is now better overall than at the time of the last inspection, where a quarter of lessons in Key Stage 1 were deemed to be unsatisfactory. Across the school, it is satisfactory or better in more than nine out of ten lessons (92%), and good or very good in more than one in every three (39%). Teaching is still unsatisfactory in about one lesson in every twelve (8%).

Within the under-five classes, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory or better. This is a similar finding to that at the time of the previous inspection. There is a considerable variation in overall teaching in Key Stage 1. Within Year 1, 29% of lessons observed are good or very good, whereas in Year 2 the total rises to 62%.

In reception and Key Stage 1, the teaching of English and mathematics is at least satisfactory in all of the lessons observed and, in over half of the lessons in each subject, it is good. The school is successfully following national guidance in these subjects. Teachers are technically competent in teaching the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. Lessons are well planned, with clear objectives that are appropriately shared with the children. Good quality resources, many home-made, support teaching and learning in these areas.

The quality of teaching is less secure, where the pace of lessons is too slow, activities are not sufficiently matched to the ability of the children and lessons are dominated by the teacher with little opportunity for the children to work independently. Teaching meets the needs of children with SEN. Higher-attaining children are not always consistently challenged across the curriculum

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum for children in reception and Key Stage 1 is satisfactory. In line with the mission statement for the school, which highlights the drive to raise standards in English and mathematics for all children, much curriculum time is dedicated to these subject areas. Thus, although the curriculum is broad, it is not balanced.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision for children with SEN is satisfactory.

Aspect	Comment
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The needs of these children are satisfactorily met.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for moral development is satisfactory. Provision for children's spiritual, social and cultural development is presently unsatisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Arrangements for caring for the well-being of the children are very good, and are a major strength of the school.

Partnership between school and parents is good. Parental support is valued by the school. They find the staff open and approachable. The school ensures that parents are provided with very good information on school life and what is being taught in the classroom.

The school development plan outlines a range of extra-curricular opportunities, which are to be systematically put in place.

Presently, there are limited opportunities for children to practise, consolidate and apply the skills gained in literacy, numeracy and IT across the whole curriculum. Opportunities for spiritual, social and cultural development are limited. The provision for PSE is less than satisfactory.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the acting headteacher and other key staff	The acting headteacher provides good leadership. Overall, management is satisfactory with middle management roles requiring further development.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Collectively, they meet their statutory responsibilities well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Procedures for the regular monitoring, evaluation and review of performance have been introduced. Although satisfactory, they need continued development and application across all the school.
The strategic use of resources	The school now makes satisfactory use of resources available to it.

There are sufficient appropriately qualified staff. Learning resources are satisfactory. Accommodation is good.

The senior management team provides good leadership. The acting headteacher has not only continued to develop effective strategies previously put in place, but has also set out additional clear directions for improvement. All staff, both teaching and non-teaching, work hard and are committed to providing the best opportunities for the children, and to the continued raising of standards. Presently, the roles of some staff with subject and other whole-school responsibilities are insufficiently clearly defined or not, as yet, fully developed.

The governing body contains a number of new governors. They meet regularly and are better placed than at the time of the last inspection to undertake their statutory responsibilities. Many have specific roles such as literacy, numeracy and SEN link governors. This helps them to become more informed in their role as "critical friends."

A clearly defined pattern of monitoring, evaluation and review is now in place. This was a weakness at the time of the last inspection. Procedures are improving, and becoming increasingly more effective in highlighting strengths and weaknesses in whole-school provision. There is now a need to extend the process to all levels of management.

Strategic planning is now more effectively focused on the priorities of the school, as outlined within its development plan. The school looks more closely at the value that it gives. The budget excess is smaller than at the time of the last inspection.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That their children enjoy going to school and make good progress. • They are happy that their children are well taught, and with their learning. • How approachable the school is when there is a general question to be answered, or a problem to resolve. • That the school expects children to work hard and achieve their best. • That the school works closely in partnership with them. • The leadership given by the acting headteacher and the dedication of the staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better procedures for keeping them informed on how their children are getting on. • An improvement in the range of activities outside of lessons. • Behaviour both inside and outside of school.

The findings of this inspection show that the school is presently reviewing procedures for the frequency and style of teacher parent consultations. Similarly, the structure and content of annual reports to parents are being reviewed. The school development plan shows that an increased number of extra-curricular opportunities are to be phased in. The great majority of children behave very well in lessons and around the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

- 1 Review of the school's national test results show that, in comparison to schools nationally, standards have improved significantly over the past three years. In 1997, results for reading, writing and mathematics were well below the national average. The most recent assessments, in 1999, show that standards were broadly in line with the national average in each of these areas. In comparison with schools of similar characteristics nationally, standards were well above the national average in reading and mathematics, and above average in writing.
- 2 The 1999 assessments show that, although the number of children attaining level 2 in reading was slightly below the national average, the number gaining level 3 exceeded it. In writing, the number of children attaining these levels was close to the national average. Similarly, in mathematics, the number of children attaining level 2 was close to the national average, whilst those attaining level 3 was above it. Since the last inspection there has been a significant improvement in results in these areas; improvement has been more marked since 1997 for both boys and girls. The rate of improvement has been better for boys in each area. However, they started from a lower base, and attainment is still slightly lower than that of girls, especially in reading and writing. In mathematics, attainment is now more uniform.
- 3 In science, teacher assessment in 1999 shows that the school's results overall were below the national average for the number of pupils attaining both level 2 and level 3 when compared to all schools. When compared to like schools, they were broadly in line with the national average for both levels. Since the last inspection, the number of pupils obtaining level 2 and above in science has remained fairly static. This is unlike the overall improvement shown in reading, writing and mathematics, which are priority areas for the school.
- 4 In 1996, there was a significant difference in the attainment between boys and girls, especially in reading and writing. Since that date, the differential has narrowed. Although there is some variation in the achievements of boys and girls, notably in science in 1999, this is not as significant as previously, and results now raise less of an issue about differences in performance than at the time of the last inspection.
- 5 Within its development plan, the school has set targets for performance in reading, writing, science and mathematics for the year 2000 and beyond. Each target identifies clearly the percentage of children that the school expects will reach level 2 and above in these assessments. Bearing in mind the attainment of pupils on entry to the school, these are realistic. However, the school constantly monitors and evaluates attainment and, where necessary, is prepared to refine future targets.
- 6 Evidence from this inspection indicates that by the age of seven, standards are higher than expected in music. In reading and writing, mathematics (including numeracy), science, and information technology (IT) standards are in line with the national average. In design and technology, geography, art and physical education (PE) standards are in line with those expected. Standards in literacy, overall, are average. In speaking and listening and religious education (RE), standards are below average.

- 7 By the age of seven, children are competent readers; they are positive about books and enjoy both reading and listening to stories. They build a secure base of phonic knowledge and use an increasing range of strategies to unravel text. They talk about characters within stories and make predictions about their outcome. Standards in speaking and listening are below that expected, however, considering the low attainment in this aspect on entry, children generally make satisfactory progress through the school. In writing, standards are at least average and for some children are above.
- 8 In mathematics, children can use their understanding of number in real-life situations; they recall number bonds to 10 accurately. They subtract and add numbers with increasing confidence and accuracy. They begin to apply a range of appropriate strategies during mental-maths sessions. Children write numbers in words as well as figures. Many can sequence up to 100 and have a good understanding of odd and even numbers.
- 9 In science, the children are able to use a satisfactory range of scientific skills by the age of seven. Investigative skills are better developed than at the time of the last inspection. Their subject knowledge and understanding are broadly appropriate for their age in all areas except physical processes.
- 10 In most other subject areas, children show knowledge and understanding that are broadly average. In geography, for example, they are able to talk about the character of their local area and compare it to other localities. In design and technology, children are aware that puppets have moving parts and they are able to design, make and evaluate finger puppets. Improved access to computers now means that children are acquiring IT skills more rapidly.
- 11 In music, where standards have improved much since the last inspection, children have a good understanding of beat and time. They record music in terms of signs and symbols and include crescendos and diminuendos within their scores.
- 12 Children are, however, very unsure about some of the key elements of the religious education curriculum. They have little knowledge about the stories of Jesus, Christian festivals or the characteristics of other faiths.
- 13 By the age of five, the evidence from the inspection indicates that the majority of children will reach the standards expected in the personal and social, language, mathematical and knowledge and understanding of the world components of the national "Desirable Learning Outcomes". With regard to physical development, children do better than expected. However, children presently underachieve with regard to the development of their creative talents. The school is presently re-developing the under-five curriculum to ensure that children are realistically challenged in all areas.
- 14 The under-fives, generally, develop satisfactory social skills; they enjoy being at school and mainly involve themselves in the planned activities. When given the opportunity, they work well in a group situation. They do, however, find it difficult to concentrate for long periods and, when frustrated, can occasionally disturb others. Skills in language and literacy are developing well. Children listen well to adults and each other, and become increasingly confident with regard to speaking. They are

beginning to form letter shapes correctly. Some children are already aware of letter names and sounds. Most of them enjoy books and some can read simple texts.

- 15 In mathematics, children can count and order numbers up to 10. They learn number rhymes and games and use the computer to consolidate previous learning. The children are developing a sound knowledge and understanding of the world through a range of opportunities that integrate aspects of science, history, geography and design and technology.
- 16 Physical skills of most under-fives are good. They move around confidently and imaginatively with increasing control and co-ordination. The lack of opportunities for children to express themselves creatively through a wide range of experiences means that this area is less well developed.
- 17 Children with special educational needs (SEN) make satisfactory progress in both reception and Key Stage 1, and good progress in mathematics. Children make satisfactory progress in small-group and individual lessons although progress in mainstream classes is less apparent. Across the school, children for whom English is an additional language make satisfactory progress.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

- 18 Most children like coming to school and enjoy being involved in the range of activities. Children know that they are expected to work and generally involve themselves readily when lessons are interesting and tasks challenging. When given the opportunity, most children are eager to contribute to discussions and answer any questions posed in lessons, or during assemblies. This attitude makes a positive contribution to the standards they achieve and reflects the findings of the previous report.
- 19 Children behave well outside the classrooms, in the playground and when interacting with one another. They move around the school in a very orderly way. In the hall at lunchtimes, the atmosphere is congenial and characterised by courtesy and good manners. Children play happily together in the playground and enjoy each other's company. Behaviour in lessons is, however, variable. Many children do behave well and are eager to please their teachers and be involved. These children listen carefully to adults and willingly follow their teacher's instructions. A few children sometimes find it difficult to concentrate if introductory explanations are too long or fail to motivate them. These children can become noisy and restless to the detriment of their own work and that of others. No harassment or bullying was observed during the inspection. There have been no exclusions over recent years.
- 20 Children form satisfactory relationships with one another and with teachers and other adults. They show care and concern for each other. This was noticed particularly in the playground if a child was distressed or had fallen over. When pupils become enthusiastic about their lessons they take turns and share resources sensibly. When given the opportunity, children work effectively, both individually and collaboratively. A good example of this was seen in a literacy hour when children were sharing writing boards and in a PE lesson when children put out the apparatus. Children are responsive to the achievement of others and are able to appreciate each other's success. This positive attitude was seen at the achievement assembly when children clapped heartily to acknowledge good work or good behaviour of others.

- 21 Children's personal development is held back, largely as a result of weak provision. Few instances were seen during the inspection week where children were able to exercise responsibility and initiative in the school community. Where opportunities do exist, such as tidying classrooms, infant children respond well and apply themselves diligently. However, they do not generally use their own initiative in lessons, and take only limited responsibility for their own learning. Older children are seldom distinguishable from the younger ones, in terms of initiative or responsibility.
- 22 Children with SEN have positive attitudes to learning. Good relationships are formed between all children and SEN pupils are included in friendship groups.
- 23 The great majority of children arrive at school on time. This ensures a prompt start to the school day. Attendance throughout the school is satisfactory and in line with national average. The number of unauthorised absences is above the national average, a similar finding to that of the previous inspection.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

- 24 At the time of the previous inspection in 1996, teaching within the reception area was judged to be at least sound and often better. At that time a quarter of lessons observed in Key Stage 1 were deemed to be unsatisfactory.
- 25 Teaching is now better overall. It is satisfactory or better in more than nine out of ten lessons (92%), and is good or very good in more than one in every three (39%). Teaching is unsatisfactory in about one lesson in every twelve (8%).
- 26 In reception classes, the quality of teaching is satisfactory or better. However, there is a difference in the overall quality of teaching and learning between the two classes. This is a similar finding to that of the last inspection. In one class, the teaching is overall satisfactory whereas in the other, it is often good and on occasion very good. Attainment on entry to reception is low. Consequently, the curriculum is essentially, heavily weighted towards literacy and numeracy. However, children do not receive a balance in terms of applying and using these skills through investigation, enquiry and creative tasks.
- 27 Examples of where teaching and learning are of a good or better standard in reception include:- the sharing of objectives with children in a way that ensures that they understand fully what they are going to learn and how they are going to go about their tasks; the setting of clear individual targets for future improvement; the careful modelling of techniques, for example, for letter formation and word recognition; the full involvement of classroom support staff in planning and review of lessons; the use of a wide range of strategies for reviewing work and a sensitive, caring and calm management of whole-class and group activities.
- 28 There is considerable variation in the quality of teaching within the infant phase. Within Year 1, 86% of teaching is satisfactory or better, with 29% being good. In Year 2, although there is an almost exactly similar percentage of satisfactory or better teaching, 62% is good or better, with 12% being very good. Overall, the quality of teaching in the infants is satisfactory. It has improved since the time of the last inspection, but there is still room for further improvement.
- 29 In Key Stage 1, the teaching of English and mathematics is at least satisfactory in all of the lessons observed and, in over half of the lessons in each subject, it is

good. Teachers are technically competent in teaching the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. Good use is made of a range of contemporary resources to support learning. Home-made resources are of an especially good quality. Lessons are carefully planned and taught to ensure ideas are developed well across the key stage. Lesson objectives are shared fully, at an appropriate level, with the children to ensure that they are clear as to what they are going to learn. Many lessons are imaginatively delivered and teachers use a range of techniques for reviewing them. During literacy and numeracy the majority of pupils apply themselves well to their work. They show an interest in it and concentrate well especially considering the amount of sitting time involved in these morning sessions.

- 30 Teachers make good use of guidance within the appropriate national strategies. This means that children gain skills, knowledge and understanding as they move through the school. This ensures that one of the central school aims highlighted within its mission statement, related to the equipping of children in basic skills, is met.
- 31 In areas of the curriculum, other than literacy and numeracy, the quality of teaching and learning is more variable. However, due to the nature of the curriculum map, little or no teaching could be observed in certain subjects, for example history. The teaching of science is broadly satisfactory. It is better where children are involved in investigation and where it supports the development of systematic enquiry. Teaching and learning in music are good. Here, teachers make good use of a range of instruments and children are encouraged to compose, rehearse and evaluate fully. This was especially good in Year 2 where children were composing music that characterised aspects of the weather.
- 32 There are examples across the school in other subjects of some support for, and development of, basic skills. In science, for example, writing skills are developed whilst outlining procedures and findings of investigations whilst in history, children outline the work of Florence Nightingale. Reading of non-fictional text is supported during the investigation of street signs and signals in geography. Numeracy skills are supported in some science investigations and during a traffic survey in the local area. However, at present, there are too few planned opportunities for children to develop and extend their basic skills repertoire, on a regular basis, across the curriculum. Work sampling shows that in English and mathematics the children are very careful about the presentation of, and detail in, their work. However, many do not transfer the skills that they have developed to other areas of work such as their topic work.
- 33 The new IT suite allows children increased access to computers. Children are taught appropriate skills in groups, supported by competent classroom assistants. Here, they work well in pairs encouraging and supporting each other. Teacher knowledge and understanding in this area are to be further developed from 2001 by an extensive programme of training funded at a national level.
- 34 The school has set itself challenging targets with regard to the continued improvement of the overall quality of teaching and learning across the school. The school development plan indicates that it is the intention to achieve 65% good or very good teaching by the end of the 2001 school year. Inspection evidence shows that there are common elements within whole lessons, or components of lessons, which the school needs to address if these targets are to be reached. The quality of teaching is less secure within both reception and Key Stage 1 where the pace is too

slow. Sometimes, questioning is closed and it fails to allow children to express fully their feelings, knowledge and understanding. In some areas of the school, too little use is made of the day-to-day assessment of children's needs to inform planning and the delivery of appropriately pitched tasks. Expectations of what children can achieve, especially in the non-core subjects, are sometimes too low. Where teachers over-dominate the lessons, or where there are limited opportunities for children to work independently or the management of behaviour is weak, teaching is less secure.

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

- 35 The quality and range of curricular and other opportunities are satisfactory overall. The provision for children who are under five is satisfactory. Curriculum planning to meet the needs of the national "Desirable Learning Outcomes" is presently being reviewed and redeveloped where necessary to enable all areas of learning to be more appropriately covered. On entry, baseline assessments are carried out effectively and efficiently and individual targets are set, but the recording of progress during some lessons is irregular and does not always affect the planning for future learning. Good notes are kept about attainment in reading.
- 36 The curriculum for children in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory and meets statutory requirements. It is broad but not balanced due to the priority of raising standards in English and mathematics. These two subjects account for nearly 60% of curriculum time. However, a review of assessment shows that standards have improved significantly in these areas. The time spent on other aspects of the curriculum is not well planned and this leads to an imbalance of experiences, for example RE is taught in blocked units with long gaps where no RE is taught. Children are unable to remember what has been taught in RE.
- 37 The learning opportunities for children with SEN are satisfactory. These children have full access to the curriculum. Half-termly targets are written for these children but progress is not sufficiently carefully monitored and some targets are too broad to be achievable in the time available. Children with SEN are well supported by a strong team of learning support assistants (LSAs). Where children have English as their second language, the correct procedures are in place for involving external support agencies. Satisfactory provision is made for these children and they make sound progress in their language acquisition.
- 38 To assist with its ongoing review of the Key Stage 1 curriculum, the school is making satisfactory use of guidance materials produced at a national level by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority.
- 39 The school has effective strategies for teaching the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. However, there are too few opportunities for children to use the skills acquired in literacy and numeracy lessons in other subject areas.
- 40 The school provides opportunities to enrich the curriculum through visits, such as the Minstead village study as part of the planned geography curriculum, visitors and use of the school grounds. The after-school computer club provides a very good opportunity for parents and children to work together. The School Improvement Plan outlines good ideas to develop the extra-curricular activities of the school over the next two years. All children have equal access to the curriculum provided, however,

there are some important weaknesses in the provision of personal and social education (PSE). The quality of education delivered in this area is unsatisfactory. This is because little specific time is planned for the delivery of this aspect of the curriculum. Health education is taught satisfactorily and incorporates sex education and attention to drug misuse. No whole-school policy statements presently exist for these.

- 41 The school's provision for spiritual, social and cultural development is unsatisfactory overall.
- 42 Provision for children's spiritual development is unsatisfactory. The daily act of worship goes some way towards developing children's spiritual awareness. The children are encouraged to think about their responsibility for the world and for their local area. The lack of personal and social education and the limited delivery of RE prevent the children from experiencing a range of opportunities to explore their inner feelings and beliefs. Little opportunity is provided for children to be inspired or moved by art, music, drama, history or geography.
- 43 Provision for moral development is satisfactory. Class rules, which are displayed around the school, set high expectations for pupil behaviour. The celebration assembly promotes hard work, effort and kindness to others through its use of certificates and praise for notable actions. The 'kindness tree' highlights the need for children to be thoughtful and helpful to others. Children know and understand the difference between right and wrong, however, they are not given enough opportunity to discuss moral values or extend their personal understanding of issues that impact upon them. All adults working in the school present good role models of fairness and kindness.
- 44 Provision for social development is unsatisfactory. Too few opportunities are provided for group and paired work. Where children are asked to work together they do so sensibly and effectively. In the playground, the children play well together; they know the rules and abide by them. The school provides little opportunity for children to take responsibility for themselves or others. Presently, too few children are encouraged to help in classrooms, and opportunities for older children to help across the school are very limited. There are too few opportunities for children to show initiative or make choices and guided decisions.
- 45 Children with specific social needs are well supported by staff. LSAs and lunchtime assistants are aware of individual needs and make time for one-to-one conversations to support those needs.
- 46 Provision for cultural development is unsatisfactory. Children are given some opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding of their own culture, for example, when exploring village life in Minstead in the New Forest. They are given some opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding of Indian culture through their study of the Hindu religion. There is little evidence that greater opportunities are available for the children to learn about their own culture and contrasting cultures and this is a weakness.
- 47 There are well-established and successful links with the junior school and the local playgroup.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

- 48 The school's arrangements for promoting the welfare, health and safety of the children are very good and have improved since the last inspection. This aspect is a strength of the school. The designated member of staff responsible for child protection has been fully trained and ensures that all other members of staff are aware of child protection issues. The school liaises effectively with the relevant agencies when necessary. There are appropriate policies to support health and safety, and great care is taken to ensure the medical well-being of the children who know they will be looked after should they feel unwell. Lunchtime supervisors are caring and supportive. They initiate playground games, manage them effectively and efficiently whilst keeping a watchful eye on the children.
- 49 The school's procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are satisfactory. Children take pleasure in receiving stickers and stamps for good behaviour and in the chance to be recognised at the weekly celebration assembly. The school has behaviour and discipline policy with agreed strategies for managing undesirable and challenging behaviour. This policy is not always adhered to in some lessons and, thus, behaviour can become less satisfactory. Parents and children are in agreement that bullying is not an issue but should a problem arise they are confident it would be dealt with effectively.
- 50 The monitoring and support of children's academic progress are satisfactory. Class teachers know their pupils well and give appropriate help and guidance throughout the school day. Children are encouraged and helped to set their own targets in English and mathematics. The school has a number of procedures for tracking and recording academic progress of the children. Children's record sheets for reading and mathematics are well maintained. The school has developed portfolios of moderated and levelled work in the core subjects. These are beginning to help class teachers to be more accurate in their setting of targets and in assessing the level at which children are working. Some good examples of these were seen in science. Portfolios in the non-core subjects are not linked to the national curriculum levels of attainment and, therefore, are currently not so effective. Formal assessment of children's progress is less than satisfactory. Day-to-day assessment procedures across the school are presently inconsistent and they are not used sufficiently to guide curriculum planning and classroom practice.
- 51 The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) is responsible for liaison with all people involved in working with children with SEN. Expertise is used from outside agencies that provides useful support for these children and assists in the training of support and teaching staff.
- 52 The school endeavours to ensure that parents are made aware through newsletters that good attendance to school is expected. Parents are asked to advise the school, on the morning of their child's absence. There are occasions when parents fail to respond to this request and the school is required to try to contact the parents. The school's rate of unauthorised absence is above the national average. Whilst registers are completed accurately, the school does not have rigorous procedures to monitor the unacceptably high rate of unauthorised absence. On the week of inspection, most children arrived at school on time.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- 53 The school recognises that home-school liaison is most important and great efforts have been made to maintain and develop links. Partnership between school and parents is good and has improved since the last inspection. Parents agree that they are made to feel most welcome when coming into school and that teachers are always ready to listen to their concerns.
- 54 There are many strengths, but some weaknesses, in the quality of information provided for parents. The school now ensures that parents are provided with very good information on school life and what is being taught in the classrooms. The school prospectus and annual governors' report to parents are comprehensive, easy to read and friendly in tone. The building of the very good relationships that exist with parents commences when new parents are offered home visits before their children enter school. They are invited to information meetings and receive an induction pack. Parents are most appreciative of the regular newsletters and imaginative 'Curriculum Links' fact sheets. They are given the opportunity to learn about the literacy hour and numeracy strategy. Parents are further informed by participating in the homework schemes.
- 55 Some parents were concerned that they did not receive enough information on the progress of their children. The inspection finds that parents of reception pupils are well informed of their children's progress. Throughout the rest of the school, parents are advised of their children's targets but there is only one formal consultation evening each year for parents to talk to the teachers. Parents understand that information on their children's progress is readily given upon request, but many parents would prefer a formal appointment system for consultations with teachers each term. Parents receive annual reports but these do not meet with statutory requirements. Some reports lack sufficient details to enable parents to understand the progress children are making.
- 56 Parents are actively encouraged to be involved in the life of the school and a significant majority of parents have signed a home-school agreement. When appropriate, questionnaires are used to gauge parental opinions. A number of parents assist in the classrooms helping with art, reading and cookery. There is an active Parent Teacher Association that organises the successful summer and Christmas fairs to raise funds for school equipment and resources. Each morning, before lessons start, parents are encouraged to accompany their children into classrooms to read and look at work. On the week of inspection, parents were seen attending the celebration assembly.
- 57 Some parents are concerned that poor behaviour is a problem in the school. The school has had a meeting with parents to discuss behaviour and discipline. This inspection finds that movement around the school and in the playground is orderly. There are, however, some incidents of inappropriate behaviour in classrooms when pupils lose interest in the lessons. Some parents would like to see more extra-curricular activities for their children. The school is aware of this and has recently introduced the IT club which is well attended by both parents and children. There are plans to extend activities in the future.
- 58 Parents of children with SEN are treated with respect and good partnerships exist between them and the school for the benefit of the children.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- 59 Within the inspection report of 1996, the collective leadership of the school was criticised for its failure to give the sufficiently clear educational direction needed to move the school forward. This is no longer the case. Priorities set out in the previous post-OFSTED action plan, especially with regard to raising standards in English and mathematics, have been addressed. Both the National Literacy and National Numeracy Strategies have been successfully implemented. At the time of this inspection the overall leadership and management of the school are satisfactory.
- 60 The school complies with the statutory requirements for the curriculum, the SEN Code of Practice and holds proper acts of collective worship.
- 61 Presently, the school deputy is acting headteacher, covering for the head who has been away due to illness for a considerable period of time. The acting headteacher provides good leadership to the school. She communicates a strong sense of purpose and is not only continuing to develop effective structures put in place by the headteacher, but also to set out additional clear directions for continued improvement for the school. An acting deputy, seconded from another school in the Local Education Authority (LEA), supports her. The acting deputy is due to leave at Easter and to be replaced by another secondee. The school has coped well with changes to the senior management team and continues to function effectively and efficiently. All staff, both teaching and non-teaching, work hard as a team and there is a shared commitment to provide the best possible opportunities for children in the school, and to the continued raising of standards.
- 62 The school has clear aims and values that are reflected in its mission statement. They are fully shared with all stakeholders. Unlike at the time of the last inspection, both the long-term strategic plan and the school development plan set out clear priorities for sustained improvement. An effective and efficient cycle for school development planning is in place. The plan is costed and has more precise criteria to evaluate against than previously. The school is committed to raising standards and has identified a number of priorities to promote improvement. Presently, these include:- ensuring that targets are met with regard to children's achievements; the raising of attainment of boys in English; to improve the overall quality of teaching and to continue to develop IT skills both for staff and children. Already, there is an improved use of IT across the school, both for curricular and administrative purposes.
- 63 To assist development planning, regular self-assessment takes place. In the autumn term there is monitoring, evaluation and review of attainment and progress, in the spring term of the quality of teaching and in the summer term of leadership and management. Procedures are improving quickly, and are becoming more effective in highlighting specific strengths and weaknesses in practice across the school. Gradually, more effective strategies to alleviate weaknesses are being developed. At this time, the role of subject and area leaders is still underdeveloped. The senior management team is aware of the need to give staff greater delegation of responsibility, and better opportunities for more systematic monitoring, evaluation and review in order that improvement is sustained both across the curriculum and within other areas of school life.

- 64 The governing body, containing a number of new governors and a relatively newly elected chair, shows a strong corporate affection for the school. They are better placed than at the time of the last inspection to support and oversee the day-to-day work of the school. They meet regularly, either as a full body or committees, to review the workings of the school in line with the terms of reference. The governors value and appreciate what the school achieves for the children. Individual governors know the school well through their regular contact and involvement. Many governors have specific roles, for example as literacy, numeracy, SEN or able-child links, which significantly helps the governing body in undertaking its statutory duties. Clearer guidelines for focused visits to the school, be they to talk to subject leaders, or to visit classrooms, would ensure that there are common procedures for supporting their work as 'critical friends'. There is a positive relationship between the work of the governing body and the acting headteacher based on trust and mutual respect.
- 65 The new SENCO has ensured that all children with SEN have Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and are well supported in class by effective and efficient support staff. She has attended a number of appropriate courses and is, at present, developing her own knowledge and understanding in this important area. Insufficient time has been given over to the monitoring of children with SEN in their classrooms. There is a need for the SENCO to develop more fully staff knowledge and understanding in this area.
- 66 Teaching staff are suitably qualified and are hard-working. The number of teachers is sufficient to meet the demands of the curriculum although, currently, there is a shortage of expertise in IT. There is a generous provision of administrative support staff and the level of educational support staff is also high. Class-room support staff work well with, and alongside, teachers and particularly those children who have SEN. The school's accommodation is very good. It is bright, lively and creates a welcoming environment for the children. The school building is exceptionally well maintained through the pride and care taken by the caretaker and cleaner. Space is used effectively. Good use has been made of surplus classrooms to create an IT suite and resource base and an SEN area and sick bay. The school grounds are being well developed in order to provide a range of opportunities for outdoor learning, for example the development of the mathematics garden. Overall, the school has adequate quality and range of resources to support the implementation of the curriculum. Learning resources are well organised but are not always easily accessible to pupils to promote independent learning. Arrangements for the induction of newly qualified teachers are good and meet statutory requirements.
- 67 Financial planning is now more closely linked to the priorities outlined in the school development plan. The budget and other grants are effectively utilised. The auditor's report of July 1999 highlighted a range of measures required to improve the administration of school finances. The action points have been acted upon and routine administration is satisfactory. Systems for control of the budget are well maintained.
- 68 The delegated funding for SEN is spent effectively on providing support for the needs of these children.
- 69 At the time of the last inspection, the school had a sizeable budget surplus of approximately 9%. This has been reduced, but is still high at 7.6%. The existing leadership of the school is aware of this and has submitted to the LEA a plan for

spending the surplus in line with priorities outlined in its strategic plan. The school is starting to apply the principles of best value in the management and use of resources. Overall, this is satisfactory. Procedures are also in place to seek parents' views on the school and what it provides, and about proposed change. The leadership of the school regards the parents as key partners in their drive to continue to sustain improvement.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

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

- Increase the opportunities for children to be more fully involved in their learning through:
 - allowing them to use their initiative and to take greater responsibility
 - developing activities which require them to be creative and to use their imagination more fully
 - promoting enquiry-based and investigative learning where appropriate
 - allowing them time to reflect on their learning more fully and to set personal targets.

(paragraphs: 13, 16, 21, 31, 66, 75, 81, 82, 84, 88, 107, 128)

- Improve opportunities for children to practise, consolidate and apply the skills gained in literacy, numeracy and IT within other subject areas through:
 - monitoring, evaluating and reviewing existing provision within planning, teaching and learning
 - identifying clearly additional opportunities within the curriculum planning for all subjects
 - making more effective use of enquiry, investigation, decision making and problem-solving tasks.

(paragraphs: 32, 39, 82, 93, 99, 122)

- Continue to raise the overall quality of teaching and learning through:
 - systematic and focused monitoring and evaluation of teaching in all subject areas
 - empowering subject leaders to take greater responsibility for the monitoring and evaluation of teaching within their areas
 - paying particular attention within monitoring and evaluation of lessons to weaknesses such as pace and pitch, questioning techniques used, pupil management and response and expectations outlined in the report.

(paragraphs: 26, 28, 31, 34, 62, 63, 89, 99, 106, 130)

- Improve the quality of day-to-day assessment, so that teachers are able to focus lessons more accurately and to ensure progression and challenge in learning through:
 - tracking more systematically what children know, understand and can do
 - using this knowledge acquired to plan work that will consistently challenge and extend all children.

(paragraphs: 34, 35, 50, 89, 94, 101)

- Improve provision for spiritual, social and cultural development and PSE through:
 - planning for their inclusion more fully within the curriculum
 - developing whole-school opportunities beyond the formal curriculum
 - monitoring and evaluation of the impact of their inclusion on pupils' personal development.

(paragraphs: 21, 40, 41, 42, 44, 46, 75, 105)

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

- Review planning for, and the delivery of, RE where, presently, the quality of teaching and learning is seen to be unsatisfactory
- Procedures for decreasing the rate of unauthorised absence.

(paragraphs: 6, 12, 36, 132, 133)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	49
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	25

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0%	6%	33%	53%	8%	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 - Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	190
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	59

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR - Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	69

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	16
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	14

Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	4.6	School data	1.2
National comparative data	5.4	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	34	40	74

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	23	27	30
	Girls	36	38	37
	Total	59	65	67
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	80 (83)	88 (72)	91 (87)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	22	31	27
	Girls	36	37	34
	Total	58	68	61
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	78 (78)	92 (85)	82 (83)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	2
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	6
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	118
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	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.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.8
Average class size	21.7

Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	178

Financial information

Financial year	1998 - 1999
	£
Total income	345448
Total expenditure	348120
Expenditure per pupil	1724
Balance brought forward from previous year	33698
Balance carried forward to next year	31026

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	190
Number of questionnaires returned	55

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	58	33	7	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	45	49	5	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	29	47	15	4	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	35	56	9	0	0
The teaching is good.	56	33	5	2	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	40	40	20	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	58	36	4	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	53	36	4	0	7
The school works closely with parents.	40	45	9	2	4
The school is well led and managed.	44	44	5	4	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	45	38	4	4	9
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	13	35	15	11	27

Summary of parents' and carers' responses

- 72 A number of parents included additional, sometimes lengthy, comments about the school either on the back of the questionnaire or as a separate letter. These, mainly, confirmed support for the school and what it seeks to achieve.
- 73 Within the parents' meeting, concern was expressed over class sizes in Year 2. The quality of teaching and learning in this year group is often good or very good. The school is moving towards smaller class sizes with a drop in the standard number to 30. Concern was also expressed over the impact of the literacy and numeracy hours on the breadth and balance of the curriculum. The curriculum is indeed weighted towards English and mathematics and lacks balance. However, the school has had to address low standards in these subjects. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics have improved significantly since the last inspection.

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

74 Children join the school, following a well-planned induction programme which includes parent and child sessions in school, and home visiting. Many, but not all, have attended some type of pre-school provision. The school carries out a careful analysis of the children's abilities when they start school using the Local Education Authority's (LEA) Baseline Assessment. Results show that when children enter school, attainment is below the LEA average in all aspects of learning. By the time they are five, children have made good progress and many attain standards that are typical for their age in language and literacy, mathematics and in knowledge and understanding of the world. Standards in the children's physical development are good, and below expectations in their creative development.

Personal and social

75 Overall, children are beginning to develop sound social skills and progress is satisfactory. They really like being at school and generally involve themselves well in most of the activities that are planned for them. They usually relate well to others and have a good relationship with the adults around them. Many are able to work well in a group, such as when they work together on a jig-saw puzzle. When changing for physical education, they can organise their belongings and undress, with little support. Children are confident and feel secure and happy. There are some aspects of their personal skills that are less well developed. Some children find it difficult to concentrate for long enough, and can disturb the work of others. There are too few opportunities for children to investigate, enquire and to ask their own questions. Children have too few opportunities to take initiative for their own learning by making decisions and choices, for example, not having a range of art materials readily available for pupils to select. Children do not always tidy away for themselves and too often rely on adults to do this.

Language and literacy

76 Children make good progress in all aspects of language and literacy. In whole-class sessions, children usually listen well to adults and to each other. They develop their speaking skills and imagination through well-planned role-play such as when they visit Old Macdonald's farm shop and café. In this play, they develop writing skills through shopping lists and orders in the café. Children are beginning to form their letters correctly so that when they write their names they are easily read. They practise their formation of letters in sand and paint as well as with a pencil. Some children know letter names and sounds, and several are beginning to use that knowledge to write words, such as in 'Rosie's Walk'. Children enjoy sharing books and a few children can read simple texts. Children are appropriately involved in the discussion of books in group-reading time.

Mathematics

77 In mathematics, children make good progress in their acquisition of knowledge relating to number and pattern. They learn to order numbers to ten through an interactive game of 'ten green bottles'. They take part in a number of action rhymes, songs and games to reinforce the concept of addition and subtraction.

Through practical tasks, they experience a range of opportunities for developing an understanding of repeating patterns. Good use is made of resources and higher-attaining children can access the full range of resources used. Some children are able to record mathematical sentences. Many children can competently complete mathematical games on the computer. Most children can count and order numbers to ten.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

- 78 Children have many opportunities to practise skills of cutting, gluing, making and assembling. They design and make a picture frame and make a box for the teddy bears' picnic. They have regular opportunities to cook. They develop an understanding of forces via play with toy cars, and of growth through the observation of bulbs in the garden and of changes to themselves. Work on young animals supports this. Sorting household items introduces children to the idea of classification.
- 79 Work on the old and new school and personal time-lines supports the development of a sense of change. Children are able to follow routes around the school when on a 'Bear Hunt'. Directional and distance awareness is reinforced within their work on 'Rosie's Walk'. They begin to express personal preferences about places in and around the school, and realise that their opinion may be different from other children's. Review of holiday destinations and other visits introduces the children to more distant localities.

Physical development

- 80 Children move confidently and imaginatively with increasing control and co-ordination. They have a good sense of space. Regular practice through a range of structured activities, such as tracing, dot to dot, and painting enables children to develop their fine motor control. They handle tools such as scissors, pencils, crayons and paint brushes with increasing control. Children have the benefit of a designated outdoor area with a small climbing frame and opportunities to play with a range of tricycles. These resources support physical development well.

Creative development

- 81 Although children are offered a range of experiences, they do not have sufficient opportunity to express themselves creatively. They enjoy participating in art and musical activities and their painting skills are developing. Children enjoy the role-play situations and these are often supported well by an adult. Planned activities give children the experience of using a limited range of materials in collage work, such as the farm animals and in making models. Opportunities to further develop the children's creativity are limited. In some examples, practical activities are tightly directed by an adult and children's own ideas are not fully incorporated into the task. There are too many examples where practical activities are over-structured and directed by an adult resulting in a limited opportunity for children to develop their own creativity. Children have a good knowledge of nursery rhymes and number rhymes. They are able to move to music identifying fast and slow elements. They are able to play a range of un-pitched instruments and understand the need to have quiet times in music. They listen carefully to each other and to the tunes being played by the teacher. Children are able to select instruments for themselves. Some children can identify tunes from a clapped rhythm.

- 82 Overall, the quality of teaching in reception is satisfactory with about a quarter of the lessons being good. Class teachers and support staff work well as a team. The curriculum is currently being reviewed and redeveloped. A good start has been made. Whilst planning is detailed at the current time, there is not a sufficient framework based on the national “Desirable Outcomes for Learning”. Opportunities for children to develop appropriate independence in their learning are not sufficiently planned for. The curriculum has a heavy weighting in favour of literacy and numeracy. This is essential but the children do not receive a balance in terms of applying and using skills through investigation, enquiry, spiritual development and creativity. In the previous inspection, the pupils attained well across all areas of learning. This is still broadly the case, although the creative area requires some further development. Provision is similar to that reported at that time. The quality of teaching is broadly the same, and there is still a degree of disparity between the classes.

ENGLISH

- 83 The school has achieved significant improvement in reading and writing in the end-of-key stage tests since the last inspection. The results show an improving trend and reflect improvements nationally. When children join the school, their attainment in language and literacy is below the LEA average. The 1999 end-of-key-stage results show that, by the time they leave the school, standards are in line with national averages. Attainment is above that achieved by similar schools. The school has successfully raised the proportion of children who achieve higher levels. Reading results for the higher-attaining children are above the national average and writing results are in line. Boys do not perform as well as girls. Observations made during the inspection indicate that there is no significant difference in the standards achieved by boys or girls. The last inspection showed that standards in English were unsatisfactory. The school has worked hard to ensure that improvements have been made. This has been supported by the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy (NLS). The development and application of English across the curriculum is not well developed and this is an area that the school needs to focus on and improve. Children with special educational needs (SEN) are well supported. They achieve appropriate standards for their abilities and make sound progress.
- 84 Although there is some variation in the standard of speaking and listening, overall it is below expectation. However, recognising the low attainment on entry, children make satisfactory progress. They enjoy using role-play, such as the farm shop, to discuss what to buy for lunch. Children generally co-operate effectively with one another to accomplish tasks although there are too few occasions when this occurs. Opportunities to express themselves are less well developed as the children progress through the school. Children are rarely given time to discuss their work. In some lessons, teachers do too much of the talking and allow the children too little opportunity to develop their spoken language skills. Consequently, children are unable to evaluate, question or discuss ideas in depth. Many, but not all, the children can listen attentively. Attention strays when work is not stimulating enough or matched to the pupils’ level of attainment.
- 85 Progress in reading is good. Overall, standards are in line with expectations. Children build a secure base of phonic knowledge and a good sight vocabulary. Younger children are positive about books and enjoy listening to stories. Children can use picture, context and phonic cues. They are able to talk about characters

and make predictions about stories. Older children know how to use contents pages and simple dictionaries. Parental involvement in reading is encouraged and is effective in creating a positive attitude to reading and to raising standards. The tracking of children's progress in reading is a good development. Teachers maintain comprehensive reading records, which, in the best examples, inform future teaching targets. The use of non-fiction text is less well developed, and this is recognised by the school.

- 86 Standards in writing across the school are at least sound and sometimes good, and children make good progress. They progressively develop skills in spelling and grammar to support their writing. Many children can spell a range of common words and use simple punctuation to good effect. In Year 2, some extended writing illustrates pupils' ability to organise their ideas and use vocabulary to good effect. Spelling and punctuation skills have developed very well but there is a limited range of different kinds of writing, for example, poetry and non-narrative writing. This impacts on the use of English in other curriculum areas. Good examples of writing for a purpose are the interactive displays where children are expected to comment on such issues as "No more playtimes?"
- 87 Handwriting is mostly well formed. There is clear progress. Children can form their letters correctly and many children are developing a fluent script.
- 88 Children's response is satisfactory overall. In the best lessons, children are completely involved. In the literacy hour sessions, they concentrate well and respond enthusiastically. The youngest children listen well in the 'big book' sessions, and start to express their ideas. Attitudes to English are generally positive. In some lessons, the lack of attention of a few children limits the extent to which others are able to concentrate. There are too few opportunities for children to think for themselves, ask questions or develop a sense of enquiry.
- 89 In all the lessons observed, the quality of teaching was satisfactory or better. In Key Stage 1, 60% of lessons were at least good. This has been significant in terms of raising standards. In the better lessons, children respond well to the expectations of the teacher. Learning takes place at a good pace and children show high levels of interest. A good example is when Year 2 children investigated characters from a story, and linked this in to their story plans, and created settings. Planning takes into account the requirements of the NLS, which has been very well implemented. The use of day-to-day assessment limits the capacity to build on prior learning and to match work to the children's ability. Questioning is limited in many lessons. Many questions asked are closed and do not sufficiently promote the development of speaking skills.
- 90 The subject manager is aware of the strengths and weaknesses within the subject. Although monitoring has taken place, this has mainly concentrated on the implementation of the NLS. The manager works to a very clear and detailed action plan, which continues to focus on standards in reading and writing. Targets have been set to improve the subject further, reflecting the good analysis that is made of available data. Resources to support the teaching of English are satisfactory and are continuing to be extended.

MATHEMATICS

- 91 In the 1999 national tests for seven-year-olds, the number of children obtaining level 2 and above was close to the national average, whereas the number reaching level 3 was above it. The school performed considerably better than similar schools nationally. Girls did a little better than boys. Trends over the past three years show that standards have improved consistently over that period of time. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls. Children make good progress over time. Work seen during the inspection indicates that good progress is made in learning from entry to the age of seven. Improvements in standards and progress have been good since the last inspection. The school has worked hard to achieve challenging targets.
- 92 A range of mathematics lessons were seen during the inspection; these included work on number, shape, money and pattern. By the time they are seven, most children can recall number bonds to ten with accuracy and most are adding to twenty and subtracting from twenty with confidence. They are able to write numbers in words as well as in figures. In Year 2, they are able to sequence numbers to 100 and know which are odd and which are even. The higher-attaining children are able to interpret information from graphs. They understand how to measure in centimetres and have learnt their two, five and ten-times-tables. They are able to add money to 50p and many understand how to give change from 50p. The tasks presented during lesson times often lack challenge for the higher-attaining children. Those children who are lower attainers and children with SEN make good progress in mathematics. They are well supported by classroom assistants and are often given the opportunity to work on the computers during mathematics lessons. Samples of children's work and discussions with children show that they know the names of common two and three-dimensional shapes. They can recognise a right angle. They halve and double numbers with confidence. Most children know and can order the months of the year.
- 93 Teaching in mathematics is satisfactory overall and no unsatisfactory teaching was observed in mathematics. In Year 1 and Year 2, half of the mathematics teaching is good. The teaching of basic numeracy skills is well developed throughout the school and good use is made of home-made resources. Teachers are very clear about what they want children to learn and share this with them. When lessons challenge and motivate children they are keen to participate. Suggestions for work at home are offered to reinforce the learning taking place in lessons. Good use is made of information technology (IT) to support the lower-attaining children. Where the teaching is good, children know and understand the mathematical language appropriate to the activity. Where an interesting range of activities has been prepared to challenge the ability of all children, good progress is made within the lessons. Insufficient time is given to investigation work in mathematics. Too few opportunities are provided for children to solve problems and to show how they would use mathematics in real-life situations.
- 94 Records of achievement are kept for all children. Targets for improvement are set for all children and predictions made for future attainment. Day-to-day assessment is not well used to inform future planning. Too often, planning is based on what children have to be taught and not enough on what they really need to learn individually in order to improve their knowledge and understanding. The quality of teaching in mathematics has improved since the last inspection though there is still too little time given to investigative work. Most children behave well in mathematics

but there are a small number of children who display disruptive behaviour and cause a distraction for other children.

- 95 The subject manager is new to the position but has been instrumental in implementing the numeracy strategy in line with recommendations. She has ensured that the right level of resource is available throughout the school and has supported staff with planning and delivery. She has effectively monitored mathematics lessons and offered suggestions for improvement to all staff. The governor nominated to be responsible for numeracy has also effectively monitored the work of the school in this subject. The quality and quantity of the resources for mathematics are good. Much time has been spent on making quality resources. They are well stored and easily accessible but, too often, teachers find the resources for children instead of allowing them the responsibility to find them for themselves.

SCIENCE

- 96 Teacher assessment in 1999 indicates that the percentage of children reaching level 2 and above is slightly below the national average. Girls do a little better than boys. The results are in line with those for schools with similar characteristics. These are very similar to results at the time of the previous inspection. The trend in attainment has been fairly static since that date.
- 97 The inspection confirms that standards are broadly satisfactory and that children make sound progress in the subject by the age of seven, especially when one takes into account low standards on entry to the school. This is a similar finding to that of the previous inspection. Work sampling shows progress to be more marked within Year 2. Children are aware of parts of the human body, and foods that support growth. They are aware also of how plants develop from seeds and that they require water and light to grow. Children can classify materials using simple criteria related to their properties, and develop knowledge and understanding on how materials can be changed, for example by bending, twisting, cooling or heating. They are aware of sources of light and dark and of the forces required to move objects. Through investigation, they do, with guidance, plan, collect evidence and draw conclusions about, for example, the best materials for making parachutes, the distribution of mini-beasts, the way in which materials affect circuits and the way in which items of food can be changed.
- 98 Children enjoy science, especially when they are given the opportunity to work independently and in a more practical, hands-on fashion. Where work is more teacher-dominated, and it fails to challenge them, they become more restless.
- 99 A limited amount of teaching was observed during the period of inspection. Taking into account the findings from these lesson observations, work sampling and the subject portfolio, it is seen to be variable across the school, but broadly satisfactory. Lessons are carefully planned and have clear learning objectives that are shared with the children so that they are aware of the purpose of the session. Resourcing is satisfactory. Teaching is best where it involves children in investigation and supports the development of systematic enquiry. It is also better where children are given the opportunity to share thoughts either in pairs or larger groupings, and to reinforce and apply literacy and numeracy skills. Teaching is less secure where it fails to challenge children fully through slow pace and an inappropriate level of expectation.

- 100 To ensure that children make meaningful progress in the various components of the subject, the school has reviewed its curriculum planning fully using materials produced nationally by Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) as a guide. This has helped to focus the school more closely on the range of appropriate teaching and learning styles that can be used to deliver science, together with expectations of what children across a range of ages and abilities should achieve. The previous subject co-ordinator modified ideas to ensure appropriate levels of challenge. At the time of the last inspection, there was insufficient opportunity for the children to be involved in scientific investigation. Opportunities are now built in to the long-term planning, and training has taken place. Presently, the opportunity to develop knowledge and understanding of physical processes is slightly less well developed than other components of the subject.
- 101 The school has put together a satisfactory portfolio of work across a range of levels. The levels are agreed at staff meetings. Presently missing is evidence of work on physical processes. This document serves to help staff in assessing more accurately the attainment of children. The school is aware of the need to refine monitoring procedures to ensure especially that short-term planning is critically reviewed, and that day-to-day assessment is used more carefully to shape teaching and learning.
- 102 The quality and range of resources are satisfactory. They are centrally and carefully stored giving staff easy access. It is, however, difficult for children to select the resources they need for investigations they are undertaking. A range of good quality interactive displays around the school, for example, the corridor display on spring and the Year 2 display on growth help to extend subject knowledge and understanding.

ART

- 103 Opportunities to observe art during the inspection were limited. Planning and work seen indicates that children have a breadth of experience using a variety of media and techniques. Attainment at seven meets the national requirements. The majority of the children make satisfactory progress in art. Attainment in textiles and three-dimensional work is less well developed.
- 104 Children can paint, draw and print using a range of methods and skills. However, much of the work lacks creativity, indicating that the children are not always encouraged to use their imagination. There are good examples of where art becomes a year-group focus and children work together to develop and apply a new technique such as the Elmer Batik. Art has been used effectively to improve the grounds of the school by painting a mural which children designed.
- 105 Children enjoy their art lessons. They are enthusiastic and enjoy talking about their work. Children are not given enough opportunity for appreciating work from artists, and therefore the contribution of art to cultural and spiritual development is limited. This is less well developed than in the previous inspection. When children do not feel fully involved, their behaviour deteriorates and they do not listen satisfactorily.
- 106 Only two lessons were observed. The lessons are well planned, with clear objectives and instructions. If the pace slows, the children start to lose interest. The lessons were over-directed with too few opportunities for the children to express their opinions.

- 107 The school celebrates the children's artwork through its displays. There is not, however, a balance between guided work and independent work; most has been teacher-directed. There are too few opportunities to experiment and explore with materials. This was raised in the previous inspection and has not developed since. This over-emphasis on teaching the skills and techniques limits opportunity for children's artistic and creative response.
- 108 Resources are adequate but there are insufficient resources to promote pupils' appreciation of art from other cultures. Planning is detailed enough to guide progression. There is a portfolio of children's work, which would now benefit from annotating against national curriculum standards.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

- 109 Owing to the timing of the inspection, no design and technology was observed during the week. However, the school did provide a comprehensive work sample giving a clear view of the children's achievements together with curriculum planning which supported this. Attainment is in line with expectations and children make satisfactory progress. This was the same as in the last inspection. By the end of Year 2, the children know that puppets have moving parts and they are able to make, design and evaluate hand or finger puppets. Children are able to develop ideas. They can use a given range of tools with confidence and safety. Children work with a range of materials including construction kits.
- 110 Younger children have the opportunity to cook. They select, plan and make cakes. They respond most enthusiastically.
- 111 No judgement can be made on the quality of teaching. The planning is very thorough and is effective in ensuring progression across the school. The planning clearly identifies objectives for learning. Links with other subjects, such as science, are not fully established. There are comprehensive records of pupils' attainment, although no evidence about how this impacts on future learning.

GEOGRAPHY

- 112 Due to the nature of the school curriculum, little geography teaching was observed. Observations are based on scrutiny of pupils' work and a developing subject portfolio, discussions with staff and pupils and review of subject documentation, resources and classroom display. At the time of the inspection, the subject co-ordinator was absent from school the subject being overseen in the interim by the acting headteacher.
- 113 Although no comment was made in the previous report for this subject, all the indications are that standards are broadly in line with expectations by the age of seven, and that children do make progress in this area of the curriculum. By this time, children have satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the Sholing and Merry Oak locality adjacent to the school. They are able to compare it to other localities, for example Minstead in the New Forest, a locality that they visit. Children are aware of, and express their views on, some of the urban environmental issues within their locality having undertaken an investigation of traffic in it. Geographical skills are developed in a place or thematic context, and children's use of and ability to make maps are satisfactory.

- 114 No overall judgement about the quality of teaching is possible. However, in the single session observed, it was of a satisfactory standard, involving using the school grounds to locate and make observations about features and their location in preparation for the fieldwork visit to Minstead. Overall, a satisfactory range of learning opportunities is available for the children. These include support for the enhancement of the non-fiction component of literacy via the study of traffic signs and signals. The children are also given the opportunity to investigate "Katie Morag's Island." Well-prepared displays help to reinforce and extend the children's knowledge and understanding of their own locality and others. The traffic survey undertaken in Year 1 gives children the opportunity to develop geographical enquiry skills, and to apply numeracy skills in the presentation of their findings.
- 115 Curriculum planning has previously failed to ensure that the children make consistent progress across the school in the main components of the subject. The school has reviewed the long-term plan for the subject using materials developed by QCA as a guide, and its proposed planning is much better.
- 116 Resources for the subject are satisfactory. The school is aware of the need to monitor and evaluate much more carefully planning, subject delivery and the assessment of children to ensure that standards continue to rise. Presently, records of work kept in topic books are highly variable.

HISTORY

- 117 No teaching of history was seen during the period of the inspection due to its absence from the curriculum planning for this half term. Judgements are based on the scrutiny of pupils' work and the school's subject portfolio, discussion with the acting subject leader and children, and a review of planning and other items of subject documentation.
- 118 At the time of the last inspection, standards of attainment and the progress that children make in the subject were judged to be satisfactory. Very limited evidence of sustained work in this subject is to be seen in children's topic books. Thus an accurate judgement of attainment in history at the time of this inspection is difficult. Children do make broadly satisfactory progress in developing historical skills, knowledge and understanding.
- 119 No judgement can be made with regard to the standard of teaching. However, evidence shows that a range of learning opportunities are in place. Through review of the subject portfolio, and work samples, it is evident that children do study famous people from the past including Grace Darling and Florence Nightingale. Within their work on the latter they investigate historical artefacts and compare her work to that of nurses today through listening to Nurse Long. The Great Fire of London is investigated to support work on famous events in the past. Children are also given the opportunity to develop knowledge and understanding about how life at school and at home has altered. Here they handle a range of historical source materials.
- 120 The school has reviewed curriculum planning for history using materials produced by QCA for guidance, and the new long-term plan for the subject is more balanced across the infant phase. The study of castles, which included the opportunity of "touching" history via a visit to Portchester Castle, previously undertaken, is missing from the new plans. Clear indications of timings are given for each of the planned

units of work. The planning will ensure that all children have a common entitlement. The quality and range of resources, including artefacts, are satisfactory. The school uses a local history centre to enhance resources where required, for example the loan of a Florence Nightingale artefact box to support investigation of this famous person. It is important that the subject co-ordinator monitors and evaluates session planning, teaching, children's work and assessment of levels of attainment much more systematically.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

- 121 Little information technology (IT) was being taught during the inspection but many children had access to computers and were using skills previously taught. In one lesson, children were being taught how to use the shift key, arrow keys and space bar to edit text. Some children displayed a good level of competency whilst others found the work quite challenging. Children were well paired on the computers and were encouraged to support each other. They worked well together and were very positive in their attitudes to IT.
- 122 Displays of children's work show that IT has been used across a number of subjects in the curriculum. In geography, children have used a data-handling programme to record a traffic survey. Year 2 children have accessed the Internet and have been involved in the Tesco Schoolnet project, designing a web site for the school. IT is well used in mathematics. "Maths Explorer", "My World" and "Number Magic" are used to support lower achievers and children with SEN. Word-processing skills are taught during lessons in the IT suite and these are then used on classroom machines during English lessons. Computers in classrooms are not always well used and children are often unsure about what they have to do on these machines.
- 123 The extra-curricular IT club for parents and pupils is very popular and has created great interest in the subject. Children are encouraged to write letters to their parents and E-mail access is planned for later in the course. Satisfactory progress is being maintained in IT through the valuable support of classroom assistants. Teacher knowledge and understanding are variable but plans are in place for extensive teacher training from January 2001. IT is better established than in the previous inspection and attention has been given to the weaknesses highlighted at that time.
- 124 The hardware and software for IT have improved and the installation of the new computer suite has enhanced access for a large number of children. The new subject manager for IT left the school at the end of last term; she had begun to track pupil progress in IT and had collected samples of children's work to measure attainment and progress. The acting headteacher is managing this subject on a temporary basis until a new appointment can be made. The school has rightly recognised the need to give priority status to IT on their development plan and there is a clear vision for future development.

MUSIC

- 125 Since the last inspection, standards in music have improved and by the time the children are seven, good standards are achieved. Most children listen with concentration to sounds and are able to identify different musical instruments. They have developed an understanding of beat and time. They record music in terms of signs and symbols and understand crescendo and diminuendo. They are able to compose and perform. The quality of singing in collective worship is satisfactory and

in class lessons is good. The youngest children have a good knowledge of nursery rhymes and are able to clap a rhythm with hands and play untuned percussion instruments. They understand how to play fast and slow.

- 126 The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Children in reception and Year 2 make very good progress, while children in Year 1 maintain satisfactory progress. Good use is made of a range of musical instruments. Teaching concentrates on children's listening skills and their ability to identify sounds. Children are blindfolded to amplify their listening skills and silent moments are successfully used to heighten awareness of sound. For the youngest children, movement is incorporated into music lessons to give a sense of fast and slow. When composing, children are effectively encouraged to review and revise their work. At the beginning of collective worship, children are encouraged to listen to a variety of music and to identify instruments.
- 127 The subject is competently managed by the music co-ordinator. She has ensured that curriculum coverage meets national requirements. Ideas and guidance are provided from the Hampshire Music Service documents, which are well used. Resources for music are adequate and stored centrally providing easy access for all year groups. Violin and recorder lessons are provided for those children who wish to take part. IT has been used for music composition in the past but no evidence was available during the inspection.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- 128 Children's attainment in physical education (PE) is broadly in line with the national expectations for children of a similar age. In lessons observed, where this is not the case, it is where children are not listening well and where behaviour is unsatisfactory. Overall, children are able to use space sensibly and demonstrate sound body skills. The youngest children show good control and co-ordination in the lessons observed. Children are able to throw and catch to a high degree of accuracy. When encouraged, they work well collaboratively. There are too few opportunities for children to be involved in the planning and evaluating, exploring sequences, and using clear criteria including effects on their movements in order to extend their work. In one lesson with the youngest children, musical instruments were used to good effect to help children to develop and control their movement.
- 129 It was not possible to make a judgement over time on the evidence available. However, the planning does indicate that a full range of activities is taught over the year and there is appropriate balance. There are limited links with cultural and spiritual development.
- 130 Three lessons were observed in Key Stage 1; the teaching was unsatisfactory in two out of the three lessons. Although the structure of the lessons is consistent across the school, with a clear warm up, main activity session and recovery time, the content and pace of the lessons are variable in quality. Behaviour in lessons is very variable, although all children show enthusiasm and are keen to participate. In some lessons, the children's listening skills were poor. The youngest children listen exceptionally well and respond to instructions with accuracy. In the most effective lessons, there is a brisk pace to well-sequenced activities. Demonstrations are well used, and teachers are confident in their subject knowledge. The quality of teaching in the last inspection was variable as well.

- 131 Curriculum planning is satisfactory and supports a progression of skills. This has been developed since the previous inspection. Teachers make good use of this in planning their lessons. The school should evaluate the scheme and make the necessary adjustments in response to the outcomes of monitoring. Currently, there has been no monitoring of lessons in PE. Resources are sufficient and of a reasonable quality. This is an improvement on the previous inspection. In some lessons the accessibility of the apparatus caused some difficulty.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- 132 During the period of the inspection, no religious education (RE) was observed. Evidence collected from discussion with the subject manager and with children, scrutiny of children's work and displays indicate that the quality of teaching and learning in RE is unsatisfactory. Children are very unsure about what RE is and are not developing an understanding of spirituality. By the time they are seven, they know some of the stories told by Jesus and are aware of some Christian festivals. Insufficient time is given to the teaching of RE and work undertaken in blocked units is quickly forgotten. Recording in RE is insignificant and unsatisfactorily stored in topic books, sandwiched between other subjects.
- 133 The overall planning for the RE curriculum meets the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Resources are adequate and stored centrally for ease of access. The subject manager has provided planning for all year groups but has not monitored its delivery. Some work sampling has been undertaken but the work is not annotated and its relevance is unclear. This subject has not improved since the last inspection.