

INSPECTION REPORT

RIDGEMEDE JUNIOR SCHOOL

Oak Road, Bishop's Waltham, Southampton,
Hants, S032 1EP

LEA area: Hampshire

Unique reference number: 116006

Headteacher: Mr David Porter

Reporting inspector: Mrs Jane Spouse
10028

Dates of inspection: 29th January – 1st February 2001

Inspection number: 191712

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Oak Road Bishop's Waltham Southampton Hants
Postcode:	S032 1EP
Telephone number:	01489 892368
Fax number:	01489 896815
Appropriate authority:	Ridgemedede School Governors
Name of chair of governors:	Brian Calvert
Date of previous inspection:	3 rd February 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
10028	Jane Spouse	Registered inspector	Music	What should the school do to improve further? The school's results and achievements; How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
11575	Catherine Fish	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
3311	Martin Skeet	Team inspector	Science, Information and Communication Technology, Physical Education, Religious Education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
2667	Jocelyn Gill	Team inspector	Equal Opportunities, English as an Additional Language, English, Geography, History	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
25461	Joan Walker	Team inspector	Special Educational Needs, Mathematics, Art and Design, Design and Technology	

The inspection contractor was:

Quality Assurance Consultants
 The Hucclecote Centre
 Churchdown Lane
 Hucclecote
 Gloucester
 GL3 3QN

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 Alexandra House
 33 Kingsway
 London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Ridgemed Junior School is the only Junior school in the small semi-rural town of Bishop's Waltham. The majority of pupils live in Bishop's Waltham, but a number come from villages in the surrounding countryside. The school is larger than most junior schools, with a current role of 292 pupils and an equal number of girls and boys. The pupil role has dropped since the last inspection. Most join the school from the neighbouring infants school. The number of children known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. Attainment on entry is wide but generally average. The school has identified seventy-six pupils on its register of special educational needs, which is above the national average. There are four pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Needs, which is broadly in line with the national average. There is one pupil who speaks English as an additional language and almost all are of white ethnic heritage.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school with aspects which are very good: from the findings of this report pupils achieve high standards in most aspects of their education. The school believes that all children can and will succeed. A high proportion of good and very good teaching enables pupils to make good progress and achieve well. There is high commitment from all adults to develop well rounded, responsible and confident children who can take advantage of a wide range of social and learning opportunities. The strengths of the school greatly outweigh the weaknesses. The school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Overall standards of work are good and pupils achieve well.
- Overall teaching is good, with a high percentage which is very good and some that is excellent.
- Pupils' behaviour is very good. Their attitudes to school and their work are very good.
- Pupils' personal development, relationships and the provision for social, health and moral development are very good.
- Pupils are given a high quality range of learning opportunities. A rich curriculum is enhanced by a wide variety of extra-curricular activities, educational visits and visitors to the school.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs and the progress they make are very good.
- The quality of leadership and management is good. The governing body is very effective.
- Equality of access and opportunity in school life is very good.
- Parental support for and involvement with the school is very high.

What could be improved

- The school development plan needs to show more detail about action planned.
- The monitoring and evaluation of priorities for improving standards needs greater rigour to improve standards further.
- The roles of the senior management team and co-ordinators need better definition and their responsibilities more influence, particularly on the sharing of good practice.
- The assessment policy is not consistently implemented.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in 1997. The developments made since then have been effective in addressing most of the key issues. Standards in reading and information technology have improved significantly. Teaching has improved and is now secure in those subjects where it was weakest. Curriculum planning has improved significantly, with an effective development to ensure learning objectives drive the lessons. The cultural richness of the curriculum has been well developed. Collective worship arrangements now meet the statutory requirements. Attendance is now carefully monitored and promoted. Whilst elements of the school development plan have been addressed, it does not provide a coherent overview of the way in which the school is driving for the quality it seeks. The procedures for marking pupils' work have been clarified, but they remain inconsistently implemented.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	A	A	B	C
mathematics	A	A	A	B
science	A	A	A	A

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

In the 2000 national tests for 11 year olds, pupils' results in mathematics and science were well above national averages and in English above them. When compared to similar schools the results were well above average in science, above average in mathematics and average in English. High standards have been maintained for several years, particularly in science and mathematics. In mathematics performance has been consistently above schools nationally and close to the average for similar schools. The trend in English shows a dip in the last two years in comparison with similar schools. The school has set appropriately challenging targets for the future.

Work seen during the course of the inspection showed that standards are above average in science, mathematics and aspects of English. There is scope for improvement in writing and in mental mathematics at the beginning of lessons. There are no significant differences in the performance of boys and girls.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils take pleasure in school life, they are keen to learn and to be involved as much as they can.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good. Pupils look after each other and move around an awkward school building sensibly and thoughtfully.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Personal development is fostered by positive support from staff. Relationships throughout the school community are built on mutual trust and respect. Pupils show initiative, take responsibility for their learning and are able to pursue their learning with growing independence.
Attendance	Good.

Pupils' positive attitudes to learning, their very good personal development and the very good relationships with all adults make a strong contribution to their achievements.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Good

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

Teaching was excellent in 2% of lessons seen, very good in 30% and good in 44%. When the teaching is very good teachers have a high level of subject expertise. They have high expectations and enthusiasm for pupils' learning and they know and manage them well. Teaching is invigorating, with pupils' thinking carefully promoted through questions which deepen and extend their understanding. Teachers plan their lessons carefully. They are clear about what they want pupils to learn, and most offer a stimulating range of activities which engage and interest them. Pupils with special educational needs receive very good support which ensures that they can take full advantage of their learning. Numeracy and literacy skills are taught well. A strength of the school is the way in which the curriculum is enriched through high calibre visiting staff. Teaching is less effective when the pace of the lesson drifts, when not enough opportunity is given for pupils to participate, or when assessment has not led to a sharp enough focus for the learning.

The school meets the needs of all its pupils successfully. Pupils are enthusiastic, keen to succeed and they achieve well. They are eager to acquire new skills, and work impressively together and independently. Homework is used well to reinforce and extend pupils' learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. All pupils follow a rich curriculum which is broad, balanced, relevant and meets statutory requirements. This is a strength of the school.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Careful management from the special needs co-ordinator and high quality guidance from teachers and support staff result in pupils making good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Pupils are encouraged to understand right from wrong, to take responsibility for their own actions and understand the viewpoints and experiences of others. There are very good opportunities for pupils to develop their personal and social skills which have a positive impact on their development, attainment and achievements.
How well the school cares for its pupils	This is a caring school where the well being of pupils is central. Pupils are well looked after by all the staff. They are encouraged to attend school, to behave well and respect each other. Their endeavours are praised and rewarded.

The school enjoys the support of the overwhelming majority of parents and maintains very good relationships with them. The school and parents work effectively in partnership to promote pupils' learning.

The curriculum is enriched by the very good quality provision for educational visits, instrumental tuition, sports, including swimming, and through visitors to the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides excellent pastoral support for pupils and staff, and has forged a strong team. The school is well led and managed by key staff. Co-ordinators have high levels of expertise, which now needs to be used more fully. Whilst the school knows its priorities, the development plan is insufficiently detailed to ensure that action will be rigorously implemented.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very well. The governors have a very clear view of what is best for the school, a commitment to improvement and the capacity to secure it. They know the strengths and weaknesses of the school and identify the right priorities to tackle. Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. There is good use of information to identify areas that need further work. The monitoring of progress towards them is too imprecise to ensure that the action taken is having the planned impact.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The strategic use of learning support assistants and material resources to support teaching and learning is particularly effective. The school applies the principle of best value in an effective manner.
Adequacy of staffing, accommodation and learning resources	There are suitably experienced and qualified staff. Accommodation is well maintained and developed to enhance the opportunities for pupils.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the school is well led and managed • their children like school • their children make good progress • the teaching is good • they feel comfortable about approaching the school with their concerns • behaviour is good • the school expects children to work hard • the school is helping their children to become mature and responsible • the range of activities outside lessons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • further information about how their child is getting on

The inspectors support the positive comments of the parents. The school takes many opportunities for parents to be well informed. Annual reports on literacy and numeracy in the Spring term are followed by opportunities to discuss progress with teachers. Reports on all subjects are produced in the Summer term. These fulfil statutory requirements and inform parents about general progress, but the ticked summaries are rather impersonal, which hinders communication.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The attainment of pupils when they enter school is in line with and sometimes above that which is expected for pupils of a similar age. Their attainment differs in strengths year on year. By the end of Key Stage 2 in the 2000 national tests pupils attained results that were well above the national average in mathematics and science and above in English. When compared with similar schools the results remain well above the average in science, above average in mathematics and average in English. The findings from this inspection suggest that standards are currently high in the school. Results over the past three years show that performance has exceeded the national standards attained in all subjects.

English

2. In 2000, national assessment tests indicated that at Key Stage 2 standards in English were average when compared with similar schools. Inspection evidence shows that currently standards are above average. By the end of Key Stage 2 they are high in speaking and listening, above average in reading, and average in writing where there are weaknesses in spelling, punctuation and handwriting.

Literacy

3. Pupils develop very good technical vocabulary in all subjects which they use with confidence, particularly in science and mathematics. They are willing to express their feelings and listen to the views and opinions of others. They use their reading skills well across the curriculum.

Mathematics

4. Results in the 2000 national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 were well above the average for schools nationally and above average for comparative schools. Evidence from the inspection shows that attainment by the end of Key Stage 2 is above average except in mental mathematics where it is average.

Numeracy

5. Pupils make good progress in using their mathematical skills throughout the school, for instance in science, where they complete tables to record their results.

Science

6. Results in the 2000 national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 were well above the average of schools nationally and well above those of comparative schools. Inspection evidence shows that standards are very good in investigative work, that pupils have a good scientific knowledge base, and that overall standards are well above average.

Other subjects

7. Standards in physical education are very good. In history, geography, art, design and technology and music standards are good. In information and communication technology standards are in line with national expectations and meet the requirements in the agreed

syllabus for Religious Education.

8. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress and they achieve very well in relation to the targets specifically set in their individual education plans. The close monitoring of pupils, the very good support they receive, and the careful structure to their work ensure that they make good gains in knowledge, understanding and skills.

9. Appropriate targets have been set for English and mathematics.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development are a strength of the school. The high standards reported at the time of the previous inspection have been maintained. Pupils have very positive attitudes to the school, display very good behaviour and establish very good and constructive relationships with one another, with teachers and other adults working and visiting the school.

11. Pupils enjoy coming to school and show enthusiasm for, and interest in, learning. Attendance at the voluntary Reading Club and booster groups before school is testimony to pupils' motivation and commitment. They participate in the extra-curricular activities and are particularly enthusiastic about the annual school productions in which they all take part. They take pride in their work, are willing to discuss it and endeavour to improve it. They know what is expected of them in terms of effort and behaviour and are very clear about what constitutes unacceptable behaviour. They believe the school's rules are fair and that sanctions are effective. The school continues to be a happy and well ordered community.

12. During lessons pupils settle quickly and work productively in groups. As pupils behave so well, their teachers are able to devote the maximum amount of time to teaching. This leads in turn to the good standards of work and learning seen throughout the school. On the rare occasions when pupils' become distracted, they accept correction with good grace. All pupils show care and respect for equipment and books. They move around the school building sensibly and take care to stand aside for others when required. Behaviour in the playground is generally very good. Pupils report that there is no bullying in the school but that if it does occur, staff immediately put a firm stop to it. There was one exclusion during the school year prior to this inspection.

13. The school provides a secure environment in which pupils can successfully develop both their academic and personal qualities. By supporting the younger pupils at the Reading Club, for example, older pupils relate well to their younger colleagues and show they are capable of taking responsibility for hearing them read and recording their progress. Pupils are able to show initiative through setting up a stall at playtime to raise money for the Millennium project. Pupils are regularly involved with raising funds for various charities. The introduction of a School Council will further promote pupils' initiative and opportunities for them to develop a sense of responsibility.

14. A strong feature of the school's values is the need to help and respect others. Pupils are fully aware and supportive of this. Pupils know their contributions to lessons are valued and this means that they are confident to try out ideas and offer answers without the fear of being criticised if they are wrong. There is also a genuine appreciation of the achievements of others and a commendable willingness to work together on a task, valuing others' contributions. Pupils with severe special needs and those from different backgrounds are fully included in the life of the school and accepted without comment by all pupils.

15. Attendance is good. Pupils are keen to come to school, a fact with which parents

agree. Punctuality is good with very few pupils arriving late. Attendance is rigorously monitored by the headteacher and any trends in unauthorised or prolonged absences are immediately addressed.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

16. Across the school the quality of teaching is good, with some which is very good and some excellent. Very little is unsatisfactory. The quality of teaching in literacy and numeracy is good. The quality of teaching has improved from an already secure base from the last inspection. It is now good or very good in well over half of the lessons observed. The school has successfully implemented the literacy and numeracy strategies. The subject expertise of teachers has now been secured in information and communication technology and music.

17. Teachers' knowledge of the subjects they teach and the requirements of the National Curriculum is often high. They know their pupils well and use this to provide lessons which build on their skills and interests. Particular subject expertise is apparent in science, music and in PE. Teachers' expertise is good in the requirements for literacy and numeracy, although the teaching of mental mathematics sessions could sometimes be punchier to keep pupils on their toes. The Special Needs Co-ordinator demonstrated very good knowledge and understanding of each pupil's needs, through careful monitoring of individual education plans and careful liaison with class teachers, learning support assistants and parents.

18. The teaching is well planned, linked to the long and medium term plans for each subject so that pupils' skills can be built on progressively. The setting arrangements for English and mathematics ensures that pupils' individual needs in these subjects are well catered for. Liaison between the teacher for the sets and the class teacher does not yet enable a rigorous cross-curricular approach to raising standards. Objectives are made clear to the pupils at the start of sessions and are usually reinforced well during the course of the lesson. In the very best lessons the teacher's introductions to the objectives and revisions of past work were invigorating and lead to the interest of pupils being raised. For example, the reading of 'Beware Beware' by Susan Hill communicated the mysterious atmosphere of the writing very well and the introduction to a history lesson, about Boudica's rebellion against the Roman invasion, grasped pupils' imagination. In mathematics lessons teachers make good use of opening sessions to draw on pupils' knowledge, recall previous work and introduce pupils to each lesson's main activities. Planning in year group teams supports the consistency of the curriculum offered across the year groups.

19. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils, particularly with regard to how they will work and behave. Pupils are well motivated to succeed in the tasks they are set and enjoy doing so. The best teaching utilises a range of activities matched interestingly to the learning intentions. Pupils move briskly between these as the lesson progresses, aware that they need to work productively within a given time, and with their interest well sustained through the range of individual, paired and group activities which they are asked to undertake. Elements of lessons are well structured, such as in PE and English which allows the sequence of learning to develop coherently. The imaginative range of resources for specific subjects, as well as general class use, is additionally used to very good advantage.

20. Relationships with pupils are very good. A hallmark of the best lessons is the way in which trust and security in the learning environment is developed, so that pupils are able to take risks in their learning without fear of being wrong. Learning support assistants are usually used very appropriately to reinforce and support the work of individuals and groups. The high quality of this support follows from the teamwork of all staff.

21. Assessment is used satisfactorily to identify the overall areas which need to improve in the pupils' work, such as writing, or groups of children who need additional help to ensure they make the expected progress. It is used well in lessons to check for understanding through well targeted and pursued questions. Weaknesses exist in the way some teachers do not carry out marking as agreed in the policy or do not relate it to the precise objectives for the learning. This leads to pupils not being certain how they can improve their work. Key learning targets identified by the school, such as to improve aspects of writing are not always properly promoted by the range of subject opportunities available. Work scrutiny and teaching evaluation, to check progress with the school's targets do not occur sufficiently systematically. As a result there is variation in how well improvements are being secured within the school.

22. Homework is used well and parents provide very good support for their children's learning. Reading and independent study is particularly encouraged through the work set to complete at home.

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

23. The quality and range of learning opportunities offered to the pupils are very good and meet statutory requirements including the provision of religious education. The curriculum is broad and balanced and well matched to the needs and interests of the pupils.

24. There have been considerable improvements since the last inspection, particularly in relation to improved curriculum planning, and the school now meets the statutory requirements for collective worship. In addition to this the school has worked very hard to incorporate the principles contained in Curriculum 2000 for Ridgemedede School. The success of this development and the actions taken can be seen in a number of significant ways. These include the careful allocation of time to all subjects, the sequencing of foundation subjects over time, the manner in which numeracy and literacy skills are applied across the curriculum and how information and communication technology is used to enhance learning in other subjects. This has resulted in a stimulating and well-structured curriculum which promotes high personal and academic achievement.

25. The school is effective at meeting the needs of pupils with particular interests and skills for example in music and physical education. A particular strength is the provision made for pupils with special educational needs. These pupils have equal access to the curriculum, and are well supported in lessons by teachers and support staff. Their academic and personal progress are well monitored through carefully written individual education plans.

26. The strategy for teaching literacy is good. The school is very good at developing pupils' speaking and listening skills not only in English lessons but also in subjects such as history and science, which require a high level of technical language combined with reasoned argument and precise observation. Reading skills and comprehension are well established and used to promote enquiry in other subjects such as using non-fiction texts, CD-ROM and the internet. Skills in writing are sound and improving. The strategy for teaching numeracy is also good. Pupils can use and apply skills of data handling and measure in other subjects.

27. The school provides excellent enrichment through a wide range of extra-curricular activities, visits and visitors to the school. These are imaginatively planned and organised. They include singing and instrumental tuition in music, music and drama performances, an ICT club, French and a wide range of sporting clubs and teams such as swimming, cross-country, football, netball and athletics. To this can be added aqua-polo (a form of water-polo

for younger children), basketball and visits to outward bound centres. The school also runs clubs such as the Reading Club which helps develop pupils' interests and study skills.

28. The school is very effective at ensuring that pupils have equal access and opportunity to become involved in all aspects of the life of the school. Pupils with emotional, learning and physical difficulties are accepted as equal partners in the school and sensitive actions, on the part of teachers and learning support workers in particular, enable this aim to become a reality. Similarly in sport; while pursuing excellence the school does not lose sight of the fact that pupils are encouraged to participate, enjoy and improve their performance, whatever the starting point.

29. Provision for personal, social and health education (PSHE) including sex education is very good. This provision actively encourages pupils to consider their responsibilities as citizens through lessons on, for example, the role of the governors and how they determine the priorities for school, to displays which highlight the work of the local parish and Hampshire County Council.

30. There are very good links with the local community such as singing in the local church, work with the Rotary Club and the Parish Council. They include joint use of facilities such as the swimming pool and the basketball rings. There are good links with secondary schools with pupils being well-prepared and positive about transition to the next phase of education. There are also good curriculum links with secondary schools in information and communication technology and pupils from these schools come to the school on work experience or as a specific aspect of a unit of study. Transition from infant to junior school is managed well with a year 2 year 5 buddy system and exchange of curriculum information.

31. Overall provision for pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.

32. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. The daily act of collective worship allows pupils to reflect on inequalities of rich and poor and uses factual stories about oppression, the work of organisations such as Amnesty International and the power of nature and the weather. These are reinforced by appropriate examples from the Bible and hymns that echo the chosen theme. Pupils are attentive in assemblies and listen carefully to teachers and children who play a major part in the worship. Time for reflection and prayer are provided, and with careful guidance from teachers pupils are given opportunities for reflection. Further opportunities for spiritual development occur through study of beliefs in religious education, poetry in English, experimentation in science and composition in music.

33. Provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good. They know the difference between right and wrong and understand the principles of fair play, acceptable behaviour and their responsibilities to other pupils and adults in the school. The school is a thriving community with a clear sense of purpose which provides a very secure environment in which pupils can develop. There is a shared understanding and tradition of taking responsibility in the school. Very good examples of trust and relationships are set by both staff and pupils, and learn that we are dependent on others. Pupils take responsibility in lessons for resources, they work as ICT monitors, librarians, older pupils help younger pupils in the book club, organise resources for assembly and tackle the task of making arrangements for fund-raising events.

34. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good. Many opportunities are provided for pupils to consider their own cultural traditions. These include listening to music, visiting authors and poets and visits to buildings of historical interest such as Winchester Cathedral and the Hampshire countryside. The work of other cultures is covered through looking at

religions such as Islam and Hinduism in terms of key features of worship and its impact in Britain, and in geography pupils carry out studies of life in an Indian village. The very good displays around the school which feature artefacts and pictures reinforce the work in assemblies and class.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

35. Elements of this aspect were criticised in the previous report. Whilst some improvements have been made, others are still needed in the area of assessment. Aspects which received positive comments in the previous report have been well maintained.

36. The school provides good support for pupils' personal development. Both parents and pupils comment on the positive ethos in school and inspection findings concur with this view. The school places strong and successful emphasis on personal, moral and social development of its pupils and this promotes their positive attitudes. All staff have a very good knowledge of pupils' individual circumstances and needs and this gives them the confidence to seek help over any concerns or problems. The head teacher has an open door for pupils and will always attend to any difficulties at the earliest opportunity; pupils appreciate this.

37. The school takes good care of its pupils. It has good procedures for ensuring the health, safety and welfare of its pupils in a range of situations and circumstances. Risk assessments are carried out for the buildings and grounds, good attention is paid to safety throughout the curriculum, such as swimming, design and technology and science, where there is a greater potential for accidents to occur. There are very clear guidelines on how to undertake visits, whether short or long, in a safe manner. The school is careful to provide sufficient appropriate supervision for such activities. The school has good procedures for looking after any pupil who becomes ill or who has an accident during the school day; it is also prepared to administer medication when necessary. All accidents are correctly recorded and the routine administration of regular medication is noted. Fire drills are carried out at least termly and appliances, alarms and apparatus are checked regularly. The school has adequate procedures for child protection. At present, the only teacher trained in this area is the head, although the deputy head is familiar with both the documents and the procedures. The policy is reviewed annually with staff.

38. Measures to promote discipline and good behaviour are very effective. There are high expectations of behaviour and almost all pupils strive hard to meet them. Pupils' positive behaviour, attitudes and actions are regularly rewarded and celebrated in assemblies. Very good procedures for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour are also in place. Pupils know who to turn to, that the matter will be taken seriously and action to resolve it will be rapid.

39. Procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are very good. The marking of registers was criticised in the previous report and very good action has been taken to address the concerns. The presence of the codes, to be used to identify the reason for absence on the register pages, means they are correctly recorded. The head teacher monitors the registers weekly. Any unidentified absence of two days or more is noted and appropriate action taken.

40. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress are satisfactory. Several issues were raised during the last inspection and the school has addressed them to some extent. The school now has consistent systems on how to decide the objectives each child is to be assessed against in each subject and how these are to be recorded. In all subjects, except English and mathematics, planning for each half term contain clear details

on what pupils will be assessed on. These assessment opportunities are less well identified in the planning for English and mathematics, although teachers do assess pupils in these areas of the curriculum. The moderation of pupils' work in English, against National Curriculum criteria, is good, although this has been mostly undertaken by the co-ordinator. Pupils' work in mathematics has not been moderated. In English and mathematics, assessment outcomes are being used to identify weaknesses. However, these are not sufficiently underpinned by precise curriculum targets. A start has been made in some areas, such as in writing, but the targets are unclear, too broad and insufficiently specific.

41. The school has a marking policy. However its use is very variable, a concern mentioned in the previous report. It is particularly lacking in mathematics, where too often marking is just a tick. Some very good diagnostic marking of work was seen. In particularly good cases, the assessment outcome was used to set individual targets for pupils and further work was then assessed against these. This successfully focuses pupils and helps them to improve their work.

42. Provision is made to support pupils experiencing difficulties with literacy and numeracy. A Reading Club for Y3 and 4 pupils, and booster classes in literacy and numeracy for Y6 pupils are held before school. Attendance is optional but high. Support for pupils with special needs is effective, with assessment used well to identify and monitor their progress.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

43. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and what it provides for their children. It works very hard to establish and nurture a good working partnership with its parents and is successful in this endeavour. This reflects the very positive picture in the previous report. Parents are very welcome in school; a lively buzz of activity in the entrance hall, with parents coming in to talk to staff about a wide variety of subjects, was observed at both the start and end of the school day, indicating a good working relationship. Nearly a half of the questionnaires sent to parents before the inspection were returned. The analysis shows that those who responded feel the school is well led and managed, the majority are comfortable to come into school with any concerns and feel it listens well to suggestions, acting on them if appropriate. They consider the behaviour in school is good and their children like attending each day. They also approve of the expectations set for their children and the good teaching. There is some concern about the information they receive on the progress their children make. A number of parents attended the meeting with the Registered Inspector before the inspection. Most of the views expressed supported the areas already identified in the questionnaire analysis. In addition, parents wished to mention the good support for children with special educational needs, the good impact that setting for numeracy and literacy has had on standards achieved and the way that the school is very supportive and outward looking. Inspectors agree with the positive comments made by the majority of parents, and also with those who expressed concerns about the style of reports.

44. The quality of information provided for parents is satisfactory overall. The prospectus and letters concerning trips and events ensure parents are well informed about basic information and school activities. The governors' annual report to parents provides an enjoyable and informative overview of the school's work. Reports to parents on their child's progress are given at two points in the school year, and meetings for parents supplement this information helpfully. The spring term reports provide a sound indication of how children are achieving in literacy and numeracy and summer term reports inform parents well about their children's personal development. Information about pupils' progress and standards in all subjects is given, but for science and foundation subjects in a style which parents find impersonal and which does not reflect the rich experience children receive at the school.

45. The homework policy is very clear and part of the home school agreement which most parents have signed. Homework is set regularly and systematically with well used reading logs and helpful guidelines for project work for Years 5 and 6 to undertake at home. Regular meetings and workshops are well attended by parents. They cover specific areas of the curriculum and enhance parents' involvement in their children's education

46. The parents who come into school to help are well supported and their work is appreciated by the school. There are good opportunities for them to be briefed by teachers where necessary and this means that their assistance is focused and purposeful. Parents help with trips and visits as necessary. Many parents are very supportive of the work of the school in their willingness to get pupils to school early for such activities as swimming and Reading Club. All this builds very good relationships between parents and the school and involves the parents in their children's learning and development.

47. The Friends of Ridgemedede School Association is very active and raises considerable amounts of money each year to support the school. There are regular fund raising events, the chief being the Christmas Fair and the summer barbecue. Many well supported events are organised for the pupils by the 'Friends', such as discos and film evenings. A very positive aspect is that, although there is a committee of about a dozen who are in overall charge, the organising and running of events is shared with many more parents and friends.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

48. The quality of leadership and management of the school is good. The head provides excellent pastoral leadership and has very effectively fostered the constructive relationships at all levels. As a result there is a strong staff team. There is a very high commitment to providing the range of good quality educational opportunities for pupils. The drive for raising standards, for example the reading skills of boys which were weak, has been successful. Further emphasis in the leadership and management to support the raising of standards is needed.

49. The aims and values of the school are succinctly expressed and reflected in the school's prospectus and policy for teaching and learning. There is a very high value placed on equal opportunities and inclusion which is very effectively promoted for those with special educational needs and those with particular interests and talents, such as in sport and music.

50. Data analysis has led to the identification of key areas for the school to improve. Behaviour and personal development are carefully monitored. Challenging work is evident in classes. Priorities are identified carefully, although the lack of underpinning precision hampers progress in moving standards on; for instance, the targets for improving spelling, handwriting and presentation are not defined sufficiently to ensure that follow up can be rigorous. The school does not yet evaluate the impact of its improvement initiatives, nor determine whether these are consistently implemented in all classes with enough precision.

51. There is a high level of commitment to the improvement of the school by the governing body. It has a range of appropriate expertise which is used effectively to support the school. The governing body exercises its duties in a committed manner through regular meetings of the finance, personnel, premises and curriculum committees, which feed into full governing body meetings. There is a link governor for each subject area and for special educational needs. They have a very good knowledge of the work of the school from visits and meetings. The annual report to parents is innovative and produced in a readable,

interesting style. In discussion it is apparent that the priorities governors have identified for the school have been informed by appropriate sources, for instance the last inspection report. A new ICT suite and the refurbished library area have supported the improvements intended in pupils' learning in information technology and in independent research work. Nevertheless, the school development plan does not provide any insight into the context in which the school is operating, the quality which it seeks to provide or show explicitly how the priorities were arrived at. Curriculum priorities are not carefully defined within the plan, and action planned is insufficiently detailed. Plans for action do not provide success criteria or milestones towards them, such as intended improvements in teaching and in learning. This means that the systematic monitoring of pupil progress, through activities such as work scrutiny and the observation of teaching, and the identification of adjustments that might need to be made are too imprecise to ensure that the action taken is having a beneficial impact.

52. Performance Management has been effectively introduced for the headteacher. The policy has been agreed and training undertaken by the headteacher and the governing body. It is on schedule for implementation with other staff.

53. The school uses new technology well for administrative links with the local authority, for pupil records and for financial administration. Wider application is developing, such as for tracking pupils' progress.

54. Financial control is very good. The administrative officers ensure that information on expenditure is readily available to the head, finance committee and to the governing body to ensure that finances are kept in good order. The most recent auditor's report was made over four years ago and the minor areas needing attention have been addressed. The school is prudent over expenditure and seeks to get best value through tendering and comparison of prices and quality.

55. The headteacher has delegated monitoring of standards to the deputy head who has taken this forward well. Co-ordinators for subjects and for special needs have responsibilities which are well matched to their expertise and enthusiasm. The roles of the senior management team and co-ordinators are not clearly defined. Their responsibilities, particularly in monitoring and evaluating the quality of their areas, now need to be extended and implemented more rigorously so that they can influence practice more consistently through the school.

56. The number, qualification and experience of teachers and support staff match the demands of the curriculum. Staff generally have an appropriate balance of experience and expertise, and work well in teams. Good support is given to pupils from learning support assistants. Newly appointed and qualified staff are given very good support and guidance and are assimilated into the life of the school well. The standards fund is used well to support the training needs of staff.

57. The accommodation of the school is well developed to enhance the opportunities for pupils. It is carefully maintained. Physical education is well supported with a good sized hall and a good field used for games and sports. The heated indoor pool leads to high standards in swimming and allows the range of extra-curricular enrichments to be extended. An environmental area in the grounds supports the science curriculum. The music room allows music to be taught without acoustics inhibiting aspects such as performance. The recent refurbishment and extension of the library has led to its wider use. Some aspects of the use of the building do compromise the learning. For instance the hall and some classes have to be used as thoroughfares whilst lessons are in progress, and the music room has also to be used for literacy and numeracy groups which means that additional resources have to be stored in a small space.

58. The range and quality of learning resources are very good, for instance for English, mathematics, science, ICT, P.E. and music. Resources are of good quality and up to date, they are very well stored, well cared for and as a result pupils respect and access them sensibly to support their learning.

59. The co-ordinator for pupils with special educational needs manages and maintains the special needs register well. She supports colleagues and parents in the needs of the children with special educational needs. Regular meetings are held with learning support assistants to discuss pupils' progress and meet training needs. The co-ordinator and support assistants play an important part in the very good support these pupils receive and have a positive impact on their learning.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

60. The following key issues for improvement should form the basis for the governors' action plan.

- Improve the breadth and detail of the current school development plan to include raising standards in writing. (Paragraphs 2, 48, 51, 66, 67)
- Develop a monitoring and evaluation strategy related to the development plan. (Paragraphs 55, 72, 82, 87, 106, 114, 124)
- Define the roles of the senior management team and subject co-ordinators support those with monitoring responsibilities and ensure the senior management team and co-ordinators evaluate teaching and pupils' progress. (Paragraphs 40, 55, 72, 82, 87, 106, 114, 124)

Additional aspects

- Review the reports to parents so that they provide better information about the progress of their child.
- Monitor the implementation of the assessment policy and improve marking.
- Improve spelling, punctuation and handwriting to raise standards in writing, and improve standards in mental mathematics at the start of sessions.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	54
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	39

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	30	44	22	2		

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	Nursery	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		292
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		15

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		76

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	9
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	13

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.7
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
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 2

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2000	45	40	85

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	39	39	42
	Girls	32	30	38
	Total	71	69	80
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	84 (85)	81 (80)	94 (88)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	29	37	40
	Girls	31	32	33
	Total	60	69	73
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	71 (85)	81 (81)	86 (86)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	80 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	2
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	290
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	3	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: Y3 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	12.34
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.7
Average class size	32.6

Education support staff: Y3 – Y6

Total number of education support staff	12
Total aggregate hours worked per week	187

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
	£
Total income	565532
Total expenditure	576358
Expenditure per pupil	1865
Balance brought forward from previous year	38423
Balance carried forward to next year	27597

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	292
Number of questionnaires returned	131

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	62	35	2	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	42	50	6		2
Behaviour in the school is good.	50	47	3	1	
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	33	59	7	2	
The teaching is good.	56	39	2		3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	29	49	19	3	
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	72	25	2		1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	57	38	3		2
The school works closely with parents.	40	48	10	2	1
The school is well led and managed.	82	18			
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	56	38	5		2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	49	40	6	2	2

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

ENGLISH

61. Attainment in English is above average by the end of Key Stage 2 from the findings of the inspection. Standards in speaking and listening are high and reading is above average. Attainment in writing is average. Since the last inspection report, reading standards have risen significantly, whilst those in speaking and listening have been maintained. Standards in writing have fallen slightly.

62. The results of National Curriculum tests at Key Stage 2 in 2000, were above the national average and in line with those of similar schools. Results in reading were high and show a significant rise in the attainment of boys. By contrast the results in writing were lower than in reading and contributed to the relatively weaker performance at Level 5 in English. This is confirmed by the inspection which found that the attainment of pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 is currently above that expected for pupils of this age in all aspects except writing, which meets, but does not exceed expectations.

63. Throughout the school there is no significant variation in attainment among pupils of different gender. The very good progress made by boys in reading over the last two years is the result of the school having recognised that boys' attainment in reading was below that of the girls and putting in place strategies to address the problem, with obvious success. The one pupil for whom English is an additional language is fluent in English and has been placed in the top sets for the year groups. Pupils with special educational needs learn very well. They receive effective targeted support in the sets and their classes, through well structured and well matched teaching.

64. By the end of the key stage, pupils' attainment in speaking and listening is good. Pupils listen attentively to their teachers and learning support assistants. They are given frequent opportunities to work in collaborative groups in a wide range of lessons, where they listen very well to each other, expressing themselves clearly and using each other's ideas constructively. They answer questions in class or assembly with confidence and correctly formed sentences. They use an increasingly wide range of vocabulary, which includes accurate technical language and subject terminology. For example, the youngest pupils are able to explain what an ascender in handwriting is and older pupils can describe complex sentences and parts of speech. All pupils are particularly good at articulating their responses to literature. They are able to describe the behaviour and feelings of characters, showing empathy through thoughtfully chosen language, and they can justify why they like a particular poem. They are able to explain the features of different genre in writing, such as ghost stories, identifying the impact of, for example, the use of short sentences, 'unanswered questions', 'cliff-hangers that help to build tension'. Some older pupils use sophisticated language to discuss the merits of different books and their authors.

65. Attainment in reading is above that expected for pupils of this age. Most pupils by the end of the key stage are secure and confident readers. Pupils read a wide range of material such as books, poems, play scripts, non-fiction reference material, newspapers, etc. with increasing competence. The younger and less able pupils use phonics to sound out unfamiliar words, but tend not to use contextual clues or other strategies to establish meaning. However, lower attainers higher up the school have learned to self-correct by using a wider range of clues. Most pupils read fluently, with expression and genuine enjoyment. They can give a clear synopsis of the story and sequence of events, showing insight and empathy for characters, using inference and deduction. They can give reasons for liking a favourite character and many refer to the text to support their views. They recall the plot and

predict sensibly, and sometimes imaginatively, what might happen next. Older pupils are able to identify the key features of different genres, and the effect created by the style, organisation and language. Most pupils can discuss their favourite authors and the types of books they prefer to read. Many pupils have been inspired to read particular authors, such as Jacqueline Wilson, after the author visited the school. All pupils use their reading skills well across the curriculum. Throughout the school, pupils are able to find information quickly, using the contents and index in reference books. Project work in history and geography shows pupils able to research and collate information from a wide range of reference material. The library is used well, and provides a good selection of fiction and non-fiction books. It is a well organised and attractive space which helps instill in pupils a real enthusiasm for reading.

66. Attainment in writing, at the end of the key stage meets expectations overall, with some aspects that are good, but with spelling, punctuation, and handwriting below average. The slight decline in standards over the last two years is due in part to the emphasis placed on raising attainment in reading, particularly that of the boys. However, the school has recognised that writing needs to be improved and has put in place strategies to secure this. Additional time has been allocated outside the 'literacy hour' to the teaching of writing. Pupils are now set in ability groups so that work can be more effectively targeted to their needs.

67. Pupils write in a wide range of genre that contribute effectively to other subjects, such as non-fiction pieces researched and written about the Mary Rose in history, a questionnaire in geography, instructions to design a bedroom rug in design and technology, note taking during a video about Diwali etc. The strengths in pupils' writing are in the development of style where pupils are increasingly using language to create particular effects. They have a good knowledge of the features of different genre. For example, a Year 6 group was able to re-draft their writing to develop a sense of suspense using language features of ghost stories. Pupils use figurative language very effectively to write poems and settings for narratives. In some cases the imagery is impressive and leads to outstanding work. Most pupils' writing is lively and thoughtful, drawing on a wide range of imaginative and adventurous vocabulary. Older pupils are beginning to write in complex sentences and to structure their writing according to purpose. However, standards in presentation are weak. Although there is evidence of progress in handwriting, standards are not good enough. Too many pupils have poorly formed handwriting with no consistent style. Some pupils' work shows different standards of handwriting in the same book. The setting out of work varies too greatly between pieces of work and between pupils. The application of correct spelling and punctuation is unsatisfactory. Pupils are making too many simple mistakes. Often the same mistakes are repeated frequently with no comment from the teacher. Pupils are aware of the 'look, cover, write, check' strategy to learn their spellings and they use dictionaries well to support spelling, but there is little evidence that these strategies are being consistently applied to pupils' general writing. Again, pupils know the rules of punctuation, but too often need prompting to use them correctly.

68. The quality of teaching is good. It is never less than satisfactory and on occasions it is very good. The National Literacy Strategy has been implemented well and planning is clearly driven by the learning objectives from the strategy. Most teachers have good subject knowledge. The very good teaching is characterised by challenging work, which builds effectively on pupils' previous learning and gives them opportunities to apply what they already know to new contexts. Skilful, probing questions draw out pupils' own ideas and help refine them and improve them. In the most effective lessons teaching is well paced, moving the learning on through successful completion of all the planned tasks and learning objectives. Pupils with SEN participate fully through sensitive and skilled management, which ensures that lessons continue at a brisk pace. Pupils' understanding of what they are learning is good and this supports their progress. Teachers share learning objectives with pupils and return to them at the end of the lesson, sometimes analysing with them their

success against these objectives. All teachers employ a good range of teaching strategies which maintain pupils' interest and motivation. The quality of learning activities both in guided and independent work is high. They are well matched to pupils' prior attainment, and are often imaginative and challenging. Learning support assistants are effectively deployed and make a very good contribution to pupils' learning. Pupils are given frequent opportunities to work collaboratively and this they do with commendable skill. Throughout the school, speaking and listening, reading and writing are practised well through other subjects.

69. Pupils' attitudes are very good and their behaviour is very good. This means that teachers can work with particular groups or individuals without interruption. Respect and care is shown for books and other learning materials.

70. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory. However, whilst daily, on-going assessment is good, more formal teacher assessment is less effective as there is currently no clear expectation that pupils' progress will be assessed on a regular basis. One teacher provides opportunities for her pupils to self assess following a unit of work, but this good practice is not being effectively shared with staff. Marking varies in quality across the school. The best is constructive and developmental, often giving feedback to pupils relating to individual targets and suggesting ways to improve further. Not enough marking points to basic mistakes in spelling and punctuation. The class records contain helpful criteria against which pupils' progress can be assessed. However, these are not passed on to the next teacher which limits what teachers can know about pupils' specific strengths and weaknesses.

71. The class records are used to inform the annual reports to parents. However, these reports use criteria that contain a lot of educational terminology. This means that information about individual children's progress is not always clear to parents.

72. The curriculum for English has good breadth and is well balanced. The use of information and communication technology to support writing is developing well and there is a lot of evidence of pupils re-drafting and editing work through the use of ICT. The range, quantity and quality of resources are good. The co-ordinator has good subject knowledge and is well aware of the need to raise standards in writing to at least that attained in reading. She has a well thought out action plan and has undertaken some monitoring of teaching and moderation of pupils' work, although the outcomes of these activities have not been formally noted. Through sampling pupils' writing, she has identified weaknesses evident in each year group and, informed by the national literacy strategy target statements in writing, set out curricular targets for each year group. However, these are currently too many in number and do not address the needs of each set. A second analysis of pupils' work will be done to refine the areas of specific weakness further that will need to be tackled. These aspects will also inform teachers' assessments, and any monitoring activities carried out by the co-ordinator, in order to track progress and evaluate success. The ability of the co-ordinator to implement the action plan fully and to monitor progress, is currently inhibited by the lack of non-contact time and a systematic programme to enable her to carry out her responsibilities effectively.

MATHEMATICS

73. Pupils currently in Year 6 attain standards above those expected for their age in mathematics, and this is an improvement since the last inspection, when standards were judged to be in line or higher than those expected nationally. The year 2000 national tests for 11-year olds, show the percentage of pupils attaining the national expectations, Level 4 or above, to be above the national average, while the proportion of pupils reaching Level 5 was well above the national average. In comparison with national benchmarks for schools in similar contexts the percentage of pupils reaching Level 4 or above was in line with

expectations nationally and above for those pupils reaching Level 5. Results over time have continued to be above the national average. There are no marked difference in the performances of girls and boys.

74. The school has successfully implemented the National Numeracy Strategy and this is having a good effect, particularly with the pupils' number work. All aspects of the curriculum are well covered. Pupils with special educational needs are supported very well and progress is good.

75. The majority of pupils enter the school with levels of attainment that are in line with those expected nationally for children of their age, although a minority still require support and carefully staged numeracy work. By the age of eleven, pupils perform mental calculations in number satisfactorily and occasionally with speed and accuracy and in a variety of ways. They recognise equivalence between percentages, fractions and decimals. For example, 80 per cent is the same as $\frac{4}{5}$ as a fraction and 0.8 as a decimal. Pupils in Year 3 know and understand vertical and horizontal axes and can plot co-ordinates correctly on a grid. They can describe the attributes of shapes such as triangles, squares and circles. In Year 4, pupils estimate and record their findings when weighing a variety of objects. In Year 5, pupils can make up their own improper fractions and convert them into a mixed number and vice versa. They use correct mathematical vocabulary for example, numerator and denominator.

76. Overall pupils' attitudes to mathematics are good and frequently very good, especially in the top group classes. They respond well to the work planned for them, listening attentively, speaking confidently and not afraid to make mistakes. Most teachers value the pupils' responses and the suggestions they make. Pupils enjoy mathematics and, notably, in lessons where the work is well matched to their abilities, the pupils sustain concentration and behave very well. Pupils with special educational needs are conscientious and have good attitudes to their learning.

77. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good; it ranges from satisfactory to very good. Of the lessons seen, 30 per cent were very good, 50 per cent good and 20 per cent sound. The setting of mathematics throughout the school ensures that pupils' individual needs are generally well catered for. All lessons are well planned and prepared. At the start of every lesson, the learning objectives are written on the board and shared with the pupils. They are reviewed at the end of the lesson in most lessons. The structure to lessons has been influenced by the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy and includes a mental/oral starter, a main activity and a plenary. In the majority of lessons numeracy is taught well. The best teaching makes good use of mathematical vocabulary and this gives pupils the relevant vocabulary with which to explain the work that they are doing. As a result, in these lessons the standard attained by the majority of pupils in mental and oral work is good, particularly where teachers give them the confidence to have a go at answers and then encourage them to share how they arrived at their answers with the rest of the class. These sessions also help the pupils to develop their skills in speaking and listening. There are effective links with numeracy in other subjects i.e. history, geography, design and technology and science. During lessons observed there was little evidence that information communication technology was being used to support mathematics.

78. In the best lessons teachers have a very secure knowledge of the subject, set very challenging and interesting tasks, are enthusiastic, check on previous pupils' understanding, and time and resources are used to very good advantage. For example, in one lesson in which the pupils were weighing objects, the teacher set an interesting task of weighing items of luggage for a trip on an aeroplane. The pupils had to decide which items to take because the weight of the luggage was restricted. Very good collaborative work was observed during this lesson. Pupils achieve well in the mental/oral session when a brisk pace is sustained

and pupils are made to think quickly and accurately. However, in most mental/oral sessions the pace is too slow for pupils to make good progress. Where additional adult support is available it is deployed well, especially to support lower-attaining pupils and those with special education needs. When teaching is good the impact on pupils' progress and learning is also good. Pupils work at a good pace and acquire new mathematical skills. They sustain interest throughout the lesson and understand what they are doing and how they can improve their work.

79. The quality of pupils' written work in mathematics varies according to the expectations of the teachers. Too frequently the work is poorly presented. Where the teachers insist on a high standard, the work is well presented and numerals are well formed. However, generally insufficient attention is given to pupils' presentation of work or to the quality of marking, which fails to inform the pupils of their progress adequately.

80. Links with the parents, to help their children in mathematics, are good. The school has held sessions with parents to assist them to understand how mathematics is taught and learnt. Homework tasks are given to the pupils on a regular basis and the parents are pleased to assist their children.

81. Mathematics makes a valuable contribution to the pupils' moral and social education in the way in which they are required to work together. For example, they learn that it is totally acceptable to make mistakes and that you can learn from them. There is scope however, for the subject to make a better contribution to the pupils' spiritual and cultural development through, for instance, looking at patterns in nature and at mathematical designs in specific religions.

82. The quantity and quality of resources for mathematics are good and meet the needs of the curriculum. The co-ordinator has no regular non-contact time to monitor and evaluate teaching within the subject, but does monitor planning. Teacher assessments during lessons are effective. However, the way the school arrives at its assessments for the national curriculum tests at Level 5 may need to be reviewed. The role of the co-ordinator lacks precision and needs to be defined in terms of the specific responsibilities she needs to undertake within this subject. The mathematics curriculum meets the statutory requirements and the capacity for further improvement is good.

SCIENCE

83. Pupils' performance in the Key Stage 2 tests in 2000 show that attainment is well above the national average compared to all schools and to similar schools. High standards have been sustained since the last inspection. Evidence from work in lessons, scrutiny of recent and current work and discussions with pupils indicate that these standards will be maintained in the 2001 national tests.

84. Pupils are very good at conducting scientific enquiry. They demonstrate a creative approach to explaining things such as day and night and the properties of magnets and can also systematically carry out investigations. Work is always well planned and they are very good at collecting and collating evidence and then evaluating it. They are also able to discuss the accuracy of their findings as they have a good grasp of what constitutes a fair test and the importance of recording precise observations. Pupils use the technical language of science accurately and this is improved further as they possess good descriptive skills. For example in an enquiry which sought to investigate the hypothesis that mixing materials causes change, pupils use descriptions such as 'translucent', 'whipped-cream', and 'murky' to capture their observations on paper. Pupils show a wide range of knowledge and understanding about life processes and living things and materials and their properties. They are also able to apply this knowledge to everyday life. As a consequence they have a good understanding of how forces are used in the world around them, that diet, fitness and exercise are related to lifestyle and that safety in electricity must always be observed.

85. Pupils' attitudes to science are very positive. They are keen to carry out investigations and levels of concentration are good; pupils complete tasks to a high standard taking great pride in presenting their findings accurately and then using information and communication technology programs to complement and enhance the final assignment. They feel comfortable to take responsibility when carrying out practical work and show good levels of patience when watching what is unfolding in front of them. Pupils showed enormous enthusiasm when observing the effect of mixing baking powder and plaster of Paris with water. Good skills enable them to record their findings accurately. Pupils listen carefully to their teacher and each other. Pupils co-operate well together and this has a positive impact on learning - they use each other as a resource to discuss hypotheses and monitor practical work in groups.

86. The quality of teaching ranges from good to very good and is predominantly very good. Objectives are clear with work well planned, lessons well structured and work matched well to pupils of differing ability. Teachers' expectations are high, both in terms of conceptual knowledge, learning about sunrise and sunset, and pupils' capacity to carry out investigations productively. The pace of lessons is good, with pupils being set deadlines to complete various tasks within set points within the lesson timeframe. Explanations are clear; they capitalise on pupils' previous knowledge and often use analogy to explain more abstract concepts, such as the relative size of the sun and the earth. On going marking and assessment is used well to support, question and move pupils on to the next level of comprehension, for example when considering the variables relating to the rate that sugar and salt dissolve in water. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and through their enthusiasm and organisational skills effectively promotes the idea that science is interesting and important. Good use of resources support this and the matrix forms, that teachers have generated for pupils to record their observations to help them become more systematic, as it aids the gathering and analysing of data and guides them to come to valid conclusions. Questioning of pupils is to a very high standard; it seeks to make pupils use vocabulary accurately and encourages them to justify their findings by drawing on supporting evidence.

87. Work in science is well planned and co-ordinated and the school benefits from having

a co-ordinator with very good subject knowledge and a vision for making pupils think scientifically. There is a comprehensive curriculum plan and schemes of work which cover the elements of the National Curriculum requirements and enable pupils to build on skills and understanding as they progress through the school. Very good links are made to other subjects of the curriculum. Information and communication technology is used not only for data-logging but also to enhance the presentation of pupils' work. The need for precise measurement is linked well to mathematics, and health and safety issues are given appropriate emphasis in lessons. The need for pupils to speak accurately and listen carefully are a feature of lesson plans and this too has a positive effect on pupils' progress. Resources are good and effectively organised and used. Analysis of test data and assessment of pupils' knowledge are used to systematically monitor pupils' progress. To build further on the effective leadership in science the school has identified the need to develop the co-ordinator's role in supporting teaching, and see how science can be utilised to improve pupils' writing skills.

ART AND DESIGN

88. Due to timetable constraints it was possible to observe only two lessons in art. Judgements are made additionally from discussions with pupils and staff, scrutiny of pupils' past and present work, displays and teachers' planning. Pupils currently in the top age group for the school are achieving standards that are above those expected for their age. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when overall standards were considered to be in line with expectations of similar aged pupils.

89. Younger pupils produce full-length paintings of people. In another lesson they made collage patterns which were inspired from a history lesson. Pupils designed their patterns first and used these plans to produce a material collage. Older pupils had previously drawn pictures of toys using different grades of pencil to produce some very effective shading. For example, using the pencil to draw fine and thick lines and smudging some to give a solid effect. In this lesson the objective was to look at only a small part of the toy and enlarge it. Pupils used their sketchbooks to try out their ideas first.

90. Throughout the school, pupils learn and apply new skills successfully. They use a wide range of media, including chalk, oil pastels, pencils and paint. They make three-dimensional shapes in clay and print in a variety of ways. The use of the computer programs, to draw and illustrate is being developed but is not established as a medium in art and design work in the same way that more traditional techniques are used. However, the computer was used to stimulate pupils' interest in mini beasts and pupils made their own version in 3D in the lesson.

91. Teaching overall is judged to be very good. From lessons observed and from a scrutiny of teachers' planning, teachers' plan their lessons with very clear learning objectives. They identify the skill to be taught and set out an appropriate structure to enable pupils to build on previous knowledge and understanding. In both these lessons the teachers were very aware of the need for the pupils to design and plan before attempting the finished product. The introductions were clear and very imaginative and pupils were very excited and highly motivated to complete the task. All through these lessons the teachers used very good questions to stimulate the pupils' thinking about how they could improve their work. Teaching and learning is very good because pupils work at a good pace, they are aware of the high expectations of quality of work and are extending their knowledge and skills. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their abilities.

92. Pupils' attitudes towards their work are very good. In what are often exciting lessons pupils work sensibly. Such mature attitudes enable the teachers to spend time discussing

work with individual pupils. All pupils behave very well and respect the opinions of others. They work together very well, sharing resources without any fuss. Pupils show a great sense of responsibility by using resources carefully and returning equipment to the appropriate place at the end of the lesson.

93. The co-ordinator monitors teachers' plans and supports them appropriately through her consultancy role. There is an appropriate range of resources that are readily available. The subject contributes well to the social and cultural development of pupils. There are links with other areas of the curriculum i.e. religious education, history, science, design and technology, numeracy and literacy. The careful and colourful displays of pupils' work in classrooms and around the school clearly demonstrate that the subject is valued. Such respect makes a substantial contribution to the overall ethos of the school. The art curriculum meets statutory requirements.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

94. Timetabling arrangements during the inspection meant it was possible to observe only three lessons, one in Year 5 and two in Year 6. Judgements on standards are therefore also based on the scrutiny of work, discussions with pupils and staff, and subject planning. Using this evidence standards are above those expected for pupils of a similar age and are consistent with the finding of the last inspection. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported and make good progress.

95. A good start is made in the early years of Key Stage 2 where pupils are given opportunities to use a variety of materials and to investigate their use. They are encouraged to design, make and evaluate their work. They are given experience with a range of constructional material, producing designs and end products that are of good quality. As pupils move through the school they make increasingly complex models and undertake more demanding activities and appropriately build on previous experience and skills. The use of the design process is good and pupils record in increasing detail their ideas for, and evaluations of, design and technology activities undertaken.

96. In the Year 6 classes pupils were working as a team to produce a vehicle that moves using a battery, motor, wheels and axles. They discussed in detail the design and materials and components needed to complete a good quality vehicle. Many pupils could explain how to make their vehicles move backwards and forward from the experience and learning about electricity gained in science lessons. They understood the need for very accurate measuring of wood etc. if the model was to be successful and meet all the criteria of their plans and learning objectives; a good link with numeracy.

97. The observation of lessons and the quality of work seen, including artefacts and the design and evaluation of work, indicate that the pupils have very good attitudes, take care and try hard to produce work of a good standard. They behave very well, sharing equipment and tools in a very mature way, often in cramped conditions within the classrooms. This means teachers can confidently offer a wide range of activities, including the use of sharp tools. Health and safety standards are observed at all times.

98. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers have a very sound knowledge of the subject and use it well to teach the basic skills. They plan all activities very carefully to the individual needs of the pupils. Tasks are challenging and pupils are made to think about the problems they encounter in completing their vehicles. Organisational methods are very good, enabling pupils to make good progress in their learning. Teachers use probing questions to assess pupils' knowledge and understanding and move the pupils forward in their thinking and making of the vehicles. During the plenary sessions the pupils show and

explain their models but also discuss what they think went well and what is needed to improve them.

99. All aspects of the design and technology curriculum are well resourced, particularly food technology, and in each classroom there is a good selection of tools housed in a design technology trolley. The work on display both in classrooms and around the school, shows good attention to detail and finish and clearly demonstrates that the subject is valued. Such respect makes a good contribution to the overall ethos of the school. The co-ordinator is recently appointed to the post and has already audited and centralised resources. Teachers assess the pupils during lessons and also complete individual pupils' record sheet effectively. The subject fulfils statutory requirements. Design and technology contributes well to social development, through the need for pupils to work together.

GEOGRAPHY

100. No lessons in geography were seen during the inspection. However, evidence from a work scrutiny and discussions with pupils indicate that standards are above those expected nationally, particularly in the area of knowledge and understanding of environmental change by the end of Key Stage 2. This shows that standards have been maintained since the previous inspection.

101. Pupils' work shows that geographical enquiry and skills are used when developing knowledge and understanding in the subject. There is also a clear emphasis on the use of local issues to illustrate wider geographical concerns. For example, pupils have looked at the impact of the proposed new stadium to replace 'The Dell' in Southampton. They drew up a good range of geographical questions to investigate the impact of the stadium on traffic, shopping, the local citizen, etc. Pupils are able to discuss, in an informed way, the issues that are raised when a large building project is proposed in a particular area. Their writing shows very good analysis of the impact of such a change on people and the environment. In Year 6, a survey was carried out about how the local towns are used. Pupils discovered that different towns attracted different types of activity. They were able to reason sensibly as to why this was case, to describe the local pattern of use and to begin to recognise the distinctiveness of their local towns. This is a good example of applying geographical enquiry to local issues.

102. In Year 3, pupils are able to identify and record the differences between places, by comparing Britain and a holiday destination such as Canada or Spain. Pupils organised the information clearly, comparing climate, landscape, vegetation, buildings using a range of geographical sources for their information. Year 5 pupils also looked at a contrasting place and some produced a postcard from the desert describing effectively the living conditions. As part of a unit of work on improving the school's environment, pupils undertook a survey on the use of a school path that ran along the side of the building. Results were placed on a graph, using ICT, and analysed well.

103. Mapping skills are progressively developed throughout the key stage. Maps of the playground have been done to show the proposed 'outside' classroom. Accurate maps of the world's continents were on display showing the effects of climate on people and their environments.

104. Pupils' apply basic literacy, numeracy and ICT skills effectively in geography. Pupils use geographical language appropriately in both their written work and when discussing issues. There is evidence of pupils writing in an appropriate range of forms, such as questionnaires, directional writing, diagrams. There is also evidence of data handling in the

use of tallies, charts and graphs for recording information, often using ICT.

105. Pupils' benefit from the good range of learning opportunities planned by their teachers. Work has been well organised into units, with clear links to literacy and numeracy skills and, where appropriate, to science, art, design and technology. The recently revised scheme of work is a helpful guide to support teachers' planning. Assessment is built into the plans. This is linked to the key focus of the work and results are recorded on a useful class record that covers all the aspects of the subject. Good use is made of homework to encourage pupils to follow their own geographical enquiries. Pupils have produced good extended pieces of work, often imaginatively presented in book form, on such topics as Rainforests, Deserts, The Tropics etc.

106. The school is well resourced for this subject. There are a good number of local resources such as old maps and aerial photographs. The co-ordinator had good subject knowledge and supports teachers appropriately. There is an action plan to continue to improve the subject. Progress in implementing the plan is sound. Further development of fieldwork is a priority for staff training. Monitoring the teaching and learning has been limited so far, but the co-ordinator intends to look at pupils' work, using the intended learning outcomes to assess the impact of teaching and the implementation of the new scheme.

HISTORY

107. The standards achieved by pupils are above those expected nationally at the end of Key Stage 2. The school has improved on the satisfactory standards seen in the previous inspection. During the inspection, no history was being taught in Years 5 and 6. Four lessons were observed in Years 3 and 4. The evidence from lessons seen, work on display, discussions with pupils, and a scrutiny of their books, shows that all groups of pupils make good progress in developing their knowledge and understanding of life in the past and, in particular their skills in historical enquiry and interpretation.

108. In Year 3, pupils are learning about the Roman invasion and occupation of Britain through the use of artefacts, information books, photographs, museum models etc. Pupils are able to explore and explain the reasons why Claudius invaded Britain. Pupils' written responses are thoughtful, giving reasons for the invasion that include not only the need to exploit Britain's minerals but also as a strategic political move, for example one pupil wrote, 'He would use Britain as a guard post, but he mostly wanted to improve his image....' Pupils are able to identify on the 'time-line' when the Romans invaded and can place this in relation to Christ's birth and later periods of history. Their chronological understanding is good.

109. Pupils are becoming increasingly skilled at looking at different sources of evidence to inform their knowledge and understanding of life in a particular period. In Year 3 lessons, they examined closely a range of Roman artefacts, and were able to describe these accurately and to speculate, using secondary evidence from reference books, what the artefact was used for. Similarly, in a Year 4 lesson, pupils were able to evaluate evidence about aspects of life in Tudor times, making inferences about the life styles of different people. By going through an inventory of the contents of a Tudor cottage, pupils were able to deduce and make sensible suggestions about the life of the people who lived there. Pupils have an increasingly good understanding that historical information is an interpretation of past events and that the past is represented in many different ways.

110. Pupils use their literacy skills very effectively. Pupils engage in thoughtful discussion about the interpretation of artefacts, arriving at agreed conclusions with commendable participation by all pupils. Where pupils have followed their own lines of enquiry within a history project, the resulting work is often of a high standard. This work shows a good level of

individual research using reference materials from books, artefacts, the internet etc. These are presented imaginatively in a structured reference book form, many including a contents page and a glossary of historical terms.

111. The quality of teaching is good. The recently revised scheme of work is enabling teachers to plan for the breadth of study in Key Stage 2. There is an appropriate emphasis on historical skills as well as knowledge. Teachers' enthusiasm for the subject is actively communicated to the pupils. Lessons are well planned and prepared with a good balance maintained between conveying information and opportunities for pupils to find things out for themselves. Teachers have good knowledge of the periods being studied. Often, lessons are challenging. For example, in Year 3, a well thought-out practical task, enabled pupils to discover that there are differences in the way historical characters have been portrayed in books and pictures and that these differences arise from historians using different sources of information and their own interpretations.

112. Effective use is made of questions to assess and extend pupils' understanding. Pupils are assessed after each unit of work and an informative record is kept of pupils' progress in each key aspect of the subject.

113. As a result of good, challenging and imaginative teaching, pupils enjoy history and have positive attitudes towards the subject. They are encouraged to think critically about evidence and to concentrate carefully on the materials they are using. Their behaviour in lessons is consistently good. Pupils are particularly knowledgeable and enthusiastic about their local history, such as the story of the Mary Rose and their own village history. Art is used effectively to illustrate aspects of study, such as the portraits of Tudor monarchs represented in collage.

114. Resources are satisfactory, with an increasingly good range of artefacts and reference books available. The school benefits from the close links enjoyed with the Portsmouth Museum and the Mary Rose Trust. The co-ordinator has good subject knowledge and boundless enthusiasm for history. She offers good leadership to staff, having re-written the scheme of work in a way that guides teachers' planning effectively and places appropriate emphasis on historical understanding and skills. There is a suitable action plan in place to address improvements in history. For example, the co-ordinator plans to attend an ICT course to improve the use of ICT to support work in history. Although the co-ordinator has done some monitoring of teaching and pupils' work, she has not been able to do this systematically with the benefit of non-contact time.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

115. Pupils' attainment in information and communication technology is at least in line with and, in some aspects, above national expectations by the end of the key stage. There have been important improvements in the subject since the last inspection. Most notably these include the fact that pupils in all year groups attain sound and often good standards and they progress well as they move through the school. In addition resources have been expanded and are organised effectively to support both teaching and learning.

116. Pupils are good at using ICT to find things out. They are able to search the internet and save and download historical data in their topics such as the Aztecs and the Tudors and in geography find maps and information about weather patterns. They are also able to access CDs to support study in other subjects such as the Romans in history. These skills are secure and deepen pupils understanding. Pupils use the programs available to input and collate data and then communicate and investigate their findings. Pupils are familiar with spreadsheets, line and block graphs and use these skills well in other subjects of the curriculum. Good examples are graphs which show findings in science and a database of towns visited in geography.

117. Pupils' word processing skills are a major strength of the school. They can organise text, tables, images and sound. They have a good grasp of how to use different and appropriate programs and can insert tables and pictures to improve and exemplify their work. They are clear about using spell and grammar checks and use different fonts and formats to produce high quality desktop publishing work. In science they construct flow diagrams which guide the reader through characteristics of invertebrates.

118. In investigative work they explore models, traffic light sequences and light sensitive operations which include repeat loops. Pupils are good at exchanging and sharing information. Although they have done some work with email, this aspect of the subject is under-utilised at the moment. There are many high quality examples of the use of ICT within the school. Displays and posters which utilise desktop publishing skills feature widely and enhance the environment considerably. Pupils' individual work in history, English, geography and science is enhanced by capitalising on these skills. Pupils are able to evaluate their work; they talk about how they have constructed pages, how they can be improved and the effectiveness of the communication.

119. The quality of teaching is good. Pupils are given clear guidance about what they have to do, how to carry out the activities and how to improve. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and how it can be used to enrich pupils learning and the curriculum as a whole. Lessons have clear objectives both for development of knowledge and application of skills. Teachers' expectations of what can be achieved are high and while pupils are working they are effectively monitored and supported and progress at a good pace.

120. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are very good. They are keen to learn more and they are able to explain and use their knowledge and skills in other subjects. They settle well to tasks and sustain interest and are well-motivated to produce high quality work. They are confident of their ability to use the hardware and software and are able to explain, with authority, what they have done or what they are currently doing.

121. Information and communication technology is well organised and co-ordinated. The school benefits from a very effective co-ordinator who manages the subject very well. Curriculum provision is effectively planned for coverage, progression of skills and the application of skills to other subjects. Each class is timetabled to use the computer room twice a week. Firstly to teach and practice skills and secondly to use the skills in the topic

they are studying linked to another subject. Assessment is organised well, with teachers evaluating and recording pupils' levels in key competencies as they progress through the school. Resources are good. The school has a computer suite which is divided into two sections. One part is used for control work and the other, which is a network of new personal computers, is used to meet the requirements of the rest of the programme of study. There are computers in the library area which are linked to the internet and used to find information. In each classroom pupils have access to older machines to practice skills, such as data handling and word processing. The hardware is supported by a good range of software, CDs and peripherals. Training for staff is underway using the new opportunities fund. The development plan for the subject is good; it identifies the key areas for improvement which include the greater use of email for communication and getting compatible computers in each classroom so pupils can develop their skills more effectively.

MUSIC

122. The previous inspection judged attainment to be broadly in line with national expectations. From the evidence in this inspection overall attainment is at least in line with expectations and in some lessons, above. Pupils attain well in sessions taught by visiting specialists, read notation, perform and improvise by ear, and are able to sustain their part within a group performance. Their skills on keyboard, cello and percussion are extended through discussion about how performance can be improved. In a class session high standards were seen as pupils developed a response to a picture in music. They were able to select from a range of instruments those which would be most appropriate for their purpose, and then work together, combining pulse, melody, rhythm and silence in imaginative ways to make an expressive piece. Pupils learn the make up of sections of the orchestra and know how to be a good audience. They listen to music with attention and produce thoughtful responses. They understand the importance of notation. They can recognise and repeat rhythms, and join in singing in lessons and assembly with tunefulness and enthusiasm. They review their own and each other's performance constructively, and find ways in which it can be improved. Pupils who have high expertise in music contribute their skills to the learning of the class, for instance demonstrating the way a violin is played, or to the community of the school through playing in assembly. Those with special educational needs are involved fully, participate in the learning well and make very good progress.

123. The teaching quality ranges from sound to very good and is good overall. The very good teaching shows high levels of musical expertise, with very secure relationships established with pupils where expectations for the work and the pace of the sessions are high. Musical performance and experience are extended through a wide range of imaginative opportunities, such as millennium celebrations, music groups from other nationalities visiting the school, and school performances in the local area. Music makes a high contribution to social, spiritual and cultural development through these opportunities.

124. Resources and accommodation are very good. The music room is very carefully organised so that pupils can have ready access to instruments and can develop their performances without impinging on other classes. Its use for literacy and numeracy sessions has led to other resources getting in the way of this organisation. The co-ordinator provides a very good source of expertise for staff, although her ability to monitor the curriculum is inhibited by the lack of time. Schemes of work offer helpful guidance concerning continuity in the work, and assessment procedures have been defined but are not due to be implemented until later in the year.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

125. Overall attainment in physical education (PE) is well above the national expectation which is an improvement since the last inspection. Swimming remains a significant strength of the school with pupils attaining well above what is expected of them by the end of the key stage. There have been major improvements since the last inspection and these include the range of extra curricular activities which greatly enhance the provision, and improvements in teaching and assessment arrangements which enable teachers to track progress in skills against the key objectives in the units of work.

126. The curriculum has been thoughtfully mapped out to meet the needs of the National Curriculum and during the course of the inspection pupils were observed in swimming, gymnastic and dance lessons as well as before and after school clubs. Pupils are able to create and perform dance routines from different places and cultures and connections are made to other areas of work. For instance pupils use their knowledge of the properties of magnets to attract and repel to work in pairs and explore creatively through movement the opportunities inherent in this concept. In swimming, pupils know the correct arm and leg actions for recognised strokes and demonstrate well the key skills linked to personal survival such as sculling, floating and surface diving. In gymnastics they perform and improve a fluent sequence of actions which combine floor and apparatus. They also use terms such as 'symmetrical' and 'asymmetrical' from mathematics to explore space and deepen learning. Pupils work well together to plan, evaluate and suggest improvements.

127. Pupils show very positive attitudes to PE. Pupils of all abilities participate fully and show a real sense of achievement when mastering new techniques or refining skills say in backstroke or putting together a sequence of eight moves in gymnastics. They are eager to acknowledge the achievements of others so when a child finally accomplishes a headstand the class breaks out in spontaneous applause. Pupils apply skills well and work with tenacity to improve movement skills related to rhythm and the planned components in dance and so there is a real feel of coherence in the composition.

128. The quality of teaching is very good, and is sometimes excellent particularly in swimming. Teachers are skilled at planning work. Expectations are high and lessons conducted at a lively pace. The organisation of lessons ensures good progress in learning and teachers are particularly skilled at building pupils' confidence, using example, and enabling pupils to evaluate their performance. Lessons have objectives which focus on developing skills then using them to secure improvement. Thus in swimming, stroke technique is practised in individual elements and then all of these are brought together so pupils can improve their efficiency through the water. Similarly in gymnastics work is planned so that previous and new skills, for example balance, are developed in the main part of the lesson.

129. Physical education has a prominent place in the life of the school and this contributes positively to the standards achieved. It promotes the idea of fitness for life, that all can participate as well as endorsing excellence through sporting achievement. The school benefits from a knowledgeable and enthusiastic co-ordinator who is well supported by other colleagues. Patterns of training are well established in the school and this too has a positive effect on standards and teacher confidence. The school offers a wide range of curricular opportunities to pupils. These include football, netball, hockey, cricket, cross-country, athletics, rounders, water polo and basketball. Swimming is encouraged through additional training and the school competes successfully at county and district level. Resources are very good. They include a swimming pool, good outdoor facilities and good apparatus and equipment, which are used by both the school and the community. Visits and visitors to the school enhance standards; good examples include older pupils undertaking outdoor and adventure activities and dance teachers coming in to broader provision and skills. At present opportunities for the co-ordinator to work with other teachers are limited and this has been

correctly identified as an area for improvement in the subject development plan.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

130. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in religious education and by the end of the key stage attainment is at least in line with that expected by the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils have a sound factual knowledge of Christianity. They demonstrate an understanding that Jesus has special significance through his teachings, especially the parables, and provides a model for relationships and behaviour. Pupils have a breadth of knowledge about religions in general. They know about worship, sacred texts, holy places, festivals and the significance of religious symbols in faith and worship. In specific terms they display good knowledge about Hinduism, Judaism and Islam. The more able pupils are beginning to explain terms such as 'agnostic', 'atheist' and 'humanist'.

131. Pupils show a positive attitude and interest in religious concepts and traditions. They speak with enthusiasm about the Qu'ran and appreciate that children like themselves are involved in Qu'ranic study - learning the text by heart. They also know about the five pillars of Islam, the importance of pilgrimage to Mecca and the life of Mohammed. Pupils were able to explain the difference between Mohammed who was Allah's prophet and Jesus who was the son of God. Pupils generally settle well in lessons, they are keen to ask questions and are good at taking notes for example when watching a video on Hinduism. In general discussion are of a high standard; pupils listen carefully to one another, and combine good speaking skills with a command of appropriate religious vocabulary. They progress well deepening their own knowledge and comprehension of spiritual matters. They take the work seriously and work well with each other.

132. Although only a small sample of lessons was observed, the quality of teaching overall is good, ranging from unsatisfactory to good. This is also evident in scrutiny of pupils' recent and current work and discussions with pupils. Work is carefully planned using the scheme of work. Learning objectives are clear and shared with the class. Where the teaching is effective teachers have high expectations for pupils to record, recall and discuss information for example, important symbols in Hinduism and for pupils to use new and unfamiliar language. Teachers are also good at getting pupils to make the connection between their own experiences and new information so as to reinforce the learning. Religious artefacts are used to make the learning come alive for pupils, such as the Puja tray, but they are not always utilised fully to secure the religious element of the learning. Teachers are aware of the need to present faiths such as Islam and Hinduism not only historically, related to the areas of origin, but also in the context of Britain today. Careful use of resources such as videos promote the notion that we are part of a multi-faith country.

133. Religious education is carefully managed by the co-ordinator who has recently introduced a more systematic approach to the subject through the provision of clear guidelines. These inform teachers of what to teach and when, aspects which are related to other subjects such as geography, history, art and music and a focus in each lesson to reflect on the cultural, moral and spiritual element of each unit. The school has recently started to use key objectives to assess pupils' progress in RE effectively.