

INSPECTION REPORT

FAIR OAK INFANT SCHOOL

Fair Oak, Eastleigh

LEA area: Hampshire

Unique reference number: 115891

Headteacher: Ms H Shaw

Reporting inspector: Mr M S Burghart
20865

Dates of inspection: 5th – 7th June 2001

Inspection number: 192083

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Botley Road Fair Oak Eastleigh Hampshire
Postcode:	SO50 7AN
Telephone number:	02380 692207
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Q Oliver
Date of previous inspection:	January 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
20865	Mr M S Burghart Registered inspector	Information and communication technology; Religious education; Special educational needs; English as an additional language.	What sort of school is it? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? Areas for improvement.
9487	Dr F Hurd Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development; How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
20671	Mr J Palethorpe Team inspector	Science; Design and technology; Music Physical Education; French; Equal opportunities.	The school's results and pupils' achievements.
20977	Mr R Thelwell Team inspector	Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage; Geography.	
21015	Mr P Inness Team inspector	Mathematics; Art and design.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
30976	Mrs K Henry Team inspector	English; History.	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Fair Oak Infant is a large infant school in the prosperous village of the same name near Eastleigh in Hampshire. The school provides good accommodation for twelve classes, four for each year group. There are 368 children on the school roll aged four to seven. There is an average of 30.7 pupils per class. Pupils are drawn from the local surrounding area mostly from private accommodation. Most of the pupils attend some kind of pre-school group before starting Year R. Their attainment on entry to the school, aged four, varies, but overall is broadly average. The headteacher has been in post for ten years. She is supported by twelve full time, and six part time, teachers. Fourteen of the staff including the deputy are new since the last inspection. There are 123 pupils on the special educational needs register. This accounts for 33.4 per cent of the school roll, and is well above the national average. One pupil has a formal statement under the terms of the DfEE Code of Practice¹, which proportionally is below the national picture. Eight children are known to be eligible for free school meals, which is well below the national average of 20 per cent. No pupils require extra support as a consequence of being in the first stages of learning English as an additional language.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Fair Oak Infant is a very good school with a variety of excellent features. Children and staff get on very well together. Standards are at least good in English, mathematics and science when pupils leave. The school's performance is being further improved by very good curriculum planning supported by excellent leadership and management. The above average proportion of pupils with special educational needs are very well provided for and, like other pupils, make good, and frequently very good, progress. Pupils learn well and respond very well because teaching is good, and often better. Excellent financial control successfully promotes a very good learning environment for broadly average spending, consequently the school gives very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Leadership, management and financial control are excellent.
- Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are excellent.
- Provision for pupils' personal development is very good and pupils respond very well.
- Consideration of equality of opportunity is excellent.
- Standards are above average in reading, writing and mathematics and well above in science and religious education.
- Provision for special educational needs is very good.
- The quality of teaching is good and frequently better.
- Curriculum planning is very good throughout, and provision for the Foundation Stage² supports young children very successfully.
- Induction procedures for new staff are excellent

What could be improved

In the context of this very good school there are no key issues to be addressed. The school has identified areas for its own development: in provision for information and communication technology (ICT); extending the subject managers' monitoring of actual teaching; developing problem solving activities in mathematics; and reducing noise transfer from class to class in Year 1 as a result of poor acoustics. The school constantly seeks to

¹ The DfEE Code of Practice gives practical advice to schools and local education authorities about their responsibilities to ensure that all pupils who have special educational needs receive the most appropriate help to further their learning and personal development. This is a statutory duty under the 1993 Education Act.

² From September 2000, the term 'Foundation Stage' refers to children's education from the age of three until the end of reception year.

raise standards even further.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The last report in January 1997 raised five key issues. The school has made very good progress in addressing these. Standards have been raised in design and technology, music and information and communication technology and are now in line with expectations at the end of Year 2. Very good planning now provides a clear structure, identifying what should be taught and allowing for progression year on year across the curriculum. The quality of teaching has been significantly improved with better use of time and pupils more appropriately challenged. This, together with clear policy and planning, provides more opportunities for more able pupils to make progress at their own level. Assessment procedures are now excellent, notably in English, mathematics and science, and results are better used to plan for future work. In addition National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy have been successfully introduced and the high turnover of staff has been managed very effectively to maintain the school's development. Substantial improvements to the building have created new staff and meeting rooms, better storage and enhanced teaching areas. Since the last report the school has been recognised as an 'Investor in People' and been granted the 'Healthy Schools Award'. On the basis of the high quality planning, policies and procedures in place the school is very well set for future development.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 7 year olds based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
Reading	C	C	B	B	well above A average above B average
Writing	D	D	A	B	average C below average D well below E
Mathematics	C	B	B	B	average

Similar schools are those with up to 8 per cent free school meals.

In 2000, when considering the school's average point scores³, the school's performance was above the national averages and those of similar schools in reading, writing, mathematics and science. This continues an improving trend, which early indications from 2001 assessments show is being maintained. Children make a very good start in the Foundation Stage in Year R and nearly all are on target to achieve most of the Early Learning Goals⁴ before they move into Year 1. Considering the above average level of special educational needs this is a very good achievement. For pupils currently in Year 2 standards are above average in writing and mathematics (although there is still more to do to improve how pupils can apply what they know), and well above in reading and science.

³ Average point scores refers to the average of pupils' scores weighted by Ofsted for each level attained in each subject.

⁴ QCA (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority) has produced a set of 'Early Learning Goals', comprised of skills, knowledge and understanding that children might be expected to achieve by the time they enter Year 1. There are six areas of learning: personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literature; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; creative development; and physical development.

In religious education pupils' attainment is very good being well above the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. In ICT standards are just in line with what is expected and the school has identified how this will be improved. In French, which unusually is taught from Year R, standards are above expectations. In all other subjects of the National Curriculum pupils' achievements are in line with national expectations. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and higher attainers, make good and often very good, progress throughout.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good: the overwhelming majority of pupils like school and join in readily with work and play
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good: notwithstanding the small minority who can, and sometimes do, misbehave.
Personal development and relationships	Very good: pupils take responsibility and when given the opportunity, show initiative. Relationships are at least good throughout.
Attendance	Very good: well above average. Unauthorised absence is low.

Pupils' response throughout the school is usually very positive, but this is particularly so in reception where in all 23 sessions observed children's attitudes and behaviour were never less than good and in 15 lessons were very good or excellent. In only one lesson anywhere in the school did response slip below satisfactory and here it was poor as the result of pupils being inappropriately challenged.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years
Lessons seen overall	Consistently at least good.	Good with very good and some satisfactory features.

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.

Learning is good, and often very good, because of the quality of teaching. The overall profile of teaching evident not only in lessons but from work sampling, discussions with staff, pupils, governors and parents, is very good. Strengths are in the Foundation Stage, where teaching consistently stimulates and extends children towards the Early Learning Goals; very good planning which, throughout the school, very clearly sets objectives; special educational needs teaching where education support assistants make a very good contribution; the quality of relationships; and the way pupils and support staff are managed. Relative weaknesses are where teachers' knowledge and understanding is not as secure as it might be: for example in some aspects of science and ICT; when pupils are insufficiently challenged; and where the balance of the day is geared too much to the pattern of sitting and listening rather than doing. Most literacy and numeracy sessions are well taught and all were at least satisfactory. Only one lesson in any subject was judged unsatisfactory out of the 67 observed. Seventy per cent of lessons were at least good with 25 per cent very good and one Year 2 religious education lesson graded as excellent. Fifteen teachers had at least one good lesson and eleven teachers had very good sessions. The quality of teaching is significantly better than at the time of the last report.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good: broad, balanced and particularly well planned. Very good provision for the Foundation Stage. Excellent planning for personal, social and health education. Homework effectively used. Visits and visitors enhance provision. Some work to do to make more use of ICT to support other subjects.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good: the above average proportion of such pupils are fully included in all activities and well taught. The consideration of (and planning for) equality of opportunity is excellent.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good: excellent social development and very good spiritual, moral and cultural provision. Multicultural awareness is catered for very well.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good levels of care. Staff know pupils well. Excellent assessment procedures in core subjects and for special needs: much improved emphasis on the use of this information to plan for the future. Assessment satisfactory in other subjects with developments in hand. Good baseline assessment on entry.

Parents' views of the school are excellent. The quality of information available to parents is exemplary. There is a very good partnership between school and home which directly benefits children's learning, and plays an important part in fundraising. The school's reputation is very high, consequently it is oversubscribed.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership of the head is excellent. She leads a very good team of staff who demonstrate a high commitment to raising and maintaining standards. Excellent educational direction is established in high quality planning. The work of the senior management team and subject managers is very effective.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors support the school well. Their contribution to financial control and developments to accommodation is very good. Governors' growing awareness of curriculum matters is a positive feature of management. All statutory requirements met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good: detailed analysis of the school's performance, policies and procedures results in a very good understanding of its strengths and relative weaknesses.

The strategic use of resources	Excellent financial control and strategic planning has resulted in a very good learning environment. Finance, staff, accommodation and resources are used very efficiently to promote learning. Best value principles followed very well. Considering its average level of spending the school gives very good value for money.
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PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good teaching • Pupils are helped to become mature. • Expectations are high. • The school is well led. • Behaviour is good. 	<p>A small minority of parents noted the following concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework: too much or too little. • High staff turnover.

The overwhelming response of parents through the Ofsted questionnaire and in meetings with inspectors was very positive. Inspectors are pleased to support these views. With regard to homework, school policy and practice are judged satisfactory. Homework is effectively used to enhance pupils' learning. Reasons for staff leaving over the past two years were scrutinised. Whilst a high number of teachers have left, evaluation reveals no particular cause. Staff moved for a variety of reasons: pregnancy, promotion and leaving the area as a result of a partner's job relocation, are the most frequent explanations. Excellent support is in place for the induction of new staff, regardless of their experience.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Assessment on entry shows the majority of children have levels of attainment broadly in line with those expected for their age. Those now in reception make good progress, and a number of higher attaining children have already achieved the officially recommended learning goals. Nearly all others are on line to achieve the expected levels by the time they leave reception.

2. In 2000, the percentage of pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 reaching the expected Level 2 or above in reading and writing was well above the national average, and in mathematics it was above the national average. At the higher Level 3, results showed writing to be well above, reading above and mathematics close to the national average. When compared with schools nationally using average point scores, results are well above average in writing, and above average in reading and mathematics. Compared with schools with similar circumstances, results are above average for reading, writing and mathematics. Trends over the last four years have generally been upwards, and the 2001 results appear to maintain that improvement. In the year group that took the tests in 2000, 37 per cent were on the register for special educational needs, and 30 per cent in the current Year 2. This will have a bearing on results, and indicates that pupils are achieving very well.

3. The school has raising standards at the heart of its work. Several factors have led to a year on year improvement in results. Among these are:

- Improved schemes of work, setting out what is to be taught each term, thus ensuring that pupils build on their existing knowledge and understanding;
- Improved assessment procedures, enabling teachers to set challenging work for all groups of pupils;
- Careful analysis of results, using the data to identify any particular areas of weakness which need to be addressed;
- Staff development to ensure that teachers are competent and confident to teach the curriculum;
- Good attention to all pupils' needs, including the higher attainers and those with special educational needs, involving some setting for English and mathematics;
- Regular monitoring of pupils' performance to see whether they are achieving as predicted;
- The setting of whole school, group and individual targets, and making learning objectives clear in every lesson.

4. The school sets challenging targets each year. These are arrived at through very good tracking documents which detail pupils' achievement at regular intervals during their time at the school. Predictions are made at the end of each year for attainment the following year. Most year group targets have been achieved this year, although the percentage achieving the higher Level 3 in reading and mathematics was below the targets set by the school.

5. Attainment in English is above the national average at the end of the key stage. The results of 2000 National Curriculum assessments were above average in reading and well above average in writing. This marks an improvement in writing, which was identified for development following the last inspection. Reading standards have improved. Over the last two years there has been an upward trend in both reading and writing following a drop in attainment in 1998 of a somewhat weaker year group.

6. Emphasis on acquiring skills in numeracy underpins all mathematics lessons. Careful organisation, clear curriculum planning and good teaching are undoubted strengths, and when coupled with the rapid progress children make in reception, by the time pupils are aged seven, standards in numeracy are above the national expectations. The school is aware of the need to further develop opportunities for pupils to apply mathematical principles in problem solving.

7. In science, pupils' attainment is well above national expectations, particularly with the number of pupils reaching the higher Level 3. Teachers have worked hard with planning and teaching methods to achieve these results, which are much higher than was predicted from this year group's baseline scores, and are a good improvement since the last inspection.

8. The last report described standards of information and communication technology as unsatisfactory. The situation has been improved and now for the majority of pupils attainment is in line with national expectations by the time they leave at the end of Year 2. However, the school is aware that compared with pupils' own performance in other core subjects, their achievement in ICT constitutes a relative weakness.

9. Standards at the end of Year 2 in religious education are now considered very good, being well above the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus, and pupils' learning is very good. This is an improvement on the judgement of the last inspection.

10. The quality of work in art reveals a steady development as pupils progress through the school. By the time they are seven, attainment is in line with national expectations.

11. Learning and standards in design and technology are in line with expectations and an improvement over the previous inspection. Examples of a satisfactory range of products, designs and evaluation are representative of all year groups.

12. In geography, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory gains in their geographical skills and understanding. At the end of the key stage, standards meet those expected nationally for their age. The subject has maintained its position since the last inspection.

13. Standards in history are in line with national expectations. Pupils have a sound awareness of chronology and are beginning to understand that things change over time.

14. Pupils throughout the school attain the standards in music expected for their age and enjoy music making activities. This includes pupils with special educational needs and physical disabilities, and is a good improvement since the last inspection.

15. In physical education, standards are in line with those expected for pupils of their age at the end of Key Stage 1. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and physical disabilities, try very hard, working with great enjoyment and excellent attitudes, enabling them to make good progress.

16. French is taught to all pupils for a short period each week. By the end of their time at the school, most pupils achieve good standards for their age.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

17. The staff and parents of the school are proud of the attitudes and behaviour of the pupils, and with good reason. Attitudes and behaviour were judged very good or better in 49 per cent of lessons observed during the inspection. In 88 per cent they were good or better, and in 93 per cent at least satisfactory. In the reception classes attitudes and behaviour were judged to be good or better in all lessons, 62 per cent being very good or better. Children are courteous and friendly towards visitors, and behave sensibly in playtimes and the lunch hall. They hold doors open for adults and spontaneously offer to help carry things or clear spaces to put them down. Pupils generally sit quietly even when required to do so for long periods.

18. Pupils are very enthusiastic about their school, and are eager to talk about it with visitors. They are generally enthusiastic about the work they are given to do, although the level of enthusiasm varies in direct correlation with the standard of teaching. The youngest children quickly become confident and independent. They know where everything is kept in their classrooms, and clear items away or get them out without needing any supervision. Throughout the school, children work together very well in pairs or small groups, remaining focused on their work rather than becoming distracted. Pupils sustain concentration well and listen carefully to instructions.

19. Attendance in the last academic year was well above the national average (96.1 per cent compared with 94.4 per cent); authorised absence was below the national average (3.9 per cent as opposed to 5.2 per cent) and there were no unauthorised absences. There were no exclusions in the last academic year. All pupils are asked to assess themselves at the end of their last term. They were able to discuss their own strengths and weaknesses, clearly respond well to incentives like the Gold Book and winning certificates, and wanted their next teacher to see them as 'good' and 'hard-working'. During the inspection there were a very few instances of inattention, fidgeting and silly behaviour during lessons, when teaching failed to be challenging and keep pupils' interest.

20. Relationships in the school community are good and in some cases very good. Children are encouraged to express their feelings, to show affection and to be caring towards each other. Children of different ages and sexes play together naturally and in a

friendly, non-threatening way. The 'Friendship Squad', Year 2 pupils whose job it is to make sure 'everyone is happy at playtime' take children with minor injuries indoors for attention, or find a playmate for someone else who is on their own. Special mention must be made of the Pupil Council, which has a representative from each class. Council members take great pride in their role, reporting back to their own classes after each weekly meeting and canvassing their opinions. At the meeting which took place during the inspection they were eager to volunteer for responsibilities such as writing to Marwell Zoo about the school's sponsored animal, and discussed the possibility of amending the school rules thoughtfully and sensibly. Attending the Council meetings means missing a playtime, but all members seemed happy to do this. They gave their opinions confidently and listened to each other courteously. Their classmates elect them each term.

21. All pupils accept opportunities for responsibility around the school very well. Pupils show outstanding respect for the feelings and values of others and have a very good understanding of the impact of their actions on others. For example in a Year 2 religious education lesson pupils freely shared their perceptions of what God might be like, without fear of ridicule.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

22. All but one of the 67 lessons observed were judged as satisfactory at least, with 70 per cent good or better, 25 per cent very good and one Year 2 religious education lesson excellent. This is a very good profile of teaching and constitutes a significant improvement on the last report where 12 per cent of lessons were unsatisfactory and where three subjects: design and technology, ICT and music were below expectations.

23. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is consistently good, with one in four lessons observed judged very good. Teachers deliver a very good, balanced and relevant curriculum very well and children learn well and make good progress. In Year 1 and Year 2 teaching is predominantly good with a quarter of lessons observed as very good. Forty per cent of the 44 lessons seen in these year groups were satisfactory with one lesson unsatisfactory. Statistics show that teaching was slightly better in Year 2, where 69 per cent of lessons were at least good compared with 43 per cent in Year 1. Strengths in the Key Stage 1⁵ teaching are the result of very good subject planning which clearly identifies learning objectives; good relationships; and the management of pupils, which is usually good.

24. Pupils with special educational needs are very well included in all activities and the quality of provision for them in terms of teaching is high. The special educational needs co-ordinator and education support assistants teach well to ensure that such pupils meet the targets of their individual education plans. Consequently pupils' learning is good and children achieve well and make good, and frequently very good, progress against their ability and what they already know. To the school's credit many of the high proportion of pupils with special needs attain average levels by the time they leave and this considerably enhances the school's performance as a whole.

25. Since the last inspection the school has taken steps to improve teaching for 'more able' pupils. It now maintains a register of pupils who show particular potential and has improved planning and organisation to take account of their needs. The success of this is evident in the improved proportion of pupils who achieved higher than average levels in 2000 National Curriculum assessments including four pupils who achieved Level 4 in reading, which is much above average.

26. Highlights in teaching are in: literacy where 11 of the 17 lessons seen were good or better, with five very good; and numeracy with 13 of the 15 lessons at least good, of which three were very good. Fifteen teachers had at least one lesson judged good and a very

⁵ Key Stage 1 refers to pupils in Years 1 to 2.

creditable eleven staff had very good sessions. The excellent session observed was in Year 2 for religious education where the teacher's sensitivity and capacity to listen to pupils whilst giving them time to come to terms with their own feelings and ideas, was of the highest order.

27. Although there are some gaps in for example some aspects of science and ICT, between them teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the infant school curriculum. They mark pupils' work effectively and make good use of targets to bring about improvements. Staff usually manage pupils well as a result of both the school's good systems and the good quality of relationships. Teachers function as a very good team supporting each other well in all aspects of their work. They make good use of support staff, accommodation and resources. However, in some subjects there is still room for improvement: for example making more use of practical equipment to reinforce pupils' understanding in mathematics; and in the use of ICT to support other subjects. Inspectors noted that a relative weakness in teaching was in the amount of time, lesson on lesson, that pupils spend sitting and listening (often on the floor). At some of these times pupils were not always sufficiently challenged: for example in a Year 1 information and communication technology lesson where pupils had to wait a long time before being involved.

28. Teachers make appropriate use of homework in accordance with the school's policy to enhance the curriculum. The work that pupils do at home is valued and is generally relevant to the work being undertaken in class. Because teachers and parents volunteer their time to organise extracurricular activities the quality of provision is very good for an infant school.

29. Overall the good and frequently very good, quality of pupils' learning at this school can be attributed, amongst other things, to the very good teaching profile. This is supported principally through the monitoring of the head and deputy. In order to become even more successful monitoring of actual teaching by subject managers has been identified as the way forward by the school. Inspectors fully support this view.

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

30. Overall the good and frequently very good, quality of pupils' learning at this school can be attributed to very good planning. Regular review and evaluation of planning documents is a strength. It allows staff to make careful adjustments to the curriculum. Any shortfalls noted in the last inspection in the 'under-provision' of some schemes of work, including science, have been remedied. The long term curriculum documents, enabling teachers to plan worthwhile lessons, are of a high quality. Curriculum provision meets all statutory requirements.

31. The curriculum emphasises English and mathematics as required under the current national strategies for literacy and numeracy. Provision for both is particularly effective in raising pupils' achievements. The school provides a very good learning environment in English, and good in numeracy.

32. There is a very good balance of other subjects linked to a set of imaginative themes to provide pupils with interesting and meaningful learning. A programme of review and evaluation of lessons and planning allows adjustments to be made to meet the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs. Such pupils are very well provided for. Extra support guided by a good programme of target setting, recorded in good quality individual education plans, enables pupils to be involved in all work and activities. The staff are successful in their intentions to include all pupils fully in the life of the school. The school keeps a register of pupils who are capable of high achievement with the aim of providing modified activities. Most lessons are successful in addressing the differing needs of each pupil. However, occasionally, there are some lessons where the curriculum is not

sufficiently adapted to match the needs of some pupils, including those who are more than capable of achieving higher than average expectations.

33. In other respects the school does well in enriching the experiences of pupils. There is a real strength in the curriculum for reception children. The Foundation Stage is provided for very well and ensures that the early goals for learning measured by the stepping stones of achievement are applied fully both in and out of the classroom. Across the school very good features are seen in the excellent links made with partner institutions: for example older pupils from the secondary school helping pupils with computers and similar activities.

34. Provision for spiritual and cultural development is very good and has improved since the last inspection. Numerous occasions are made for pupils to reflect on their own lives and work, and that of others. Appreciation of the diversity of other cultures is represented very well through literature, geography, art and music. Classroom and shared displays of pupils' work are vibrant and presented carefully. Visitors enrich pupils' experiences even further. For example, young children are spontaneous in their questioning of a visiting artist who regularly works in the school. Occasions for art and music appreciation as well as visits to galleries and performances, heighten pupils' aesthetic awareness further.

35. Provision for social and moral development is maintained at the high quality of the previous inspection. Planning for social development is excellent. Shared planning with the local cluster of primary schools has been instrumental in adding to the excellent documentation for the planning of personal, social and health education. Human relationships, sex education and substance abuse are sensitively considered through good planning. There is an emphasis on moral responsibility and citizenship. Pupils carry out duties very well and rise to their positions as library monitors or friendship guides in the playground.

36. The school has very good links with its community. The choir sings to the Age Concern club for local elderly people, and sings carols in the village square at Christmas. The Age Concern club members were invited to the school's Christmas production. Produce sent in for the school's Harvest Festival is distributed to local elderly people. The school's two largest fundraising events, the Strawberry and Christmas Fayres, are both well supported. Pupils visit a local art gallery, and the school submits entries to the borough's annual painting competition. A local artist regularly visits the school and discusses his work with small groups of pupils. The Pupil Council visits the mayor every year, and is shown something of the work of the council. The vicar, another local minister and a representative of a Christian mission visit regularly. The doctor and librarian have visited the school to talk about their work. The school participates in the annual carnival, and pupils and parents are encouraged to fundraise for local charities. Pupils have just undertaken to sponsor an animal at Marwell Zoo. Some links are being developed with local businesses and industry.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

37. Provision for child protection and pupil welfare is very good. Both the head and the deputy head have had training as child protection liaison officers. The deputy is currently carrying out this role. The school's policy gives staff clear guidance and follows local authority guidelines. All staff and governors are given a thorough training in how to handle child protection issues as part of their induction, and the issue is revisited and the policy reviewed annually. Staff try hard to get to know their pupils and their families, and do not hesitate to contact parents over any issue that concerns them.

38. Pupils are well supervised during playtimes. There is a first aid room which is always staffed during a playtime by a trained first aider. The head and the school's Welfare Assistant are fully qualified, and all other staff are given a basic course in first aid by St John's Ambulance staff. The school nurse attends induction meetings for new parents so that they get to know her. All staff are briefed on health and safety as part of their induction. The headteacher has completed a number of relevant courses. The chair of the

premises committee is a serving fire officer and brings considerable expertise in this area. Risk assessment is carried out at least annually following local authority guidelines. The local authority carried out an audit of the school in January 2001 and found no health and safety issues of significance needed attention. All helpers in school are police checked. The general security of the site is managed in conjunction with the other schools on the campus.

39. Parents are encouraged to be health conscious. The prospectus states that children living within a mile should walk to school, and pupils are not allowed sweets in school. Two minor health and safety issues regarding hair and shoes in physical education have been brought to the attention of the school.

40. Attendance is very well promoted. Registers are well kept and are regularly monitored by the headteacher. The school office follows up absences within a day. The school has identified two pupils with a persistent pattern of late arrival and has worked with the education welfare service and the families themselves to improve the situation.

41. Procedures for monitoring and improving behaviour, and for ensuring pupils' personal development, are all very good. The school has high expectations of its pupils' attitudes and behaviour. Its carefully planned approach to religious education, and its emphasis on equal opportunities, as well as its excellent provision for personal, social and health education, all contribute to an ethos where children learn to be thoughtful and considerate to others at a very early age. Pupils are very clear about the difference between right and wrong, and are very familiar with the school rules. Each class compiles its own rules, and has its own targets for behaviour, such as 'talk about what you've done at school when you go home' and 'be the world's best concentrator today'. The detailed behaviour policy applies to the whole school and all staff are given a thorough grounding in behaviour management when they join the school.

42. The provision for personal, social and health education is of an excellent standard, and the school has won the 'Healthy Schools Award' for its work in this area. Pupils are encouraged to be aware of themselves as members of a community, and to play an active role within it. There is a Pupil Council with representatives from each class, including reception children. Membership is changed every term, and those partaking are allowed to take on real responsibilities. For instance, at the Council meeting which took place during the inspection the headteacher asked for a volunteer to telephone a supplier about some playground equipment which had not arrived. She then discussed what the volunteer needed to say, gave her a mobile phone and let her make the call and manage the conversation. Pupils are consulted on the choice of their classroom rules, and through the Pupil Council, on the school rules. Year 2 pupils can join the Friendship Squad, whose job it is to make sure 'everyone is happy at playtime'. The Squad will take children with minor injuries indoors for attention, or find a playmate for someone else who is on his own. Each class has its own monitors, who are responsible for jobs such as returning the register to the school office, or distributing milk at breaktime.

43. Pupils' personal development is reported on termly to parents in brief, and more fully in the annual reports. Children are awarded certificates and recognised for acts of thoughtfulness and courtesy as well as for academic merit. They can be entered in the Gold Book to recognise their consideration for others.

44. The school encourages pupils to give their opinions about school life. After each whole school assembly, a volunteer is chosen to give their written opinion of the assembly generally, and another one is asked to comment on any music used. This is a considerable incentive for children to reflect on the assembly in the hope of being chosen, and provides invaluable feedback for staff planning future occasions. Comments included, 'Today we learnt miracles happen when you don't expect it', and, 'I love assembly, it is fun'. Similarly, all pupils are asked to write a statement saying what subjects they enjoyed and why; what they are really good at; what they want to improve; and something they would like to tell

their new teacher. They are asked to comment on what they like or would like to see improved in the life of the school generally, and these suggestions are considered when the school development plan is being revised. This includes the use of a questionnaire.

45. The school's arrangements for assessing pupils' attainment and monitoring their progress are excellent. This area has been developed further since the previous inspection.

46. Baseline assessments, when children first join the school, are used well to identify particular areas for future development in the reception year and as an indicator of each pupil's expected attainment at the end of the key stage. Whole school assessment activities are carefully planned and take place at a variety of levels. Early in each term, mathematics, reading and writing are carefully assessed. All pupils have an assessment book, which is arranged to a common format and used well to build a profile of their attainment and progress. The results are moderated at year group level and by the senior management team. A second reading assessment takes place in the second half of each term. Pupils' attainment is matched against National Curriculum levels, which in turn have been matched to school reading stages. Additional reading information is collected through the use of standardised tests.

47. Subjects other than English and mathematics are assessed through the evaluation of planning and the recording of significant progress and problems in field notes. The records that are kept are very informative and create a clear profile of pupils' progress over time. The analysis of assessment data is used to identify pupils who are achieving below expectations and those who are potential high achievers. All assessments are used effectively to examine trends and guide curriculum development.

48. Following the last inspection whole school initiatives to improve the quality of day to day assessment to inform planning and guide the emphasis of teaching, have been put in place. At weekly year group meetings teachers evaluate teaching and learning and modify plans in the light of these discussions. Individual and year group targets are set and pupils are monitored closely in the light of this.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

49. At the time of the last inspection the school had a good partnership with parents, and this has been well developed since then. Parents currently have an excellent opinion of the school, which is always oversubscribed. They feel that the school has high expectations of its pupils, who develop a strong work ethic. Their children enjoy school and talk about it at home. The staff and headteacher are approachable; in fact several parents felt communication had improved since the last inspection. Parents who have had occasion to raise problems have found them quickly dealt with and got good feedback. Parents are impressed that the headteacher knows every child's name. Although this is a large infant school, parents feel that it really lives up to its motto of 'sowing seeds of success' by finding each child's special talent. Parents believe their children make good progress and are well taught. They were particularly pleased with the standards of behaviour in and out of school, and the management of playtime was praised at both the parents' meetings held during the inspection. Parents are very pleased with the use of the Jolly Phonics scheme. A very small minority of parents wanted more extracurricular activities, but the inspection team found the provision to be very good for an infant school.

50. The school has very effective links with parents. One of its most successful innovations has been 'Bring a Dad to School Day' which has become an annual event. (It is made clear that it does not have to be the child's own father they bring to school – it could, for instance, be their mother's dad.) This is paralleled by events for mothers, 'Sums and Mums Day', and 'Mums and ICT Day'. These events offer a chance for parents to work alongside their child and get a real understanding of the sort of work their children are doing, and are well attended by parents of both sexes. Parents are regularly invited into school to talk to pupils about their hobbies, jobs, or memories where these can support

current curriculum work. Every class holds an assembly each term when pupils talk about and display their work, and parents are invited to attend these occasions. They are invited to one or other of the Christmas production performances, although space in the hall prevents them being invited to one off occasions such as the Harvest Festival. Parents who help in school are given written and verbal guidance. Teachers are available for informal consultation after school, and parents can see the headteacher at short notice. A version of the Ofsted questionnaire for parents is sent out annually with information about the school relevant to each question. The feedback from this exercise is used in reviewing the school's development plan.

51. Parents have a very good level of involvement in the work of the school. When a child joins the school, parents are asked to say whether they can help 'regularly' or 'occasionally', and most parents offer help in one way or another, as they are able. Some have helped with gardening and landscaping the grounds; others organise the sale of milk mid morning. The parent-staff association is very active and stages a procession of fundraising and social activities. Its profits have been used to buy books, computing equipment, physical education apparatus and drinking fountains. Parents are always willing to help the school when trips offsite are organised, and many come in once a week to join 'shared reading' sessions when they read to their own and other children. Several parents have been trained to give weekly support with the 'Better Reading' scheme. The school can rely on its parents to provide resources for particular purposes, such as role play, and even found expertise to repair its musical instruments.

52. The quality of information provided for parents is excellent. Newsletters are regular, clear and helpful, and include information on how parents can help their children at home as well as dates and details of forthcoming events. The school regularly holds curriculum workshop events, and afterwards sends out questionnaires asking parents either to give their opinion of it, or say why they decided not to come. Summary details of each event are sent to all parents. There are parents' noticeboards giving full details of the curriculum for each year group, and of the targets it is hoped pupils will achieve. These details are sent out to parents at the start of each term. A curriculum map is included in the prospectus, which is attractive, well laid out, and helpful. Both the prospectus and the governors' annual report fulfil statutory requirements. An interim report with grades for academic achievement, effort and personal development are sent out at the end of the autumn and spring terms, and a full one at the end of the year. The full reports give particularly clear guidance on attainment in mathematics and English and give an indication of how this attainment is related to the average level in the class. Non-academic achievements in and out of school are noted. Parents are asked to respond in writing to children's reports. Parents feel very well informed about school activities in general and about their own children's progress in particular.

53. Parents make a very good contribution to their children's learning at home and at school. The vast majority read with their children very frequently and make good use of the home-school reading diaries. They willingly provide resources to support a particular topic when requested to do so, and support their children well when the older ones are asked to undertake occasional research tasks out of school. All pupils have mathematics homework once a fortnight from their second term in Year R and all pupils take home three different reading books every week. The school gives parents very good guidance on how to support their children's homework.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

54. The headteacher's excellent leadership and management guarantees the school's educational direction. She skilfully fashions the contributions of pupils, staff, governors and parents into the priorities for high quality strategic planning. Such planning sets clear timescales and delegates responsibilities as well as identifying criteria for success and cost implications. The plan is led by the needs of the curriculum and includes the good subject managers' action plans and very accurately reflects the stated aims and values of the school. It exemplifies the school's very strong commitment to raising and maintaining

standards, which coupled with the good, and often very good, relationships, supports the judgement that the school's ethos is very good. The strengths in leadership described in the last report have been capitalised upon.

55. As a result of very detailed policies and procedures; excellent assessment procedures; and clearly defined responsibilities, the senior management team and subject managers are very effective in planning for the curriculum. The participation of the whole staff in subject and year teams ensures that all teachers contribute very effectively to curriculum and school initiatives. The staff are very successfully led by the head and deputy as a strong team. It is evident that teachers are working exceptionally hard to obviate the problems that might have been caused by the high staff turnover, to ensure pupils can, and do, make progress. Having addressed planning, and in most subjects, standards, the priority for development in management is now in the monitoring of actual teaching by subject managers in addition to the ongoing monitoring of the headteacher. This will identify and support areas of need and make the most of strengths. For example in science, monitoring the way teachers teach magnetism would have overcome the lack of clarity in objectives and staff understanding noted in more than one Year 1 lesson.

56. Provision for special educational needs is managed very effectively with education support staff and co-ordinator well deployed, especially during literacy and numeracy sets. For example, a team of five adults were timetabled to move from class to class, giving intensive support to groups in Year R under the direction of the class teacher. As a consequence the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs receive very good support and make good, and often very good, progress. A significant number of such pupils achieve average levels, despite their below average prior attainment because of very good teaching towards the targets of their individual education plans.

57. Governors support the school well acting as critical friends and a sounding board for exploring possible developments. Supported very effectively by the head and staff, governors are making good progress in developing their knowledge and understanding of curriculum issues. This is having a very positive impact on their potential for managing developments to accommodation and on financial control. Governors successfully fulfil all statutory requirements and play a good part in supporting the school's excellent communication with parents. The governing body has a very good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.

58. The school is committed to providing a broad and rich range of curricular opportunities for all its pupils. It has an equal opportunities policy that considers race, religion, gender, disability and the needs of absent pupils. There are policies for pupils with special educational needs and higher attainers. The wealth of documentation is fully understood by all staff, and is fully implemented in all school practices. Gender issues are often discussed at training days or staff meetings, and different targets for boys and girls are set in all classes. Where differences do appear, they are dealt with in a befitting manner. For example, when analysis of results showed that boys' reading attainment was well below that of girls, the school directed its focus towards improving boys' attitudes to books and reading. The book stock was further increased with books that would appeal to boys, and a 'Bring a Dad to School Day' was organised to present boys with male role models for reading activities. For similar reasons, mums were invited into school for a day with an information and communication technology focus.

59. The school's attention to equal opportunities through its policies and documentation is exemplary, and, more importantly, this is evident in practice.

60. The school is well staffed with appropriately qualified teachers to meet the requirements of children in the Foundation Stage, pupils at Key Stage 1 of the National Curriculum, and those with special educational needs. Additional staffing is employed for the provision of oral French tuition across the school. There are excellent procedures in place to support newly qualified teachers, together with the current high proportion of staff

who are new to the school. A clear and helpful staff handbook provides further support for short term and supply staff. Since the last inspection, good procedures have been introduced for performance management. Professional development of staff is linked well to the school development plan, and includes training for National Curriculum initiatives. The good number of educational support staff are well deployed and highly effective. They receive good levels of in-service training, and work in effective partnership with teachers to give good support, particularly to pupils with special educational needs. Staff responsible for administration, premises upkeep and school meals are efficient, and contribute well to the smooth running of the school.

61. Internally, all the classrooms are of a good size for the number of children, and contain storage facilities. The main entrance is not accessible by wheelchair, but access is possible by a side door. Circulation by wheelchair inside the building would be possible, but difficult owing to the steps in the main corridor. Besides the good sized school office, the head and deputy each have a room of their own and a staffroom was recently constructed above the kitchens. There is a music room and a meetings room, both of which are used for work with small groups of children. The school hall is large enough to accommodate the whole school, and is used for meals and physical education lessons. The library is centrally placed and attractively decorated. The wide corridor that runs around the central courtyard is largely used for literacy resources, and child sized chairs and tables encourage pupils to help themselves to books. The courtyard itself was recently repaved with a circular brick pattern and is used for small group work out of doors. There are dedicated toilets for reception children, and these children have their own outside play area. There are a sufficient number of toilets for pupils and staff, but Year 1 and Year 2 pupils' toilets are to be completely refurbished during the summer holiday this year. The building is immaculately clean and well maintained. The only area for improvement internally is the acoustics in the four Year 1 classrooms. If one class is singing or clapping it is very difficult to hear what the teacher in the other section is saying. This impedes learning in these classes.

62. Externally, the school has one tarmac playground area which has seating provided. The playground has recently had new and very attractive markings installed, which are very much appreciated by pupils. The playground lacks shade, but two trees have been planted to remedy this. There is a separate outside play area for the reception classrooms, with a playhouse. The school has only one small grassed area, which is really no more than a lawn at the front of the school. The school has informal access to a much larger area next door, which belongs to the community college. This is used for playtimes, curricular and extracurricular activities. There is a low level adventure playground area, with a good base of bark chippings underfoot for safety. The grounds are well maintained and attractively planted with a variety of shrubs and flowering plants. The school has had minor incidents of vandalism over the last ten years, but this is not a significant problem. However, the woodwork of the oldest windows is in a poor state and needs repair and replacement. Overall, the accommodation is very good and contributes to a very good learning environment.

63. Resources to support learning are good for English, science and music and very good for religious education. Provision for all other subjects is satisfactory. Since the last inspection the school has addressed identified shortcomings in both design and technology and information and communication technology. There is now an adequate number of computers, which are effectively deployed. The school library is well stocked with good quality non fiction books and has a fiction section as well. It has two computers, which can be used to access information from the Internet. The school has made good use of the well kept, stimulating school grounds for a range of curricular activities such as science, history, art and physical education.

64. The quality of financial control both long term and day to day is excellent. Head, deputy and governors are expertly supported by the administrative officer. Together they ensure that money is spent wisely and that best value principles are followed in search of

quality. Because of this the school is well resourced and the quality of the learning environment is very good. All funds, including specific grants, are appropriately used and the use of the above average carry forward reserve fund, which currently amounts to approximately 15 per cent of the budget, is well planned for. Forty thousand pounds to improve toilets, £25000 for ICT resources and £5000 to help overcome the problem of noise transference between Year 1 classes, will reduce the surplus to within recommended levels.

65. Overall the school makes very efficient use of finances, staffing, accommodation and resources. Considering the quality of provision and standards which are achieved for average spending, the school now gives very good value for money. This represents a creditable improvement since the last report.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

66. In the context of this very good school there are no key issues to be addressed.

The school has already identified areas for its own development upon which the governors' action plan will be based. These include:

- Improving provision for information and communication technology and making more use of it to support other subjects;

Paragraphs: 8, 27, 90, 96, 101, 111, 115, 117, 118, 121, 144.

- Developing subject managers' monitoring of actual teaching to raise standards even further: for example to encourage a wider variety of approach to reduce the number of occasions when pupils have to sit on the floor to listen for long periods;

Paragraphs: 17, 27, 29, 55, 80, 89, 94, 96, 111, 121, 122, 126, 131, 140, 144.

- Developing further problem solving activities, where pupils can make greater application of their good numeracy skills in mathematics;

Paragraphs: 6, 27, 89, 90.

- Reducing noise transference from class to class in Year 1 which is the result of poor acoustics.

Paragraphs: 61, 64, 133.

Inspectors anticipate that such improvements will make the school even better.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

67

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

31

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	24	45	28	1	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	368
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	8

Special educational needs

Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	123

English as an additional language

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	3
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.9
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2000	54	73	127

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	49	50	48
	Girls	70	70	73
	Total	119	120	121
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94(86)	94(83)	95(95)
	National	83(82)	84(83)	90(87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	50	48	51
	Girls	70	68	73
	Total	120	116	124
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94(84)	91(95)	98(89)
	National	84(82)	88(86)	88(87)

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	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	246
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	15.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.4
Average class size	30.7

Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	14
Total aggregate hours worked per week	272

Financial information

Financial year	99/00
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	£
Total income	634251
Total expenditure	660014
Expenditure per pupil	1794
Balance brought forward from previous year	133103
Balance carried forward to next year	107340

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	368
Number of questionnaires returned	130

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	66	33	5	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	51	44	3	2	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	55	41	3	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	31	54	13	2	0
The teaching is good.	46	50	1	1	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	36	53	10	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	45	43	5	5	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	53	46	1	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	33	56	10	2	1
The school is well led and managed.	36	51	5	5	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	42	52	1	2	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	17	60	10	2	12

Percentages do not always total 100 due to rounding

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

67. Currently, 120 children are in the reception year of the Foundation Stage. They enter reception at the start of the school year in which they become five. Nearly all attend pre-school groups before joining the school. Assessment on entry shows the majority have levels of attainment broadly in line with those expected for their age. The school makes very good provision for its young children. Teaching is consistently good, and, on many occasions, very good. Those now in reception make good progress, and a number of higher attaining children have already achieved the officially recommended learning goals. Nearly all others are on line to achieve the expected levels by the time they leave reception.

Personal, social and emotional development

68. Children's progress in personal, social and emotional development is good. Staff are extremely sensitive to the needs of children in their early years of schooling. They have successfully created a happy and purposeful atmosphere where children settle quickly into the routines of school. Children work together in a friendly and supportive manner, and show respect for each other, friends and visitors. Sensitive talk and guidance from adults helps children understand the difference between right and wrong, and reinforces their understanding of what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. This results in children being well behaved, able to make sensible choices from a range of activities and to sustain concentration when working. They take part in a good number of self chosen and adult led activities, and handle resources with care. Children respond particularly well when adults become fully involved in activities. For example, they were very enthusiastic when their teacher played the part of a customer in the role play corner, set up as a clothes shop. They responded well to her questions designed to add authenticity to the activity, as well as to develop their use of language. Children follow instructions, listen to what they are told, and begin activities eagerly. They are sensitive to the needs of others, and show obvious pleasure in friends' successes as well as their own.

69. Teaching is designed to provide many opportunities for the development of children's self esteem and independence. For example, in an assembly to celebrate the work done during the term, with support from their teacher, children gave parents and friends a confident presentation of their achievements. At other times, children line up and move around the school in a sensible manner, put on and take off aprons when working with paints or water, and clear away after themselves sensibly and quickly. Their food technology activities give children good opportunities for observation, language development and preparation skills, together with an awareness of the importance of washing hands before handling food.

Communication, language and literacy

70. Children make good progress in this area of learning. They have many opportunities to speak and listen to adults and to each other, in groups or as a whole class. The use of talk and questioning by staff is very effective, and the many opportunities created to develop and extend children's language are a marked feature of the good practice observed. Children demonstrate growing confidence when taking part in discussions and answering questions. Their communication skills are developed further, when, as part of their oral French lessons, children listen carefully, then respond accordingly by giving a correct word or phrase in French.

71. Through carefully chosen stories, children come to recognise an increasing number of words in familiar contexts. Through a well structured and taught programme of phonics, they recognise the letters of the alphabet, and associate sounds with them. Whilst a number of higher attaining children confidently read texts from the school's reading scheme, others use picture clues and their developing phonic ability, to help them enjoy books. Children develop good book skills and enjoy sharing books. This is fostered by regular library sessions where children are taught how to use the library, together with how to care for and handle books. In one such lesson, the teacher reinforced the correct way to take out and replace books, with the spine showing. Children knew this was so the title, author and reference number could be seen. They understand the meaning of the terms fiction and non fiction, and where each is to be found within the library. Children enjoy library sessions, where, after a browse, they select a book to take home for the week.

72. Children undertake much 'pretend' writing as part of their activities within their 'Bakery', 'Shops' and 'Garden Centre', where they make lists, record orders and take down telephone messages. By the end of reception, most children write simple sentences. For instance, after having read the story of Tidy Titch, children write their own version of the tale. Children write instructions as when, having made clay tiles, they describe how others could make them. They are taught the correct way to shape letters and copy examples of writing with increasing control. In one such 'writing session', adults gave good support as children paid careful attention to writing words with ascenders and descenders.

Mathematical development

73. Mathematical development is good. Children recognise and count to ten, many to beyond 20. They sing and play a range of number rhymes and finger games, and put together number puzzles and jigsaws to reinforce learning. Through a variety of carefully directed activities, children develop their understanding and capability regarding addition and subtraction. In observed lessons, effective teaching enabled most children to add nine correctly to a given number. Questioning was used to good advantage to elicit children's understanding, and to provide opportunities for them to explain how they had arrived at their answer. Children sort objects in a variety of ways: for instance by colour, shape and size; by threading objects; and repeating patterns. They use correct mathematical language for simple shapes, and compare measurements such as 'more than' and 'less than'. They become familiar with handling and naming coins. During the inspection, lessons were related to the identification and value of coins, together with shopping activities. These were well planned, had clear explanations, and a good range of activities to meet children's differing levels of ability. Education support assistants were used well to support learning of those requiring further assistance. Children develop an awareness of capacity and volume through regular play tasks with sand and water. In so doing, they use quantitative words such as 'empty' and 'full'.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

74. Thorough planning that results in a good range of purposeful activities, enables children to make good progress in this area of learning. They observe and discuss weather, and understand why we wear different clothes for each season. Children develop awareness of place when studying the layout of their school, and by visiting the pre-school

unit, junior buildings and Wyvern Technical College. Their understanding of chronology is helped by impressive displays of photographs, clothes, toys and other artefacts that range from the children's babyhood to the present. This visual timeline helps children consider the many ways they have changed since they were babies. Children understand the difference between living and non living things. They know and name different parts of the body. They identify the main parts of a plant, and by conducting simple investigations on plant growth, children know the conditions required for healthy plants. Following a visit to observe their 'special tree', children respond enthusiastically to their teacher's well focused questions. They explain in considerable detail the changes in appearance since their last visits. In addition to developing observational skills, the activity enhanced speaking, as the teacher encouraged children to develop their descriptive abilities.

75. Pupils receive an appropriate introduction to 'design and making' activities. They are set several tasks, including designing a flag for 'The Grand Old Duke of York'. Children are required to decide on the materials they will need. Effective planning, together with interesting activities results in children making good use of programmable toys to input sequenced commands for the toys to follow. In an observed lesson, adults gave children clear explanations and demonstrations. Children operate computers with growing confidence. They use them to enjoy interactive story programs, and to control, colour and move items on screen.

Physical development

76. Children make good progress in their fine manipulative skills. They handle tools, scissors, paint brushes, construction kits and malleable materials safely, and with increasing control. In indoor activity lessons, children show good control of movement as they explore different ways to travel along, over and under large apparatus. They respond well to teachers' clear instructions. Such lessons are well managed, with effective use of children who demonstrate their work to the rest of the class. Teachers have suitably high expectations, and praise is used well to encourage and acknowledge good effort. Adults make good use of language such as 'high and low' and 'forwards and backwards' to reinforce children's awareness of position and direction of movement. In outdoor structured play, children make thoughtful use of a range of equipment to ride, balance and explore. They work well in pairs to improve their skills of throwing and catching. In all activities, including the co-operative work during their 'parachute' game, children show growing confidence, together with a willingness to share and take turns.

Creative development

77. Children make good progress in this area of learning. They use a range of media to draw, paint, print and make models. Teachers provide good opportunities for children to evaluate their work, as when a child was asked, "Could you change anything to make it better?" Equally good provision is made for children to explain what they have done, and what they have learnt. When, at the end of a lesson a child showed a strawberry she had painted, the teacher stated, "You've painted it pink. We haven't got any pink paint, how did you do it?" The girl confidently explained to her friends that she found that mixing red and white gave her exactly the colour she needed. Children create small imaginary environments and act out scenes in them, exploring ideas and feelings. They have good opportunities for structured role play, with adults often supporting their activities. Children enjoy singing songs from memory. They sing enthusiastically, tunefully, and, as with their playing of percussion instruments, with a developing sense of rhythm.

78. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is very well managed. The early years manager liaises effectively with her colleagues and gives good advice and support. Very good procedures are in place to assist children's induction into school. A helpful policy and scheme of work support planning for the six areas of learning. A thorough assessment of children's skills and understanding is carried out shortly after entry, and provides information that is then used to inform subsequent planning and teaching. Children's

development in learning is aided by careful observations and record keeping, and ongoing assessment.

ENGLISH

79. Pupils' attainment in English is above the national average at the end of the key stage. The results of the 2000 National Curriculum assessments were above average in reading and well above average in writing. When these results are compared with those of similar schools they are above average. This marks an improvement in writing, which was identified for development following the last inspection. Reading standards have improved with three per cent of children achieving the exceptionally high Level 4. Over the last two years there has been an upward trend in both reading and writing following a drop in attainment in 1998 of a somewhat weaker year group.

80. By the end of the key stage standards in speaking and listening are above the national average. The school has made this an area of particular focus following the last inspection when it was noted that pupils 'could make more progress' in this aspect of English. Drama has been developed further and there are opportunities for pupils to speak to a variety of audiences in assemblies, performances and class activities. The broad range of planned activities in the Foundation Stage classrooms successfully promotes the development of speaking and listening skills. In Years 1 and 2 pupils listen well, are involved and answer questions readily. There is however still scope to develop speaking skills for lower attaining pupils. Whilst their involvement was encouraged it is not specifically planned for. The inspection noted some instances of discussions being led by the teacher with very little opportunity for anything more than a one or two word response from pupils who were sitting for relatively long periods.

81. Standards in reading are very good throughout the school. Pupils are introduced to a range of well considered texts, which provide the stimulus for the exploration of feelings and the expression of ideas. In Year 1 pupils use the story of The Great Lorenzo to explore their feelings when something special happens to them. They show good analytical skills when giving reasons for the main character's response to events. They read with enthusiasm and confidence using appropriate strategies to decode new words. Each child is encouraged to take home a reading book, a free choice book and a non fiction book each week. This successfully maintains the high profile of reading and contributes to the very good standards found during the inspection. Pupils make good progress in all year groups. There is an effective emphasis on phonics⁶, and reading for meaning using contextual clues. Pupils know about conventions such as exclamation marks, from a very early stage. Good use is made of guided reading to enable pupils to respond to the text in both a structured way and a personal way. By the end of the key stage most pupils are able to locate non fiction books and use the contents and index pages competently to research information. When undertaking extended writing tasks they use simple thesauruses to find synonyms for words that describe feelings.

82. There has been an improvement in the standards of writing since the last inspection with pupils making good progress at all stages in the school. Pupils at the end of the key stage write in sentences using capital letters and full stops. They spell common words correctly and make good attempts at more complex vocabulary. They write for a variety of

⁶ This refers to a strategy whereby pupils sound out letters and blends to read words.

purposes: for example pupils in Year 1 write in the first person to describe surviving the sinking of the Titanic. In Year 2, pupils described the scenes depicted in various paintings in vivid detail so that the reader could easily match the painting and the writing. Pupils are producing pieces of extended writing, sometimes using word processing, during specially designated times and are learning how to edit and redraft their work. Standards in spelling and handwriting are very good. Pupils develop a cursive style at the earliest opportunity. Writing has been identified as an area for improvement by the school.

83. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good. They listen well and settle quickly to their work showing sustained concentration. The good relationships they enjoy with their teachers serve to motivate and encourage them to participate in whole class discussions and persevere with tasks. Opportunities to work collaboratively are used well with pupils listening to one another's ideas in a constructive manner. In Year 2 pupils working on editing and redrafting use a partner as a critical friend to help them make decisions about changes to improve their writing. Work is presented well.

84. The quality of teaching is good overall, with some good, and very good, teaching. In the best lessons teachers are well prepared and have clear learning objectives, which they share with pupils. The most effective lessons are carefully structured and involve a range of activities to support pupils' learning. The high level of interest has a positive impact on the progress that is made within the lesson. Good planning is evident throughout the school. Year groups plan together to ensure that common areas of difficulty are identified and there is appropriate expectation and progression. Lessons were satisfactory rather than good when the pace was slow and expectations were not clearly stated. However, when clear time expectations were set pupils rose to the challenge of completing work in the allocated time.

85. The subject is well managed. The manager has good subject knowledge and a commitment to maintaining and improving the good standards that have been achieved. Targets are set for the development of the different aspects of the subject and very good assessment procedures are now in place to track pupils' progress. Once each week pupils in all years are organised into sets for English and undertake work which is especially targeted to their particular needs. Resources to support English are good. The quality and quantity of books is closely monitored so that the needs of different groups of pupils are met. Teachers create stimulating displays, which are informative and present pupils' work attractively.

MATHEMATICS

86. Careful organisation, clear curriculum planning and good teaching are undoubted strengths of mathematics. When coupled with the rapid progress children, of all abilities, make in the Foundation Stage, and by the time pupils are aged seven, standards in numeracy are above national expectations.

87. Assessments made over the past five years, reveal pupils' standards have always been at, and are usually above, the national average. Since 1998 there has been a rising trend. Preliminary results of national assessments made in the current year, 2001, indicate that standards are continuing to rise and that the school's targets will have been surpassed in all but the higher Level 3 of the National Curriculum. School predictions, substantiated by this inspection, are that for the year 2002 in all levels, but especially at the higher Level 3, performance of pupils now in Year 1, will have been improved.

88. Emphasis on acquiring skills in numeracy underpins all lessons. The National Numeracy Strategy based on the framework for teaching mathematics is applied well and conforms to requirements. Pupils are given ample opportunity to develop a variety of ways of working out computations in their heads. They are asked to explain how they calculate and pupils reply clearly. In most lessons teachers encourage quick responses. Pupils enjoy this work and rise to the challenge. For example, able pupils in Year 2 were quick to spot

that a quarter is the same as a half of a half and could apply this understanding to finding a quarter of numbers below a thousand. Questions were chosen well and matched to pupils' capabilities and it was this that allowed most of them to make good progress.

89. The positive aspects of the previous inspection have been maintained. In most lessons pupils' learning is good. However, there are elements of some lessons, which challenge some pupils insufficiently. Occasionally too long is spent on the whole class question and answer session. Able pupils, who are more than ready to get on with a group or individual activity, having first gained a sound grasp of the concepts being taught, may spend too little time at this aspect of the lesson. Here they have too few opportunities to apply what they have learnt in problem solving. The school is continuing to look for ways to improve this situation which was an issue raised in the last inspection.

90. Occasionally too few resources are employed so that all pupils can quickly demonstrate their understanding in a whole class situation. On the other hand, lower attaining pupils are sometimes asked to use pencil and paper recording too soon without enough tangible apparatus to help them consolidate their learning. Scrutiny of work across the school shows that a broad range of mathematics is taught, but there is a lack of sufficient evidence of the use of computers, and too little problem solving and investigations being carried out appropriate to pupils' age and ability. This sometimes denies pupils the chance to consolidate ideas and understanding in an enjoyable and practical way.

91. However, the above points are not major weaknesses but serve as areas for improvement in what is otherwise a successful subject. Pupils respond well to provision and were often seen enjoying mathematical activities: for example in a Year R lesson children were excited by being able to use a programmable toy to move forwards and backwards to show simple addition and subtraction. Parents support the homework policy and involve themselves in classroom based activities when offered. The school takes active steps to increase its provision and effectiveness for the subject by further professional training and regular staff conferences. Teachers' planning and management of the curriculum is good. When pupils are organised in ability sets, their learning is enhanced. Teaching and guidance for pupils with special educational needs is beneficial particularly when sufficient practical resources are made available that increase enjoyment and act as an aid to concentration.

SCIENCE

92. Results of 2000 National Curriculum teacher assessments in science for Year 2 pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 showed the percentage of pupils achieving Level 2, the expected level, to be above the national average. The percentage reaching the higher Level 3 was close to the national average. The results were above those of similar schools. This year's assessments show that the percentage of pupils reaching Level 3 has nearly doubled, but there are no national or similar school comparisons yet available for 2001. This is a particularly good achievement, as it is far higher than predicted from tests taken when pupils entered the school.

93. Inspection findings show that attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is well above the national average. This is good achievement, especially considering an above average level of special educational needs, and shows good improvement since the last inspection. Pupils are given a good start, right from the Foundation Stage, where they learn about chicks hatching from an egg, and runner beans growing. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils can classify animals according to a variety of criteria, such as the number of legs, whether they have wings, or whether they can live in water. Pupils understand the life cycle of a frog and take a keen interest in the display on the subject in school. They know that it is important for humans to keep healthy, and that food, drink and exercise all have their part to play. Understanding the role of drugs as medicines links well with the personal, social and health education programme. Pupils understand that materials have different

properties, and that they are suited to different purposes. They know what happens to a number of materials when they are heated, such as butter, chocolate and water, and that some changes cannot be reversed. They know that some appliances are powered by mains electricity and others by battery, and most can construct a simple circuit with battery, wires and bulb. Pupils have a good understanding of how to test in science. They are well practised in the procedures of predicting, testing, observing, measuring and recording, with a good understanding of what makes the test fair. Pupils with special educational needs, and those with physical disabilities, are well supported, enabling them to make good progress.

94. Most teaching in science is good. In the good lessons, planning is thorough with clearly identified lesson objectives which are made clear to pupils. Appropriate tasks are set to enable pupils to achieve these objectives. Questions are used effectively to check understanding and promote thought. Lessons are well prepared, with all the necessary apparatus and equipment readily available, enabling pupils to make good use of their time and make good progress. Group work is well organised and pupils are well managed, keeping them well focused and well motivated. However, there are unsatisfactory elements in a minority of lessons which hinder pupils' progress. These relate to the teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject, and the unsatisfactory matching of appropriate tasks to the lesson objectives. This leads to pupils' time being spent inappropriately sometimes with behaviour deteriorating: for example in a Year 1 lesson on magnetism, with insufficient progress being made.

95. The subject is very well managed and led. Good attention has been given to raising standards, and this has been successful. In particular, since the last inspection, the school now has:

- An updated scheme of work, ensuring full coverage of National Curriculum requirements;
- Improved planning, including clear links with the Early Learning Goals, numeracy and literacy;
- Improved assessment procedures, thereby clearly identifying what needs to be taught;
- Improved record keeping, including tracking pupils' performance throughout the school;
- Detailed analysis of results, enabling teachers to concentrate on areas of weakness;
- Increased challenge for higher attaining pupils, enabling these pupils to achieve higher levels;
- A portfolio of levelled and moderated work, helping teachers to assess pupils' work at the right level.

All these aspects have contributed to the rise in pupils' attainment.

96. The areas in science which still need to be developed further are:

- The use of information and communication technology for pupils to communicate their results, to make comparisons by using multimedia sources, to use sensors for sound sources, and to make a database with collected data;
- The monitoring of teaching by the subject manager;
- The further increased opportunity for pupils to develop independence in asking questions and deciding how the answers might be found.

97. There are sufficient good quality resources to support the teaching of science. These are well stored, clearly labelled and easily accessible.

ART AND DESIGN

98. The quality of teaching and standards in art at the time of the last report were judged to be mostly good and these positive features were seen in this current inspection.

99. Due to timetable arrangements few lessons were observed across the school. Examples in pupils' sketchbooks, in good displays and retained samples show a good range of styles, media and techniques. The quality of work reveals a steady development as pupils progress through the school. By the time they are seven, pupils including those with special needs achieve in line with national expectations.

100. Pupils learn especially well from the expertise provided by visiting artists. The opportunity to observe colour mixing and brushwork provokes perceptive questioning by very young children and is an excellent reinforcement for lessons across the school. Visiting exhibitions and workshops enhance three-dimensional modelling, including clay work, puppet making and decorative applications to sculptures. An understanding of artists and their work is deepened by visits to local galleries as well as through the school art club.

101. Teachers build on these good examples. Cultural links are developed well through lessons to produce, for example, lively copies of African ceremonial shields that Year 2 pupils design and colour for themselves. However, computers are not used widely enough to develop designs and effects.

102. Management of the subject is improving with a clear audit of current practice and a statement of intent, which includes working with the local cluster of schools in devising new assessment and record keeping opportunities. There are sufficient resources to teach art and design throughout the school. The subject provides a good basis for the development of pupils' aesthetic and cultural awareness.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

103. Learning and standards for design and technology are in line with expectations and an improvement over the previous inspection. Whilst due to timetable arrangements only one lesson was observed, evidence across the school, points to an improvement in resources, opportunity and pupils' achievement since the previous inspection. All pupils, including those with special educational needs make satisfactory progress.

104. A key element in the school's strategic plan is to identify ways in which the subject can be used to enhance performance in mathematics and information and communication technology. The subsequent action plan is a positive way to improve the regular planning of lessons and provide relevant activities for pupils.

105. Examples of a satisfactory range of products, designs and evaluation are represented across the year groups. Appropriate links are made with art and science. Models on display and recorded work, for example, the planning for a commemorative garden, show good detail and satisfactory attainment. Pupils' assembly skills, dexterity and tool handling, match national expectations. Lesson plans and subsequent pupils' work show that teaching is satisfactory overall. A good feature is that subject expertise is available within the school and regular evaluations of current practice and planning are made to help improve lessons. There are sufficient resources to teach the subject.

GEOGRAPHY

106. Only two geography lessons were observable during the inspection. Evidence from these, together with a review of pupils' work and teachers' plans, and discussions with staff, confirms that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory gains in their geographical skills and understanding. At the end of the key stage, standards meet those expected nationally for this age. The subject has maintained its position since the last inspection.

107. By the end of Year 1, pupils have a clear understanding of maps and their use. As part of their topic 'Once upon a time', pupils draw simple maps of 'Fairytale Land', together

with the routes taken by characters as they travel from place to place. To aid understanding, pupils include keys to the symbols they use on their maps. They are given a sound introduction to the use of map references, grids and co-ordinates, when they plot and identify features on the map of 'Treasure Island' as they search for the buried treasure. Through a well planned programme of field trips, pupils gain a good awareness of Fair Oak village. They study street maps, gather information regarding services provided, analyse house types and their placement within the village. Pupils conduct traffic surveys, the results of which are translated into computer generated graphs. Pupils express opinions as to the quality of their environment, noting aspects that might be improved.

108. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a sound knowledge of how localities change over time. In addition to understanding how their own village has grown and changed, pupils link their work in history to that of geography when considering the Great Fire of London. They consider the aspect of 'cause and effect' with regard to the resulting change and development of street layout, structural design, and materials used within the city, together with the reasons for ongoing and subsequent changes. The school's close links with a nursery school in Kware are used to good advantage when pupils study a different locality to their own. Pupils undertake a detailed study of the Kenyan village, and explore the many differences between their own lifestyles and that of a child in such an African village. Pupils make effective use of their literacy skills when writing on differences between weather, environment, clothing, education, foods and everyday life, and when writing a letter of thanks to a visitor who came to speak to them about Africa. Their study of African village life has a positive impact on pupils' cultural development, as do the school's 'Intercultural' days, when they focus on the country and way of life of places that have included Australia and the Caribbean. Shortly after the inspection, pupils are to visit several locations in Portsmouth as part of comparing their environment with that of an urban conurbation.

109. A popular member of the school is the bear 'Marco Polo'. Pupils enjoy learning about his travels and receiving cards he and his minders send from different locations, and finding the various places on maps. Having recently returned from an expedition to Mexico, the bear is currently exploring Norway.

110. Pupils show positive attitudes to geography and are enthusiastic about their work. They work well either by themselves or with others, frequently sensibly discussing the tasks on which they are engaged. The quality of teaching, judged to be good overall, provides interesting and purposeful activities that meet the needs of pupils with different levels of attainment. In one such lesson, a pupil role played a child from an African village and replied well to a range of questions put to him by his classmates regarding his way of life. Pupils posed sensible questions and were attentive to his responses.

111. Appropriate documentation is in place to support teachers' planning, and the curriculum provided meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. The subject manager has only recently taken responsibility for the subject. However, she has a clear understanding of how to develop the subject's provision, and further raise pupil attainment. Priorities identified within the subject action plan include improving provision of maps of the local area, together with developing the use of information and communication technology as a tool to support learning. Whilst evaluating planning and reviewing pupils' work, the subject manager has yet to become involved with monitoring the teaching of geography across the school.

HISTORY

112. Evidence from the few lessons observed, an analysis of pupils' work, planning, displays and discussions with pupils and the subject manager show that attainment in history is in line with national expectations at the end of the key stage. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make at least satisfactory progress. Pupils in Year 2 learn how and why maps of Portsmouth have changed over time. They study the key features and discuss which ones would be present in all the maps and those that would be

added as new maps were produced. They are able to suggest sources of historical evidence such as books, photographs and videos. They show a good understanding of the role of Florence Nightingale and Mary Seole in history. Pupils can explain why the types of buildings in the seventeenth century contributed to the rapid spread of the Fire of London. In the reception class children learn about changes in their lives by comparing themselves now with when they were babies. In Year 1 pupils examine the history of their immediate locality and begin to consider how it has changed over time.

113. In the few lessons observed the teaching of history was good. Questioning is well structured and pupils listen carefully. Teachers show good subject knowledge and use well prepared resources to support pupils' learning. Assessment opportunities are identified in planning documents and the results of assessments are recorded in field notes.

114. The well qualified, and enthusiastic manager is very knowledgeable and is committed to maintaining and enhancing the cross-curricular potential of history in the school. Her curriculum leadership is good. She scrutinises planning, wall displays and interviews groups of pupils annually to monitor progress. Samples of work and a photographic record of special trips and historical themes from each year group are kept in a subject file. There are appropriate resources, and pupils learn from a variety of carefully organised trips in the local area, including one recently to see the Mary Rose and the Victory.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

115. The last report described standards in information and communication technology as unsatisfactory. The situation has been improved and now the attainment of the majority of pupils has just been raised to be in line with national expectations. However, the school is aware that there is room for improvement and that compared with pupils' performance in other core subjects, achievement in ICT constitutes a relative weakness.

116. Basic skills are taught satisfactorily throughout the school with the best practice in Year R where computer equipment has been grouped together to give children good opportunities for 'hands on' work. Reception children are proficient at loading and saving their work and use keyboard and mouse with appropriate competence.

117. Good use is made of programmable robots: for example in numeracy to give pupils experience of control, and listening stations to promote literacy skills. Pupils are aware of the importance of such ICT potential in everyday life. Teachers lay appropriate emphasis on the communication aspect of the subject with good attention to library skills and how to use index and contents lists to find information. Although some teachers lack confidence, knowledge and understanding, a programme of in-service training is planned to overcome this and overall teaching is basically sound. As a result, pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress.

118. In Years 1 and 2 basic skills are consolidated through word processing and some elements of data handling: for example transferring tally charts of pupils' traffic surveys to a database; and presenting information in simple graphs. Control is extended to include the use of art programs, with pupils defining the size of the 'brush', shape and shades of colour, and some opportunities are created to explore repeated patterns for tessellations in mathematics. However, although all subject schemes of work contain guidance on using ICT, the school is aware that the subject is insufficiently used to support other curriculum areas. Although improved, limited resources have a restricting effect on pupils' progress. Currently there is too little evidence of enough ICT work for Key Stage 1, even though the manager has collected examples which demonstrate that all required elements are attempted.

119. Through the strategic plan the school has identified how resources and expertise will be improved from September 2001, with a combination of the use of finances and

training. Good plans are in place to make use of government grants and the school's own budget.

120. An improvement, already proving effective, is in resourcing for the Internet. Year 2 pupils have accessed the Internet for research and all have had experience in e-mailing a school in Australia. This work is complemented by the opportunity for pupils without facilities at home to spend time on secure sites of the Internet at a lunchtime club. Here pupils demonstrated good ability, control and understanding of the process for their age. A highlight of provision this year was the 'ICT for Mums' day, where children were able to show mum what to do!

121. Pupils respond well to ICT as a subject. They treat equipment with respect and listen well to teachers' input even when limited resources makes it difficult to see the screen and pupils have to sit on the carpet for long periods.

122. ICT is a priority of the strategic and improvement plans. As such, a large amount of money, £25,000, is to be made available to improve provision for next term. The subject's management is satisfactory. The two curriculum managers have made an appropriate audit to produce a position statement to gauge progress by. They have introduced a form of assessment which seeks to identify, and record, how well pupils are achieving against the programme of skills featured in planning. This system is in its infancy and does not yet constitute a model which can be used to modify future planning. The managers have set, and are reviewing, planning and beginning to evaluate standards. However, the absence of the monitoring of actual teaching does not yet guarantee quality or that each class in the same year group studies elements to the same depth.

123. Overall ICT has been improved since the last inspection and now meets statutory requirements, but its selection as one of the school's foremost priorities for development is entirely appropriate.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES: FRENCH

124. French is taught by a specialist teacher to all children for a short period each week. By the end of their time at the school, most pupils achieve good standards for their age.

125. Most pupils, even the very youngest, can respond appropriately to a variety of situations such as greeting and parting. Older pupils can answer questions occurring in everyday language, such as how well they are and which animals they like. They can count to ten, some to twenty, and know many colours. Most pupils show good interest in the work, and those that are willing to put up their hands to answer questions make good progress. However, there is a significant minority who just sit and listen, taking very little part in lessons, and on these occasions, their progress is limited.

126. Being a native speaker, the teacher sets a very good example for pupils to follow. Her enthusiasm for the subject and the brisk pace inspires many pupils and they are eager to answer questions. The use of flash cards has developed well since the last inspection and is effective in motivating pupils to answer. However, there is still more scope for pupils to talk to each other in pairs or groups to enable all pupils to take part in spoken French. When pupils are asked to talk to a partner, they all join in and make good attempts at the task. When the teacher is doing all the talking, too many pupils simply sit and listen and take little part in the lesson.

127. There is a comprehensive programme planned for the three year groups, identifying what is to be learnt each term. Where possible, this links with the general topics being studied. French is sometimes used during the course of the school day, such as when taking registers or in assembly, and the colour name of each class is prominently displayed in French. Learning about France as a country is an important part of the school's inter-

cultural programme, and this is very well supported by a French Day each summer term. There is an opportunity for pupils to take part in a French Club after school each week.

MUSIC

128. Pupils throughout the school attain the standards in music expected for their age and enjoy their music making activities. This includes pupils with special educational needs and physical disabilities, and is a good improvement since the last inspection.

129. Pupils sing enthusiastically, mostly well in tune and in time. They frequently add actions, including clapping, which they usually do in the correct place and in the correct time. They are developing the ability to compose their own accompaniments to go with songs, using percussion instruments, and record their compositions with pictures. They handle the instruments with care and sensitivity. Most pupils are able to maintain a steady beat, although keeping together in slow time proves more difficult. They listen well to recorded music, and appreciate when music is loud or soft, high or low.

130. Teaching in music is satisfactory, which is an improvement since the last inspection. Good attention is paid to musical vocabulary, and many pupils know what words such as dynamics, tempo and pitch mean. New skills are taught carefully and correctly, although there are occasions when pupils would benefit from more first hand experience with instruments. For example, in one lesson, when learning to maintain a steady beat, less than a third of the class had instruments, whilst the rest beat on their bodies for the whole time. Teaching new songs is done by 'follow my leader' with the teacher singing each line first. Remembering words proved a hindrance to many pupils, and more thought should be given to enabling pupils to use their literacy skills by reading from an overhead projector.

131. A good scheme of work has been developed for Year 2, and in Year 1 and the Foundation Stage developments are imminent. Good attention has been paid to the National Curriculum requirements and to the school's own topic based curriculum. Good links have been made with other subjects. For example, when studying Africa in geography, pupils listen to African music, when they are working on following a steady beat. The subject is well organised and well managed. For example, there is a list of songs which can be taught to fit in with each of the school's topics, and music for assembly is organised for the whole year, both the hymns to be sung, and the music pupils listen to on entering and leaving. There is a book available for pupils to write their thoughts and feelings about the music. There is a three year cycle of visiting performers so that pupils are exposed to a variety of music. This includes the junior school choir, the secondary school band, the county peripatetic music staff, the mini Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra and a banjo player. Although the manager talks to colleagues about their music teaching, little monitoring of the subject takes place.

132. The choir offers opportunities for pupils to develop their singing further. They sing on a number of occasions, including in joint carol concerts and to local senior citizens. In rehearsal, choir members were able to sing rounds in four parts, each group maintaining their part well. The recorder club gives opportunities for all Year 2 pupils to play the recorder. Pupils who learn instruments outside school have opportunities to play during celebration assemblies.

133. The music room is of great benefit for teaching music, particularly with the open plan nature of the classrooms where especially in Year 1 the acoustics have a negative effect. There is a good range of good quality instruments for pupils to play. They are well labelled, well stored, and easily accessible for teachers and pupils. There is a comprehensive selection of CDs together with ideas for listening activities.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

134. At the end of Key Stage 1, standards in physical education are in line with those expected for pupils of this age. In dance, pupils perform a variety of dances with basic movement patterns, such as an English country dance. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and physical disabilities, try very hard, working with great enjoyment and excellent attitudes, enabling them all to make good progress. In games, pupils have appropriate skills in throwing and catching a ball, and are beginning to send and receive the ball with a bat. Pupils follow instructions very well, and concentrate hard on their tasks. In gymnastics, pupils have good control of their movements on the floor and on apparatus. They are beginning to link movements together. All pupils, including the youngest in the Foundation Stage, move apparatus extremely carefully and sensibly, with very good attention to safety.

135. Teaching in physical education ranged between good and very good. Good attention is given to correct clothing for physical activities, with teachers setting a good example. However, on occasions, long hair is not tied back, and pupils who have forgotten their kit are allowed to take part wearing their school shoes, some being inappropriate and a potential hazard. Lessons are well planned with good links with other subjects, clear learning objectives and a good variety of activities which enable these objectives to be achieved. Pupils are used well for demonstrations, and opportunities are created for pupils to discuss, evaluate and improve their performance. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils are very well managed and motivated, and their enthusiasm and exuberance is well directed to the tasks in hand. Very good routines are set for changing, moving to the hall, and setting out apparatus, where pupils understand the safety requirements. Whilst safety is of paramount importance, sometimes movement of apparatus takes too long. It is possible to move more than one piece of apparatus at a time without compromising safety.

136. The subject is well managed. Previously used schemes of work are being adapted for each year group which cover all the required aspects, linking with topics where possible. However, whilst dance does have a higher profile than at the time of the last inspection, and there is evidence of more creative dance planned for other terms, currently too much emphasis is placed on formal dance patterns, such as country dancing and maypole dancing. Whilst these are beneficial and done well, there is insufficient emphasis on pupils responding to stimuli in an imaginative way. There is a good range of extracurricular activities which broadens opportunities for pupils to take part in sporting activities, as does the 'Decathlon Day', a sponsored event held every year. Opportunities are further enhanced by visits from a dance troupe, and from coaches from Southampton Football Club.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

137. Standards at the end of Year 2 in religious education have been improved since the last inspection when they were satisfactory. They are now considered to be very good, being well above the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus.

138. Pupils' learning is very good because the subject's planning and resourcing is of high quality. This enables teachers to teach effectively, making good use of pupils' good literacy skills to develop their understanding. Observations show that pupils are very sensitive to the feelings, values and beliefs of others. Religious education is complemented by, and in turn complements, the school's excellent planning for equality of opportunity.

139. Teaching in all year groups is good overall, with strong features in:

- Year R where children are given good opportunities to reflect on their feelings, and to consider how they themselves have changed since they were born;
- Year 2 where an excellent balance is struck between activities such as role play and discussion to extend pupils' understanding, following the teacher's introduction;

- The teaching of the subject manager who sets an excellent example to other staff. Her capacity to listen to the views of children and give them time to develop their own ideas is outstanding.

140. As a result of good teaching pupils respond very well, most actively take part in discussions and readily share ideas. Pupils behave well, notwithstanding that some lessons are overlong, especially when set for an hour on hot afternoons.

141. The subject makes a very strong contribution to pupils' personal development. It successfully encourages respect for others and very good appreciation of spiritual and cultural awareness.

142. Children in Year R have a good knowledge for their age of Bible stories about Jesus and start to find out about how different people consider things are special. For example children compare what Christians do on Sunday with Jewish families and Shabbat. Year 1 pupils extend this work when visiting a church and a synagogue and Year 2 explore how the two faiths perceive God, and the importance of light in religion. It is clear from lessons and discussions that most Year 2 pupils' understanding is well above average because of very good planning and teaching.

143. The management of the subject is excellent. Planning, which represents a combination of the local syllabus, guidelines from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority and the school's own intentions, is presented in an exemplary way. An excellent range and number of resources are well stored and very effectively designed to support teachers.

144. Recent improvements to assessment have produced good review sheets which with the minimum of written work will identify what pupils know, understand and can do. The school is aware that this is an area for development, as is monitoring of how teachers actually deliver the curriculum and the use made of ICT to support the subject.

145. Assemblies, although they have a tendency to be too long, meet statutory requirements as acts of collective worship. They are very well planned to provide a good balance between reflection and instruction. The use of a lighted candle serves as a good focus for pupils' contemplation. Assemblies have a very good influence on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. An excellent feature is in pupils volunteering to record in the school's response books how assemblies and the music played affected them. The quality of these comments and illustrations demonstrate a maturity and sensitivity not usually associated with children of this age.